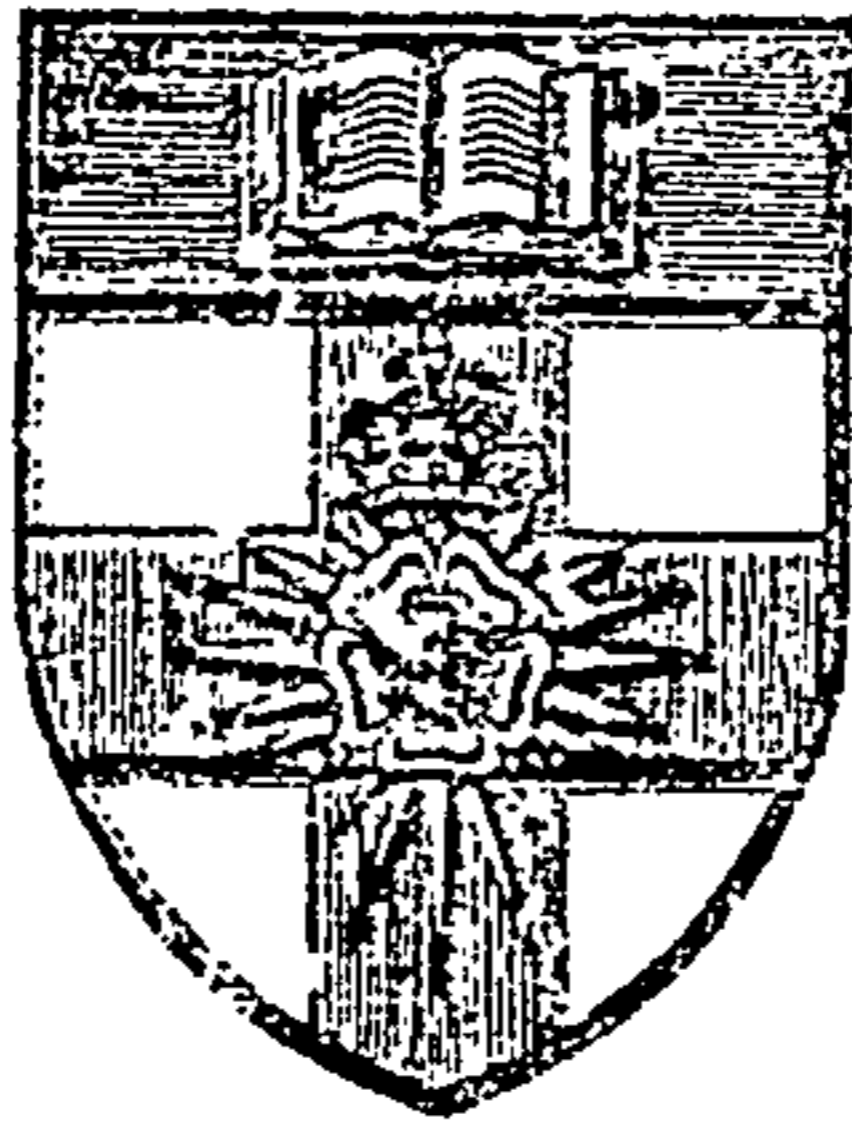


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THE

DUTY OF PAYING TRIBUTE ENFORCED;

IN LETTERS

TO THE

REV. DR JOHN BROWN,

OCCASIONED BY HIS RESISTING THE PAYMENT OF

THE ANNUITY TAX.

BY

ROBERT HALDANE, ESQUIRE.

EDINBURGH:

JOHN JOHNSTONE, HUNTER SQUARE,  
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JOHN JOHNSTONE, Printer, Hunter Square.



## INTRODUCTION.

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THE following Letters addressed to the Rev. Dr John Brown, in consequence of his refusal to pay the Annuity Tax, have recently appeared in the Edinburgh Advertiser. The subject being of such general importance, especially at a time when so many have combined to resist the payment of a legal impost, the Author has been requested to allow them to be published in a more permanent form, to which he has acceded. They are, accordingly, now collected, and presented to the Public; and as those who have undertaken their publication are desirous that they should obtain a wide circulation, and prove extensively useful, the price has been fixed at a low rate.

The questions discussed in these Letters do not respect the Annuity Tax only, nor are they merely of local and temporary interest; they comprise the duty of the payment of taxes of every description, and at all times. And especially, they relate to that most erroneous mode of interpreting the Scriptures, exemplified in Dr Brown's discourses, which is calculated to make them void, not only in what regards obedience to Civil Government, but also as to every other duty.

## PREFACE.

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THE Annuity Tax referred to in the following letters, from which the Clergy of the Established Church in Edinburgh derive their stipends, has existed for about 200 years. To the payment of this tax a system of resistance has lately been organized. Its first opponents appear to have been men immersed in the politics of this world, who cared little for Christianity in any form. Of late, however, the agitating party have so far prevailed, as to influence the conduct of many of whom better things might be expected.

The progress of this species of agitation was chiefly alarming, as it indicated the working of an opposition to lawful authority, the results of which may ultimately be attended with tumult and bloodshed. It was therefore calculated to awaken just indignation, when, at a public meeting in October last, the Rev. Dr John Brown stood forward and read a written declaration, pledging himself to suffer any penalty, even to the extent of bonds and imprisonment, rather than pay a tax which contributed to the support of the Clergy of the Established Church. At the same time he stated, that he was one of 1961 individuals in Edinburgh, against whom warrants on account of their refusal to pay this tax had been issued. The

radical in politics, and the infidel in religion, might probably laugh in secret at the abandonment of Christian duty involved in Dr Brown's declaration; but considering the station which he occupies as a leader in a large denomination of Christians, and as the theological instructor of their future ministers, no one can deny that his influence and example must be considerable either for good or evil.

It was under these circumstances that I felt it my duty to bring the conduct of Dr Brown to the test of the Word of God. I therefore addressed to him a letter through the medium of the *Edinburgh Advertiser*. To that letter he replied in a manner which proved how little he had calculated on the difficulties of his position, and how much he was swayed by the tumultuous influence of worldly passions. He felt the keenness of the shaft that was winged with truth, but instead of attributing its sting to the proper cause, he declared that he was the object of a railing accusation, and that I might rail on without further answer from him. He soon discovered that my arguments were not to be so easily disposed of, and after more than once violating his pledge of silence, he finally delivered to his congregation two elaborate discourses on civil obedience and the payment of tribute, in which he reviewed the whole subject, and printed them with copious notes, defending his resistance to the Annuity Tax.

It has been my object in the following letters to expose Dr Brown's principles and conduct in the light of Scripture, and to prove, that in refusing payment of a lawful tax he has sinned against God, and held himself out as an example to others, who, by follow-

ing his steps, will implicate themselves in the same guilt. In every one of the questions discussed are involved principles of lasting importance, which in the present age of change and agitation are peculiarly deserving of attention. If the Bible be indeed the volume of God's holy Word; if it does contain the Christian's rule of conduct, as delineated in its precepts and example by the finger of divine inspiration; if it be the book out of which men shall be judged at the last day; with what horror ought we to view the attempt to fritter down its meaning, so as to accommodate it to the prejudices and the follies of latitudinarians in religion, or agitators in politics! If Dr Brown is at liberty to trample on the law of Christ so far as it relates to tribute; if, with impunity, he may give to the winds the solemn precepts of the Apostle, why may not others more reckless, though not more daring in their application of the Neologian theory, also venture to blot out of the Book of God whatever happens to condemn a cherished sin, or run counter to any of their preconceived notions.

Dr Brown is not aware of the precipice on which he stands. He little dreams of the awful responsibility in which he is involving himself! He may take encouragement from the applause of those who use him as a political tool, and may mistake the empty sound of flattery for the approbation of enlightened men, but this is a poor substitute for the approval of God. In his calmer hours, when away from the bustle and excitement of agitation, does he not consider what is likely to be the effect of his example upon those who look up to him as a guide? Does he not think of the dangerous vortex in which he is involving him-

self as well as others? And if he hopes to escape the temptations into which he plunges, has he the same confidence as to those whom he hurries on in the like dangerous path?

Had I not been deeply impressed with the importance of the subjects in debate, I should not have come forward on this occasion. But in the peculiar exigencies of the present times, there seems to be a loud call upon Christians, according to their means and opportunities, to warn others of the dangers with which they are threatened. Every successive age brings with it its own temptations, and to those whose perceptions are not clouded by their worldly politics, or deadened with the jargon of party strife, it is very plain that we are now living in times eminently perilous to the professors of religion. There are seasons when such conduct as that of Dr Brown would be injurious to none but himself. But in an age like the present—an age of much excitement and of political changes, it is no light matter to witness a minister of the Gospel and a theological professor, placing himself in the front ranks of agitation, and heading an organized system of resistance to the laws of his country.

Assuredly this is, of itself, a sign of the times of no doubtful import. It becomes doubly striking when it is considered that Dr Brown does not stand alone; that, on the contrary, he is cheered onwards by other ministers of long standing, who have testified their concurrence in his opinions, and their approval of his resolution; while there are many professing Christians who shelter themselves behind his authority, and make his example an apology for



conduct which, at any other period, would have been deemed wholly inconsistent with the slightest pretensions to godliness.

It is not to be supposed that this restless insubordination has suddenly sprung up in such luxuriance. Christians are always prone to catch somewhat of the tone and colour of the age in which they live; and in proportion as turbulence and agitation have become popular, too many of the professed disciples of Christ have forgotten the injunctions of their Divine Master, and acted in such a manner, that so far from exhibiting themselves as strangers and pilgrims on the earth, it might be supposed that all their loftiest aspirations, and all their highest efforts, were bounded with the prospect of some new political change, or some empty dream of popular aggrandizement. The solemn injunctions in regard to civil obedience, as contained in the thirteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, have been practically neglected even by many who would fear to deny their authority. The precepts of the Apostle being in direct hostility to the spirit and temper of political agitators, it is no wonder that those who have been seduced by their snares, should desire to lull their conscience to sleep, and turn away from all that might disturb its slumbers. The infidel, sitting in the chair of the scorner, boldly scoffs at the words of the Apostle, which he does not affect either to misinterpret or misunderstand. The more subtle Neologian finds in these words matter adapted only for a peculiar season, and a small body of Christians. The Socinian adopts the same persuasion, and unites both with the Infidel and Neo-

logian in sneering at any attempt to restrain their schemes of political agitation, until at last they have gone far to turn the very idea of submission to "*the powers that be,*" into a by-word and a proverb for ridicule.

If ever there was a period in the history of the world, in which more than at any other, Christians have reason to be grateful for their outward privileges, it is now, when, in this favoured country, men of every religious denomination are permitted to worship God according to their conscience, without the hazard of molestation from any quarter, civil or religious. For these privileges, fervent thanks are due to the Great Ruler of events. But is it to be supposed that God is honoured or thanked for these blessings by men, whose feelings can only find expression in great swelling words of vanity about "battles to be fought," about "high places to be won," about "lives to be jeopardded," or "tyranny and 'wrong'" to be redressed? Is it under such teaching that Christians will become remarkable for their quiet and peaceable lives, as men that "fear God" and "honour the king," and "meddle not with them that 'are given to change?'" Or will not those Churches that are subjected to such pernicious doctrine be found to be among that unhappy number who have forsaken their first love, whose candlestick is in danger of being removed, and whose ways are not perfect before God?

The practical effects of this doctrine are becoming more and more manifest. Can we look without anxiety as to the spiritual welfare of those who are forward in every scene of political strife, and whose

whole soul seems to be wrapped up in the prosecution of some party object? Christian legislators and statesmen have lamented the deadening tendency of their legitimate and necessary pursuits. They have regretted that in their unavoidable amalgamation with the world, it was difficult to keep themselves free from its contagion. But what must be the case with those, who, on every occasion of popular excitement, volunteer their services, and engage in political pursuits with a zest which seems to indicate that these are far more congenial with their habits, than the performance of those duties in which pure and undefiled religion consists.

Nor is this all, there are some who, like Dr Brown, predict the coming of great changes. Are they foolish enough to believe that these changes can be effected without convulsion? We know that there is a day approaching when God will come out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; to reckon with the nations for their contempt of his authority, for their rejection of his Gospel, and for their trampling on his precepts. But we know also by whom it has been said, "Woe unto  
 ' you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end  
 ' is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and  
 ' not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a  
 ' bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned  
 ' his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall  
 ' not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light?  
 ' even very dark, and no brightness in it?" In nearly the same words, another prophet was commanded to speak of the coming of that day: "Blow ye the  
 ' trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy

‘ mountain ; let all the inhabitants of the land  
‘ tremble : for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is  
‘ nigh at hand ; a day of darkness and of gloominess,  
‘ a day of clouds and of thick darkness.” Does this  
resemble the language in which many in the prospect  
of great political changes are accustomed exultingly  
to expatiate, and to “ *desire* ” the coming of that day ?  
Or rather, is it possible to imagine a stronger contrast ?  
Ought not Christians, in the persuasion of the coming  
of such events, instead of inflaming their minds by  
idle declamations about occupying “ the high places  
‘ of the field,” to remind one another of the command  
and gracious injunction of God : “ Come, my people,  
‘ enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors  
‘ about thee ; hide thyself as it were for a little  
‘ moment, until the indignation be overpast. For,  
‘ behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish  
‘ the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity : the  
‘ earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no  
‘ more cover her slain.”

## THE DUTY OF PAYING TRIBUTE, &c.

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### LETTER I.

November 13, 1837.

SIR,—In the account of the late meeting in Edinburgh to oppose the Annuity Tax, it is stated that you expressed a determination never to pay it again, as you “could not do so ‘ without offering violence to your conscientious conviction,” and that you “resisted the tax from the fear of contracting guilt ‘ before God.” This resolution is directly contrary to Scripture, and tramples under foot one of the great laws of the kingdom of Christ. That a Christian, with the injunctions of the Apostles on this subject before his eyes, should fear to contract guilt by paying tribute, is truly astonishing. I shall refer only to Romans xiii. 1—7, and shall merely quote the passage. The meaning is so clear, that any attempt to evade it must be utterly forced and unnatural. The conscience that can resist it must be either not in subjection to the Word of God, or greatly in ignorance of that Word.

“ Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers ; for there  
‘ is no power but of God : the powers that be are ordained of  
‘ God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth  
‘ the ordinance of God ; and they that resist shall receive to  
‘ themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good  
‘ works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the  
‘ power ? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of  
‘ the same : For he is the minister of God to thee for good.  
‘ But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid ; for he beareth  
‘ not the sword in vain : for he is the minister of God, a re-  
‘ venger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil. Where-

‘ fore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also  
 ‘ for conscience’ sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also :  
 ‘ for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this  
 ‘ very thing. Render, therefore, to all their dues : tribute to  
 ‘ whom tribute *is due* ; custom, to whom custom ; fear, to whom  
 ‘ fear ; honour, to whom honour.”

I am aware that many expedients have been resorted to, to limit the application of this apostolic rule ; but it is a law of Christ, expressed with a fulness and precision beyond that which is to be found on almost any other subject ; and it is at his peril if any man rebel against it.

You, Sir, hold a very responsible situation as a minister of a numerous congregation—as an influential member of a large denomination, and as one who is employed officially in training young men for the ministry ; and if on so momentous a question your conscience is misinformed, how mischievous must be the influence of your doctrine and conduct. I am shocked with your determination of going to prison, rather than pay a tax of which you disapprove. What an example is this to your congregation ! What an extensive and pernicious effect must it have, not only on your own denomination, but on Christians in general ! What mischief is it calculated to excite in social life ? To what violence and bloodshed may it not lead ? Is this like the doctrine and conduct of the apostles and first Christians ? Can any thing be conceived more opposite ? Your views of the Scriptural way in which the religion of Christ ought to be maintained you have a right to promulgate and defend by argument. But to resist a tax imposed by the Government under which you live, is to rebel against Christ, and in the end may kindle the flames of civil war. You may attempt to excuse yourself as you will, but it must be evident to those who tremble at the Word of God, and understand the import of the passage above quoted, that a more flagrant violation of the divine law has seldom been exemplified than in the line of conduct which you have adopted, and the deliberate purpose which you have avowed.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

ROBERT HALDANE.

## LETTER II.

THE CONDUCT OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS RESPECTING THE  
PAYMENT OF TRIBUTE.

*To the Editor of the Edinburgh Advertiser.*

November 24, 1837.

SIR,—Dr Brown's defence against the charges contained in my letter of the 13th instant appeared in your last paper. In the second edition of that paper, you inserted a notice from me to the effect, that, notwithstanding all he had said, he had not exonerated himself from my charge of his having violated the divine law, as I should afterwards prove. This proof I reserve for a future occasion. At present, I shall only notice some of those remarks in his letter which apply to myself personally, together with what he has advanced respecting the testimony of Tertullian, in reference to the payment of taxes by the early Christians.

Dr Brown concludes his letter by observing, that I have got my answer, and if not satisfied, I may, uninterrupted and unreprieved by him, rail on. If the answer he has published be all he intends to make, or is capable of making, much better would it have been for him to have remained silent. Nothing, however, in my letter justifies his accusing me of railing against him. When any one unjustly charges another with railing, it is easy to judge which is the railer. In the same sentence, he observes that I have barred the door on all direct communication. He probably refers to the duty enjoined—Matt. xviii. 15, “If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.” That command refers exclusively to personal offences, whether private or public, and not to such a case as the one now in question. Between Dr Brown and me there is no personal offence; it is his conduct in violating the divine law that I have impugned. When Peter was to be blamed, Paul withstood him to the face before them all. Dr Brown remarks, that I made my charges against him without proof: My proof was the express declaration of one of

the plainest and most explicit passages in the Word of God, and to his perversion of that passage I intend afterwards to call his attention.

Dr Brown observes, that "he who, without evidence, insinuates that another is capable of such vile hypocrisy," (namely, "to make scruples of conscience a pretext for either evading the payment of a tax, or exciting civil dissensions," &c.) "only betrays the meanness of his own character, as, in judging of the motives of another, he unintentionally makes a disclosure of his own." Here he seems to "insinuate," that I have charged him with vile hypocrisy. His charge is unfounded. My letter contains no such charge; I neither accused him of hypocrisy, nor judged his motives; his avowed principles are what I condemn. I cannot help, however, being struck with the contrast exhibited in his conduct now and at a former period. On the occasion I allude to, he not only contributed voluntarily to the support of the greatest desecrator of the Scriptures that has appeared, but loudly called on the Christians in Scotland to concur in this contribution. At present, from the "fear of contracting guilt," he refuses to pay a tax imposed by the Government under which he lives: Without charging him with hypocrisy, in either instance, I may be allowed to express my astonishment, that his conscience should be so little scrupulous in the one case, and so morbidly sensitive in the other. This can only be accounted for by his being blinded by prejudice, or having his conscience ill informed. In either alternative, it is unsafe for Christians to follow him as a leader, and unworthy of them to be swayed by his example.

I have said that Dr Brown's charge is unfounded, and it is not the first time that I have taxed him with unfounded statements. On a former occasion I confronted him, as he knows, and challenged him to substantiate an assertion which he had made. I published, at the same time, the following remark of one who, having heard of another of his assertions, observed, that it was "one of the most audacious attempts ever made by a Christian minister to carry a point by mere hardihood of reckless asseveration." Dr Brown attempted, in a published letter, dated April 8, 1830, to answer certain charges preferred



against him by the gentleman alluded to. He received a reply, May 7th, in which, after fully and unanswerably convicting Dr Brown of “glaring misrepresentations,” the letter concludes as follows: “Your name is in danger of going down to posterity, not among the number of those who have testified for the integrity of the Word of God, but among that inglorious band who, like the younger Turretine of Geneva, bartered their hereditary honours for the short-lived praise of false and mistaken liberality.”

When any one like Dr Brown comes forward on one occasion to extenuate the violation of the purity of the Scriptures, and when afterwards, by sophistical reasonings, he perverts their import, it is proper that Christians should be put on their guard. If any are in danger of being misled by the letter which Dr Brown has now published, I beg to call their attention to the quotation he has alleged from Tertullian. Were the version he has presented correct, it would involve the early Christians in the same charge with himself, of violating the divine law. But never were men more blameless, or more exemplary in that very respect in which, according to his citation, they must be held guilty. I have been favoured with the subjoined communication on the subject, from which it will be seen how grievously his letter has misrepresented their conduct. Dr Brown’s views respecting the payment of taxes, for which he so strenuously contends, expressing his willingness to become a martyr in their support, strike at the root of all civil government. They totally misrepresent the law of the kingdom of Christ, and were they well founded, no Christian could live in a heathen country. This subject is of the last importance, and Christians should consider it well before they become abettors of a doctrine so injurious to the cause of Christianity, and so contrary to the Word of God. I am, &c.

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Dr Brown refers to the practice of the primitive Christians in support of his position. His statements upon this subject are grossly inaccurate, and the manner in which he conducts this part of his argument is equally discreditable to him as a man

and a scholar. He justly characterises the early Christians as “very *single-minded, simple-hearted* men,”—a temper of mind which their panegyrists would do well to imitate.

His statement is, that “in primitive times, Christians readily ‘paid the taxes for general purposes, but a tax for a specific purpose, which they accounted sinful, they did not, they would not pay.’” All that he offers in support of this bold averment, is a quotation from Dr Cave, (or, as he is pleased to call him, *Archbishop* Cave,) in which that author gives an outline of a passage in Tertullian. Now, it is not very scholar-like to take evidence of this description at second-hand. And it is especially unworthy in an individual who is engaged in the work of theological tuition, to hold out to the public Dr Cave as an authority—a writer notoriously inaccurate in many of his statements, and who, in his own lifetime, was more than once chastised into a retractation of his mistakes. Besides, Dr Brown must have seen in the very paragraph from which he quotes, two other ancient writers—Justin Martyr and Tatian—brought forward as stating the readiness of the early Christians freely to pay *all taxes and tributes*, without any qualification or exception whatever. A difference so remarkable in the witnesses, as reported by Dr Cave, would have impressed any man of ordinary candour with the necessity of having recourse to the originals. One of the writers, no doubt, viz., Tatian, is chiefly known as a heretic. But in regard to a matter of fact, his evidence is on a level with that of Tertullian, who himself fell into error. And, besides, the work from which the abstract is given, was written while he was in connection with the true Church, as Dr Brown may see in another of Cave’s Works—the *Historia Literaria*—and, indeed, the fact is notorious. At all events, whether he had recourse to the originals or not, Dr Brown was bound to give the evidence as he found it, to make the public aware of the discrepancy, and not to mislead by a partial extract.

An undue advantage is obtained by this mode of quotation in another respect. Dr Brown commences his quotation thus:—“Tertullian tells them,” (*i. e.*, the Gentile Magistrates,) I quote the words of Archbishop Cave in his *Primitive Christianity*, “that though they” (*i. e.*, the Christians) “*refused to pay the*

*' taxes rated upon them for the maintenance of the heathen temples, yet for all other tributes,'* &c. Now, the impression that this extract is calculated to convey is, that Tertullian's main object was to justify the Christians for refusing to pay certain taxes, and that he was addressing himself to the Gentile Magistrates upon this special topic. A different impression would have been conveyed by a more complete quotation. Dr Cave, in the chapter referred to, undertakes to illustrate the obedience and subjection of the early Christians to civil government, and for this purpose, introduces a passage from Tertullian that he conceived to bear upon the subject. To give more effect to the quotation, Cave alludes to the form in which the whole work of Tertullian is written—a form common to most of the early apologies of Christianity—viz., as addressed to the civil rulers. This, however, in many instances, was little more than a form; and, at all events, this account takes away all the effect that may arise from a direct appeal to civil magistrates upon the subject of taxation.

It is time, however, to proceed to more important matter, and we shall now endeavour to prove that Dr Cave, in this passage, has wholly misapprehended Tertullian, and that in the original there is nothing at all about "taxes rated for religious purposes," in the sense in which Dr Brown employs the words.

The object of Tertullian in his Apology, is to expose the injustice of the Heathens in their conduct towards the Christians, and to show the groundlessness of many of the charges made against the Christians. Among the calumnies circulated against the Christians, one of the most frequent was, that they were morose and unsociable, that their principles unfitted them for many important duties, and rendered them useless or dangerous members of society. Tertullian takes up this objection in the forty-second chapter of his work, and endeavours to remove the false impression in his own rhetorical way. He shows that the Christians were not Gymnosophists or Brachmans—that they lived in the world—engaged in its business—enjoyed its pleasures—performed its duties. They avoided, indeed, all excess, and also every scene in which they might be involved in idolatrous practices. But he argues, that even in a political point

of view, this did not render them less useful as individuals, or even as citizens of the world. This he illustrates in various particulars. At last he comes to the objection, that the revenues of the temples continually decreased, and that scarcely any threw in their mite to the gods. The words in the original are, *certe inquitis templorum vectigalia quotidie decoquunt, stipes quotusquisque jam jactat?* Tertullian allows that this is the fact, but argues that the Christians were not to be found fault with for this; and he goes on to state that it was too much to expect that they were to give money to the beggar gods, and relieve their suffering fellow-men; that their charities were upon an extensive scale; so extensive, that they would not even refuse to give something to Jupiter if he would hold out his hand for charity in the street, though they could not go to his temple; that they were strictly honest in all their dealings, and that in this way the Commonwealth received more from them than from any other class of subjects.

Now, in all this there is not a single word about the Christians refusing to pay the taxes rated upon them for the maintenance of the heathen temples. We confidently refer to the original passage, and appeal to any "simple-hearted" man capable of understanding the words, whether there is any approach to such an idea. Indeed every one acquainted with the subject must be aware that the instances were inconceivably rare of special taxes being appointed for religious purposes. The heathen worship was supported partly by consecrated lands, partly by grants of princes from the public purse, and chiefly by bequests from individuals, and by contributions at the temple, which were either wholly voluntary or obligatory only upon those who engaged in the worship.

And, besides, can a single example be produced in which any of the first Christians acted upon the principle ascribed to them? We defy Dr Brown to produce an instance. The degrading means resorted to in order to enforce the capitation tax on the Jews for repairing the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus are well known. But can any tax of the same kind be mentioned in regard to the early Christians? Or, if there was such a tax, did they ever attempt to resist it?

The matter, however, need not be left to a mere challenge. We have the most irresistible evidence that it was not their practice to resist any tax. Among all the charges brought against them by their enemies, they are never accused of disobedience in this respect. Now this could not have been the case had they acted upon Dr Brown's principle. The priests had a direct interest in the treasury of their temples being well furnished. We learn from another passage in Tertullian that the revenues of the temples were frequently exposed to sale, and the farmers of these revenues must have carefully watched over them. The Roman tax-gatherers were proverbially rigorous. But from neither priests, nor farmers, nor publicans, do we find any complaints against the Christians for refusing to pay what the law enjoined. In the well-known letter from Pliny to Trajan, there is a complaint that the temples were deserted, and that the victims remained unsold—but there is no notice of any direct impost being resisted. Had such a spirit been manifested, Pliny would have had less occasion to consult his master. The complaints of the priests, throughout all the early ages, were, that the gods were neglected and despised, and the temples deserted, but never that their legal claims were contumaciously withheld.

With these facts before us, even if the gloss put by Dr Brown upon the passage in Tertullian had been correct, we would have concluded that Tertullian himself was mistaken—as he often was in matters of fact—or that he was speaking merely of his own practice, or of that of a few fanatics like himself. It is well known that he held peculiar notions upon many subjects. He imagined that soldiers should not receive crowns of laurel from their commanders—though this was by no means the general opinion—and, though, as Mr Milner remarks, it might, in fact, be worn as innocently as St. Paul committed himself to a ship whose sign was Castor and Pollux. The opinion held of Tertullian by Dr Brown's grandfather may be seen in his Dictionary. "Whatever," says he, "Tertullian, 'and some others equally giddy in their notions may pretend,'" &c.

It is not necessary, however, to have recourse to this line of

argument; and we return to the position that there is not a word about refusing to pay taxes in Tertullian. The word *vectigalia* is indeed used. But every schoolboy knows that this word is by no means confined to revenues arising from public imposts. It may apply to revenues of any description. In the present instance it refers not to what the public generally "were rated with," but to the contributions of the actual worshippers. Such contributions might be permitted, or, perhaps, in some instances, enjoined by law, which allowed the privilege of begging to the priests when they had not sufficient endowments. But they were not rendered obligatory, except in the case of those who actually entered the temples. This is sufficiently obvious from another passage from Tertullian:—"Religion goes round the taverns begging. Ye demand payment for entering the temple, and for a place at festivals. No one can become acquainted with the gods for nothing: access to them is purchased."—c. 13.

This view is confirmed by another clause already quoted. "*Stipes quotusquisque jam jactat?*" It is not who pays a tax? but who throws an alms? We are aware that some critics have explained *stipes* here by *tributum*. But this is obviously erroneous, or, if it was a tribute, still it was exacted only from the worshippers. We have not room to follow out this minute criticism. But in proof of this interpretation of the word we refer to Arnobius adv. Gentes, i., p. 16. Ovid. i. Ex. Pont. i. 35. Varro. sub. fin. c. 4, and many others might be mentioned.

We hold it then demonstrated, that it is a libel against the Christians to represent them as refusing to pay any tax they were rated with. Dr Brown's gloss, or rather his friend, the *Archbishop's* gloss, of an isolated passage, will stand him no stead. We have the direct testimony of the fathers that they readily paid all taxes without any exception, and their worst enemies never charged them with any thing so extravagant and ridiculous as might be construed into a precedent for the Edinburgh Voluntaries. Ambitious as the primitive Christians were for the crown of martyrdom, it did not occur to these "single-minded men" to seek for that crown by the violation

of a positive precept of their Divine Master, or by turning their back upon his example. Dr Brown and his followers may seek in vain among the fathers for any warrant for their proceedings. These proceedings, indeed, are not without precedent. It is, however, not among the simple-hearted Christians, but among the turbulent Herodians—and Judas the Gaulonite is their true prototype. (Acts, v. 37.)

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### LETTER III.

ON THE CHEERFUL PERFORMANCE OF CHRISTIAN DUTY.

November 30, 1837.

SIR,—Considering the unhappy predicament in which you have placed yourself, I am not surprised at the extraordinary ferment in your mind which your “note” so clearly manifests. When you accuse me of railing, I rather pity than blame you. The excited imagination conjures up phantoms, and every thing is seen through a distorted medium. Be assured, however, that I shall not fail to notice, in due time, those communications on the subject in question, with which you have favoured the public. Permit me, at present, to call your attention to an expression in the first of them, not more remarkable for its unsoundness than its absurdity.

The laxity of principle which you introduce into your code of Christian morals is truly astonishing. Not content with encouraging your fellow-subjects to imitate your example, and resist the payment of taxes, you actually do what in you lies to undermine the whole system of the body politic, by laying it down as a maxim, that “Nothing is Christian duty which is ‘not cheerfully performed.’” Was there ever any dogma introduced by one in your station, wilder in theory or more dangerous in practice? On this principle all government must rest on a very tottering foundation. If a Christian cannot cheerfully pay his taxes, according to you, his obligation is cancelled; he is no longer in duty bound in this respect to obey. His

duty is placed not on his allegiance to God, but upon his fluctuating feelings of cheerfulness or discontent in regard to the Government. For example, like you, he may go on for years paying his Annuity Tax, not, perhaps, very cheerfully, but, at all events, without much discontent. But, by and by, an organised system of agitation having been matured against some of the political arrangements of the State, and the flame of discontent against the said tax having been carefully fanned, he learns from you, his minister, that “nothing is Christian duty ‘which is not cheerfully performed.’” He consults his own feelings. He discovers no cheerful disposition towards any of his taxes, but a peculiar degree of repugnance in regard to the Annuity Tax. He begins, therefore, by resisting this tax, and declares that, like his minister, he will go to prison rather than pay such an impost. But he does not stop here: he applies the same test to the duties charged upon his silks, his tea, his sugar, his spirits. He finds that he does not “cheerfully” pay any of these taxes, and, consequently, as his minister tells him, that “nothing is Christian duty which is not cheerfully performed,” he becomes a smuggler upon *Christian principle*; he defrauds the revenue of his country upon *Christian principle* by importing contraband goods; he patronizes illicit distillation, and he protects himself from the indignant voice of public reprobation, by re-echoing the great maxim of his spiritual guide and teacher:—*Nothing is Christian duty which is not cheerfully performed.* This, Sir, is no caricature. It is a picture of your own principle carried out to its legitimate extent.

As Scripture itself affords you no arguments in support of your doctrine, you try to supply the deficiency by the creation of the aforesaid first principle, laying it down as an axiom, that nothing is Christian duty which is not cheerfully performed. You thus constitute our feelings the standard of duty. Nothing can be more false. God’s Word, and not our feelings about what it contains, is the standard of duty. Our feelings cannot constitute duty, nor determine duty. It is true, indeed, that no duty is rightly performed unto God that is not cheerfully performed. But if you meant this, you have neither expressed it properly, nor would such an assertion be any thing to your pur-



pose. Christians, in the times of the apostles, took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and at all times they ought cheerfully to pay every tax imposed on them by the Government of their country. They can have no delight in the application of money to a sinful purpose, but they can have cheerfulness in paying it whatever be the purpose to which it may be applied. They ought to have cheerfulness in complying with the law of their God.

“ But surely,” you say, referring to the case of Juggernaut, “ a Christian must do violence to every principle of his new nature—he must exercise a kind of self-denial very different from that which his Lord enjoined, before he could cheerfully part with his money to uphold what is equally insult to Jehovah, and perdition to the souls of men. Can absurdity go beyond this? According to your correspondent’s principles, the Christian would be in a cruel dilemma. He must crucify every holy affection on the one side; or, on the other, trample under foot one of the great laws of the kingdom of God.” This is sorry reasoning. It proceeds on the ground, that the Christian in paying the tax which has a sinful purpose, is to have cheerfulness in that purpose. But his cheerfulness in parting with his money, arises from his conviction that he is obeying his God. With respect to the application of that money, he may grieve with the utmost intenseness. But in giving the money enjoined, he has not to crucify one holy affection. He gives it cheerfully, because it is the command of his God to obey, while with his whole heart, he abhors the wicked purpose to which it is appointed. His conduct is perfectly free even from the appearance of absurdity. The money paid in tribute is not his own, but is in full the property of those to whom it is appointed to be paid. God has taken it from him, and he ought not only to acquiesce, but to rejoice in complying with God’s appointments. Where, then, is the dilemma? Where is the absurdity? Where is the crucifixion of holy affections? Every principle of the new nature of the Christian may abhor the purpose to which the tax is appointed, while no principle of that nature is offended with its payment in obedience to the authority of civil rulers. A more heretical perversion of

divine truth, utterly subversive of the authority of the Bible, has seldom been propounded, than that “*Nothing is Christian duty which is not cheerfully performed.*” I am, &c.

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## LETTER IV.

### ON THE DUTY OF PAYING TRIBUTE.

December 12, 1837.

SIR,—In declaring before a public meeting that you were determined to go to prison rather than submit to a tax of which you disapproved, you held yourself forth as a pattern to your fellow-subjects, and courted an examination of your conduct and principles. You were not contented with privately acting upon your convictions, and patiently submitting to the consequences of resisting a legal impost on your property. You were eager to proclaim yourself a self-devoted martyr in the cause in which you had embarked. To the Annuity Tax you openly unfurled the banner of resistance, and, not content with thus defying the laws of your country, you did what you could to infuse your opinions into the minds of others, to confirm the wavering, to silence their conscientious scruples, and to rouse your fellow-citizens to follow in your pernicious career.

It was under these circumstances that I felt it my duty to address you publicly in your responsible character. It was my object to expose the unscriptural nature of your principles, the criminality of your procedure, and the dangerous tendency of your example. From one who had so deeply committed himself before the world, I had no reason to expect either “gratitude or thanks,” and assuredly you are greatly mistaken if you imagine that I experience mortification at the rudeness and vulgarity with which you attempt to turn the edge of my arguments. You are very welcome to treat as “a railing accusation” my appeal to the Word of God, and its application to your case. You may impeach the motives and impugn the character of your reprover; but, after all, the irritation you

exhibit can only be regarded as an exhibition of the moral discomfort with which you survey the novel position in which you have so recklessly placed yourself.

You begin your letter, in which you attempt to vindicate your conduct, by collecting together the charges that are brought against you, and you seem to be so deeply impressed with their accumulated weight, that you conclude, if they are true, you must not only be a fit object of Church discipline, but also a dangerous citizen. In this conclusion we shall both pretty nearly coincide. The man who refuses to pay "tribute ' to whom tribute is due," violates an express law of Christ. If a professed Christian, he is still one " that walketh disorderly ' and not after the tradition received" of the apostles. He is, therefore, deserving of ecclesiastical rebuke, while, at the same time, his allegiance to the government of his country is justly liable to impeachment. If to this we add that the offender occupies a prominent and influential station in society, his " disorderly walk" must be regarded as still more deplorable, since others more ignorant and less prudent than himself may be emboldened by his dereliction of duty to assume a still more decided attitude of insubordination, and thus occasion scenes of murder and bloodshed, such as those with which the same line of conduct has already desolated Ireland.

We are also agreed upon the grounds of my charges against you, namely, your determination to resist the Annuity Tax, even if by this defiance of the laws of your country, you should hazard "the spoiling of your goods, the incarceration of your ' person, and even the loss of your life." But you deny what you are pleased to term my assertion that "this avowal and ' determination is inconsistent with the law of Christ," as laid down in the first seven verses of the thirteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.

You admit the law, but plead for an exception in favour of the tax you resist. You cannot deny that the divine precept is very precise and explicit. You cannot point out, from Genesis to Revelations, one solitary instance of an authorised exception. Still you plead for an exception in favour of those who dislike the Annuity Tax, while you overlook the essential principle,

that the distinction upon which a limitation in each case is founded must be warranted by Scripture; otherwise, however strict a precept may be, we could easily accommodate it to our own fancies. You argue, however, that there are limitations to many divine laws, which, like the command to pay tribute, are expressed without exception or limitation. In particular, you instance the case of the Sabbath, and the command to do no murder.

In regard to the Sabbath it is quite clear that when we are commanded to abstain from work on that day, it is only that we may fulfil the first injunction to *keep it holy*. All work is therefore forbidden which is not consistent with this great duty. The words of the decalogue are, therefore, to a certain extent limited, and, even without the comment of our Lord, we might have known that the “Sabbath was made for man, and not ‘man for the Sabbath,’”—that it was an institution of mercy, intended for the temporal comfort and eternal welfare of man—and, consequently, that neither in the spirit nor in the letter could it possibly be violated by the performance of works of necessity or mercy.

The case of the Sabbath will not then, Sir, serve your purpose, nor will those other cases to which you refer. The precept, thou shalt do no murder, surely does not contravene the divine declaration, “He that sheddeth man’s blood, by ‘man shall his blood be shed.” And in regard to the injunction for wives to obey their husbands, children their parents, and servants their masters—there can only be one kind of exception to its generality, and that is involved in the paramount authority of God. It is indeed self-evident, that under colour of obedience to the letter of a divine law, we must not violate its spirit by doing despite to the Almighty Lawgiver. We are to obey God rather than man. If, however, under the general command that wives should obey their husbands, and servants their masters, a particular *act* were specified in which it was unreservedly enjoined that they should obey, can it be supposed that in the performance of that act there could be any contravention of the law of God? This is precisely the fact respecting the precept to pay tribute. It is a special act enjoined

under a general law, and apparently thus particularized, because the paying of tribute is the duty to which, above all others, men, as subjects of civil government, are most averse. Being thus distinctly specified, every doubt is removed respecting its peremptory obligation.

Another proof that there is no exception regarding the duty of paying tribute, as long as the Government under which it is levied subsists, is seen in the fact, that the payment of tribute is placed in the Scriptures on the same footing with the payment of individual debts. Tribute is declared to be a debt owing to the existing Government, which we are commanded to discharge. If you plead, then, that you are not bound to pay a tax because the purpose for which it is to be employed is a sinful purpose, on the same principle you should refuse to discharge a private debt. If the rent of your house were made over by the proprietor for some improper object, such as the support of the idolatrous worship of the Church of Rome—a case which has actually occurred in this country not long ago—you must either refuse payment of the legally constituted and stipulated rent, or contract the guilt of sanctioning and supporting a system directly opposed to the Scriptures. And according to another of your false principles, namely, that the paying of a tax whose purpose is sinful is equally sinful as a sinful work performed with our own hands, your guilt would be as great, as if you were yourself to engage in the practice of idolatry.

Resistance to the payment of tribute might have appeared more justifiable in Judea than in any other country. That land belonged to God in a peculiar sense, and he gave it by a covenant of salt to the family of Abraham. He dispossessed the Canaanites, and bestowed it on his people, among whom he dwelt as their king. The Romans, in the course of their conquests, took possession of the land. They deprived the inhabitants of the privileges which they enjoyed, by the power of the sword maintained their usurped dominion, and made the Jews “servants to tribute.” If ever any thing like a plausible objection to the payment of tribute could be offered, it must have been in these circumstances. It might have been alleged, that, in complying with this exaction, the sovereignty of

God over his people would be compromised. The matter was referred to the Lord, not, indeed, in that instance, for the purpose of ascertaining what was duty, but to lay a snare for him, which it seemed impossible to avoid, whatever decision he should deliver. He not only answered the question, but did it in a way calculated to place the subject of paying tribute in the plainest and clearest light to his people in every situation. He desired those who inquired to bring to him a piece of the current coin, and asked whose image and superscription it bore. They replied, Cæsar's. Jesus said, "Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

Such is the ground on which the Lord has placed the payment of tribute, and not on the uses to which it is to be applied. This was a question with which he did not burden the consciences of his people. By having Cæsar's image on their current coin, the subjection of the Jews to Cæsar was manifest, and they were consequently bound to pay the tribute he demanded. This duty, then, being established by Jesus Christ, it is at their peril if any of his disciples refuse or evade it. This decision not only tends to the peace of civil society, but is a very merciful appointment for Christians,—it frees them from all responsibility in this matter, or danger of being misled by their consciences being weak or ill-informed, and from being deceived by designing men. When they pay a tax, they have nothing to do with the purpose to which it is devoted, any more than they have to do with the manner in which the person to whom they owe a debt applies the payment of it. The money they possess bears the image and superscription of the head of the Government under which God has placed them, and they are bound, by his authority, to pay the taxes imposed on them while it subsists. They pay them as a debt,—the price he has appointed for having their lives, and all they possess, secured by that Government.

Now, Sir, having stated the duty of paying tribute, as decided by the Lord and his apostles, I charge you, on account of your resistance to the Annuity Tax, with aggravated criminality, for which no extenuation can be pleaded, but culpable ignorance. You are guilty of rebellion against the law of God, and the law

of your country, in refusing to pay what you owe to the Government. You do not act, indeed, like the smuggler, who, in an underhand and covert manner, defrauds the revenue. Although you are solvent, you boldly tell your creditor, "I will not answer your demand. I cannot plead that I am unable to do so; but as I know that you intend to employ the money in a way which I consider to be wrong, I will not indeed withstand you by force, but I will withhold payment by a *passive resistance*." You may send me to prison, or wrest the money from me. If you do so, I will charge you with violence done to my person, and with the spoiling of my goods."

That it is our bounden duty to pay tribute to Government, I needed not, so far as concerns you, Sir, to have insisted so long, since this is fully admitted by yourself. "I consider," you say, "Christians are bound to pay, conscientiously and cheerfully, all taxes imposed for general purposes by the Government under which they live. If the Government misapply the revenue thus raised,—for that misapplication *they*, not their subjects, are responsible. . . . . Even where the imposts themselves are in their estimation unwise, exorbitant, or unjust, it is their duty to pay them. Every attempt to evade them is inconsistent with the law as well as the spirit of Christianity, and though, in our circumstances, we may, and ought, by constitutional means, seek the repeal of the objectionable statutes, yet, while they continue the law of the land, the law of Christ obliges us to obey them." Such is the doctrine you lay down,—we are bound to pay taxes,—if the Government misapply them, they, and not their subjects, are responsible,—even when they are unwise, exorbitant, or *unjust*, it is our duty to pay them. After all this it might be supposed that you, Sir, would be one of the last men to resist the payment of taxes.

One open door, however, you have reserved, by which you may make your escape,—"All taxes," you say, "imposed for general purposes." On this point you afterwards fully explain yourself. "It is only," you add, "in the case of a tax imposed specifically for a purpose which, in the conscientious conviction of the individual, is sinful, that I hold the doctrine that the general supreme law, 'We ought to obey God rather than

“man,”—which controls and regulates all our obligations to our fellow-men, comes in to limit the obligation of the particular law respecting tribute; and even then, I do not hold that a Christian man is warranted to employ force in resisting what he must consider as an unjust aggression on his property, but that he is bound to suffer every thing man can inflict rather than be the voluntary agent of any thing he believes God disapproves.” Here you declare what is the only limitation for which you plead in paying tribute, and also what you deem the proper mode of refusing to pay it, namely, in the way of “a passive resistance.” Your sophistry on these points I shall in my next letter expose; in the meantime, I briefly notice the other methods of defence to which you resort.

In refusing to pay the Annuity Tax, you have attempted to show that you are following the practice of the early Christians, respecting the paying of tribute devoted to the maintenance of the Pagan temples; in this you have signally failed. The complete proof which has been produced against you, you have not dared to face, while you have done your utmost to parry it with a degree of disingenuousness and hardihood that has seldom been surpassed. Your appeal to the conduct of the Covenanters has been equally unfortunate, as Mr Cunningham has shown; and he tells you, in his second letter, that you “dare not repeat your assertions” respecting them. The Covenanters were excellent men, of whom the world was not worthy; but even if you had succeeded in proving that they had deviated from their duty, it would have been no rule to us. I may, however, remind you, since you are eager to appeal to such authorities, that the sentiments and conduct of your predecessors on the subject of paying tribute were directly in opposition to yours. In proof of this, I refer you to the extract from their proceedings, dated 4th March 1752, published in *The Advertiser* of October 27. Although, however, your plea from the example of the early Christians and the Covenanters has been wrested from you, I can inform you, for your comfort, that your mode of reasoning, respecting the payment of tribute, is not altogether unprecedented. I shall furnish you with an instance of the advantage of which it will be impossible to deprive you. The



principle of allowing the tax-payer the benefit of every doubt that may arise in his mind as to the lawfulness of the tax, is thus promulgated in 1652, by the famous Jesuit, Anthony Escobar, in his rules of universal morality: "Subjects are excused or are not excused from paying tribute, in consequence of an opposite probable opinion. Certainly *they are excused*; for as the prince rightly levies tribute in the opinion that it is probably just, so also may the subject rightly refuse the tribute in the opinion that it is probably unjust."—I am, &c.

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## LETTER V.

### REMARKS ON DR BROWN'S DISCOURSES RESPECTING CIVIL OBEDIENCE.

February 23, 1838.

SIR,—Your formal announcement of a full and elaborate defence of your resistance to the *Annuity Tax*, induced me to pause in the exposure of the sophistry with which you had previously attempted to shield yourself from public censure. Considering the magnitude of the sin of which you are arraigned, and the palpable fallacies of which you have been already convicted; considering that your main argument had been actually annihilated, and your appeal to history turned to your own confusion; it seemed more equitable as well as more convenient, to wait till your case was fully closed, and you had exhausted every plea which your utmost ingenuity could invent, in vindication of your disobedience to the laws of your country. Your apology is now before the world, and I am compelled to say that it does little credit to your candour, and still less to your character, as an expositor of Scripture.

After all the labour you have employed in your endeavours to prove that your conduct in resisting the *Annuity Tax* is not inconsistent with the law of Christ, you are virtually compelled to abandon this attempt so far as concerns the thirteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. The language of the Apostle is

far too precise to permit of its being explained away, and in spite of your efforts to silence its warning voice, it resists the violence with which it is assailed, and continues in solemn accents to repeat the condemnation of the course you are pursuing. It is therefore no matter of surprise that you should labour to neutralise this passage of the Word of God. It has been the uniform practice of the abettors of heresy in every age, either to wrest the Scriptures from their plain and literal meaning, or to deny their applicability to any other period but that in which they were written. Unable to torture the doctrine of the inspired Apostle into any meaning favourable to your conduct, you have undertaken the daring task of proving that his precepts in regard to government, and the duty of civil obedience, were only intended to apply to the peculiar circumstances of the Roman Christians in the age and country in which they lived. This gross perversion of the Word of God is neither more nor less than the method by which Semler and the other German Neologians endeavour to set aside all those parts of revelation with which they are displeased. "I do the 'Rationalists,'" says Mr Rose, in the full account he has given of those infidels, "no injustice in saying that the general inclination and tendency of their opinions is this, that in the 'New Testament we shall find only the *opinions* of Christ and the Apostles *adapted to the age in which they lived*, and not 'eternal truths.'" In a note he subjoins, "This is the very 'sum and substance of all the statements of the Rationalists.'" From this it appears that you, Sir, have arrived at the *sum and substance* of German Neology. In attempting to limit the exhortation of the Apostle to the peculiar circumstances of the Roman Government, you are treading in the steps of those wicked men, and doing what you can to fortify their impious system. On the same grounds on which you thrust aside an important portion of the Word of God, as local and temporary in its application, you will find no difficulty in disposing of any other precept of Scripture which offends your prejudices.

But, Sir, did you never consider the consequences of such a reckless mode of interpretation as that which you have adopted. You choose to limit your hypothesis to the doctrine of civil obe-

dience, but it cannot stop there. You may have imbibed the spirit of political agitation, and may be eager to remove every barrier to the progress of that passive resistance, (of which you shall hear more by and by,) by means of which you are conspiring the subversion of the Established Church. But others will not be so restricted. You choose to select one passage of Scripture, and one precept out of the rest with which it is connected. It is indeed the one which is most elaborately expressed, and most carefully guarded. But why may not the duellist take hold of the precept which immediately precedes that which you labour to set aside, and argue, upon your principles, that he is not prohibited from avenging the wrong which has been done to him. "Dearly beloved," says the Apostle, "avenge not yourselves." This and what follows condemns the duellist; but he says, No, you are utterly mistaken; Dr Brown has taught us a more excellent way of interpreting this passage, and this I shall prove to your satisfaction, if you will listen to the arguments I have borrowed from his discourse on civil obedience. First, then, the duellist will gravely enunciate in your words, that to understand thoroughly any book, not of a strictly scientific kind, it is necessary to be intimately acquainted with the events of the age and country in which it was written, and with the customs and habits of thought of the people to whom it was originally addressed. And, next, he will tell us that the precept against avenging ourselves "originated in a state of things totally different" from that of the present age. He will farther tell us that it was good policy in the Apostle Paul to enjoin a meek and quiet disposition as a duty, because "the Christians in Rome were a small body—chiefly of the lower orders," who could not be expected to have the high and chivalrous feelings of a modern gentleman. In short, there is not an argument you have used, for the purpose of setting aside the precept to obey the powers that be, which might not with equal ease be employed by the duellist to justify a crime which some casuists have vindicated on the footing of defensive war. But this is not a place for noticing all the false principles and false reasonings which occur in almost every page of your discourses. This requires a separate publication. Here I must confine myself to a very few remarks.

Your exposition of the first part of the thirteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, ought rather to be called an artful evasion of the Apostle's meaning, by sophistical criticism. You indignantly repudiate the absurd and palpably forced explanations of some who have substantially laboured on the same side with yourself, and sneer at the silliness of their reasoning. But your own view of the subject is as opposite to the doctrine of the Apostle, as that of the most extravagant of your coadjutors. There is no portion of the Word of God in which the reasoning is more palpably obvious. The simplest Christian needs no exposition of it but what he can make for himself; and after all the efforts of subtlety that strive to retain a favourite opinion, and at the same time to ward off the condemnation of Scripture, still the bare reading of the passage is sufficient, with every unprejudiced Christian, to dispel all the mist that a perverted ingenuity can cast upon the subject. If all the arts of human sophistry were employed to turn away the testimony of this portion of Scripture, I would not fear to leave the refutation of the whole to the judgment of the most unlettered Christian fully under the conviction and impression that it is God who speaks.

Of all the evasive resources of subtlety employed by the Socinians, there is not one more arbitrary than some of those resorted to by you, to establish a doctrine inconsistent with the testimony of that part of the Word of God which you labour to harmonise with your political views. Let the same canons of interpretation, and the same modes of evasion, be granted on any subject, and there is not a truth or duty in the Bible that might not be obscured, perverted, or extinguished. If you do not in all respects proceed with them to the same pitch of extravagance, you labour, by false colouring, to pervert the Apostle's doctrine, while you exclude, by unjustifiable limitation, what is directly taught.

In your very commencement, while you are pointing out what you esteem the proper boundaries of the interference of Christians and Christian ministers in politics, you artfully and unjustly represent this very passage as an example of interference in the matter. It is no such thing in any light in which it can be viewed. Is the Apostle addressing rules in vindica-

tion of the rights of subjects? Far from it. He is solely enjoining on Christians their duties to Government, and is not giving an example, in the slightest degree, of interference with politics, whether the thing in itself be right or wrong. He is not teaching them their civil privileges, but enjoining their religious duties.

You lay down a principle of interpretation, applying it to Scripture, which, in its consequences, would make the Bible a sealed book to the generality of Christians, and but partially intelligible to the most learned among them. “To understand ‘thoroughly any book,’” you say, “not of a strictly scientific ‘kind, it is necessary to be intimately acquainted with the events ‘of the age’ and country in which it was written, and with the ‘customs and habits of thought of the people to whom it was ‘addressed.’” So far from acceding to this canon, and considering it self-evident, I assert, on the contrary, that any composition that is not intelligible from its own phraseology, is deficient in accuracy, and that if the Bible is not intelligible from its own language, it is not a revelation. If the language of Scripture needs the knowledge of the times in which it was written, in order to be understood, farther than that knowledge is contained in itself, it is a deficient guide. Besides, with respect to many things, where is a full knowledge of the times that can be depended on but what is contained in the Bible itself? You here adopt a principle which has been extensively employed to pervert the clearest and most important doctrines of the Word of God. In the present case, however, I have no need to dispute it. I resist it as unsound and mischievous, not as being in any way against my views of the passage before us. This principle, connected with what is said in your sixth note respecting the Bible not being the ultimate standard to be appealed to, without all the notes and comments that have been written—which is the very essence of Popery—takes the Bible out of the hands of the great body of the people, and is an impeachment on the perfection of that holy book. The *ultimate standard* of religious truth is the Bible itself, and, by it alone, every note and comment from every quarter, must be justified or condemned.

As a modification of the doctrine of the Apostles in reply to the doctrine of Hobbes, Barclay, Filmer, and Parker, you give us the following passage:—"In the agitation of passion utterly forgetting, or warped by interest, studiously keeping out of view, that the circumstances of the Christians in Rome,—a small body,—chiefly of the lower orders,—many of them foreigners,—under a Heathen Government essentially absolute, over which they had and could have no control, and the circumstances of the British nation—with few exceptions making a profession of Christianity,—under a government administered by men professing Christianity,—essentially free, —on whose management the Constitution gives their subjects the means of making an impression by petition or representation, and whose very existence depended on their will, were by no means parallel—from the passage before us they attempted to prove that the existing Government was the ordinance of God, its administrators his appointed ministers, and that whosoever resisted them, violated the law of Christ, and drew down on himself the righteous vengeance of Heaven." This passage embodies a host of errors. A duty that is universally applicable to Christians in every age and country, is here represented as having its origin in the circumstances of the Christians at Rome. Does the Apostle urge their duty from circumstances of the time or place? Submission is here grounded by you on the consideration of the Christians at Rome being a small body. Does the Apostle say, submit to the Roman Government because you are but a small body and unable to resist successfully? Can any thing be more contrary to the text than such a commentary? Can any evasion of the Apostle's injunction be more unauthorised? Instead of grounding obedience on the smallness of their number, does he not urge it on the fact that Government is the ordinance of God? The Christians, you say, were chiefly of the lower orders, and this is represented as one of the circumstances that call for submission. Of course, when they should enlist the great and the powerful in their favour, and had the prospect of success, they might resist. Can any thing be more opposed to the whole passage than such a modification? It would be much better

directly to contradict the Apostle, and say with the Quakers,—Paul enjoins that women should not teach in the Church, but I beg leave to differ from Paul. Such a mode of opposing Scripture is honest. But to oppose it by perversions so flagrant, is not only irreverent towards God, but is an insult to the understanding of every reader.

Another circumstance on which obedience is here supposed to be grounded is, that many of the Christians at Rome were “foreigners.” Where do we learn that this should modify the Apostle’s doctrine? Another reason which, it seems, affects and limits the duty inculcated in the passage is, that the Christians at Rome were “under a Heathen Government essentially ‘absolute, over which they had and could have no control,” and you might have added, a Government practically tyrannical in the highest degree. But such circumstances surely are not calculated to limit the meaning of the passage. If Christians were bound to obey a Government despotic in principle and tyrannical in practice, are they not bound to obey Governments that may in every point of view be the reverse.

You also intimate, that in order that the duty inculcated in this passage should be incumbent on Christians in the present time, all the circumstances in each must be “parallel.” A more false principle of interpretation was never devised. What is it that demands such a parallelism? You might as justly bring such a diversity of circumstances to evade the paying of a debt. Of other precepts it might be said, Christians were then but few in number, and very poor, and lived among heathens who hated them. Now, things are very different. There is, therefore, no reason to apply such precepts without modification to modern times and customs. There is no precept in Scripture which this principle would subvert. The cases here are not only parallel, but identical, in the only point of view in which the question at issue is concerned. The Christians at that time, under a tyrannical Government, were commanded to obey their rulers as *an ordinance of God*. The precept then is perfectly the same to us. The apostolic injunction is not grounded on the circumstances alleged by you, but on the fact, that all the rulers of this world are appointed by God. No

circumstances are to be taken into the account in applying the duty to times and places. If such modifications are lawful on one subject, they are equally so on every subject; and every doctrine and duty of Scripture may, in this way, be evaded and set aside. Were ever reasons for a duty in the commentary more opposite to those of the text? The Apostle gives the Christians, whom he addresses, a number of reasons why God enjoins obedience to civil rulers. You, Sir, also gave a number. But in the whole there is not one reason common to the commentator and the author.

Instead of viewing the doctrine inculcated in the text which you have chosen, as containing a truth that is universal, and precepts that are always binding, you employ every art to explain away the one, and to restrict the other. And all that we have left in order to bring any part of this portion of the Word of God home to ourselves, is the drawing a precarious inference, which may suit in certain circumstances, but not in others. Accordingly, this passage may be applicable to us under the Government of Britain, and even then in a very limited degree, but by no means so were we living in Turkey. Is this the way in which a theological professor of the Secession handles the Word of God?

Here, Sir, is the mischief of your views; they not only tend to the disorder of civil society, but lay a deep foundation for perverting the Scriptures in every point in which evasion has need of assistance. They provide one of the chief refuges to which merely nominal Christians uniformly betake themselves, pleading the difference of their circumstances from those of the first Christians. I have heard this impious evasion of the authority of the Word of God urged an hundred times. This principle is now adopted by great multitudes in America, who, by means of it, set aside, among other things, the doctrine of regeneration taught in the third chapter of John's Gospel, as belonging to Jewish customs and notions, but not at all applicable to present times, and to men "professing Christianity." I distinctly and strongly charge you with making void the Word of God as grossly as was done by the Pharisees through their traditions.



It is now easy to understand the grounds on which you accused me of begging the question at issue betwixt us, when in condemnation of your conduct I referred to the thirteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, I was well aware at the time that it was out of your power to exculpate yourself without perverting that portion of divine truth. I was not, however, prepared to anticipate, that in doing so, you would boldly resort to Neological principles, and have recourse to “the sum and ‘substance’” of the errors of German Rationalists. In your refusal to pay the Annuity Tax, you proved yourself a “dangerous ‘citizen,’” and now you have proved that you are a most unsound expositor of the Word of God.

Your discourses respecting Civil Obedience, will bring a matter of great importance to the test. They will prove whether or not your manner of interpreting the Word of God is general among the Secession Churches of your denomination, or if they will bear it. It will be seen whether they will continue to intrust with the education of their future guides, one who stumbles at the very threshold in expounding the Scriptures, who has adopted principles that at once make them void, and wrest them out of the hands of the people—of one who, under the influence of Neological principles, does the utmost violence to the plainest passages of those sacred oracles, wresting them from their true and obvious meaning, thus darkening his own mind and misleading others, in regard to their duty both to God and man. You may talk of Voluntaryism as you please, but if these discourses of yours, which are said to be admired by your people, and pronounced unanswerable, present a fair specimen of the doctrine taught among you, it is full time that others should exert themselves to extend the preaching of the pure Gospel throughout the land. It is time for them to promulgate to the people the unadulterated truths of God, such as those holy men at the commencement of the Secession proclaimed with so much clearness and effect. I trust that it shall not be left to me alone, to raise the warning voice against this method of treating the Scriptures which you are introducing. I trust that others, without delay, not only of other denominations, but of your own, will lift up their voice like a trumpet,

and warn their fellow-Christians against that inundation of heresy and Neology pouring into this country from Germany and America, and those errors which are embodied in your discourses. I have no doubt, that many who are associated with you, will be shocked at your principles when their attention is called to them. Never did Neologian make more havoc of the Word of God, on the points on which you expatiate in your discourses, than you, Sir, a theological professor of a denomination long distinguished for orthodoxy. In my next letter, I shall resume the consideration of your discourses, especially as they relate to civil obedience. I am, &c.

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## LETTER VI.

ON DR BROWN'S DISCOURSES RESPECTING CIVIL OBEDIENCE—  
*continued.*

February 27, 1838.

SIR,—Having done your utmost to depreciate the force and destroy the universality of the apostolic exhortation to civil obedience; having endeavoured to show that it was limited to the small and unimportant body of Roman Christians, and that it was only to them that the existing Government was a divine appointment, you proceed to inquire, “What are these things ‘to us, and to Christians generally, in every country and in ‘every age?’” In answering this inquiry, you enter upon questions which ought never to be discussed; upon questions which are calculated to make rebellion and revolution familiar to all who come within the sphere of your influence; questions which are never touched upon in Scripture, and which, while they never can do good, are sure to produce much mischief. It is easy to imagine extreme cases, and to speak of the right as well as the power of the people to put down an intolerable tyranny by force. But the only result of such language, is to lower the standard of civil obedience, to inflate the ignorant and conceited with lofty ideas of a power which they do not possess, and to

inculcate a spirit of insubordination, which may very easily issue in the carnage of domestic war and the miseries of civil commotion. Even if your theory were sound—if there be cases in which resistance to Government might become a duty—no wise man would willingly descant upon the subject, or gloat on it as you do with an exultation that augurs very ill for your cheerful submission to the authority of God's appointment. What would you say of the man who delighted to discuss the question, whether there were not some cases when filial obedience becomes sinful, and others, where a parent might put to death his child, or a child stand in arms against his father? What would be said of the soldier who entertained his comrades with speculating on the possibility of mutiny becoming, under certain circumstances, a *duty*? Does not every right feeling revolt at such a supposition, and yet it might not be difficult, upon your principles, to make out a plausible case, to prove any of these conclusions to be, under certain imaginable circumstances, defensible.

But the Bible shuts the door against all these sinful speculations. It broadly announces to us our duty to God and our duty to man. Our obedience to God is paramount to every other consideration, but we are also told, that Government is an ordinance of the Almighty, appointed for the well-being of man, and that "whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." You dare not boldly gainsay this statement, and treat it with the scorn an Infidel seldom fails to pour on it,—but, by your perversions, you neutralise and set it aside.

When you ask the question, if a Christian is ever authorised to resist Government, how do you answer it? Is it by appealing to Scripture? Is it by quoting precept, or example, from the Word of God? No such thing. You give us your own decided authority. What better can we have? "I have no hesitation," you say, "in replying in the affirmative." And the authority of Paley may also be pleaded for the same answer.—"The truth," you observe, "is very clearly stated, and the grounds of it unfolded by Paley." "So long," he says, "as the interest of the whole society requires it; that is, so long as the established Government cannot be resisted or changed

‘ without inconveniency, it is the will of God (which *will* uni-  
 ‘ versally determines our duty) that the established Government  
 ‘ be obeyed, *and no longer*. This principle being admitted, the  
 ‘ justice of every particular case of resistance is reduced to a  
 ‘ computation of the quantity of the danger and grievance on  
 ‘ the one side, and of the probability and expense of redress on  
 ‘ the other.” Was ever an answer to a question more contrary  
 to another than this is to that of the Apostle? The Apostle  
 enjoins submission on Christians to the existing Government.  
 Paley frees from submission the moment that rebellion can be  
 resorted to without public inconveniency. Is this interpretation  
 of Scripture which you, Sir, profess your discourses to be? It  
 is the most barefaced contradiction of God’s holy Word.  
 Where did Paley learn that Christians might rebel in such  
 circumstances as he supposes? The Scriptures do not give  
 this limitation, and nothing but Scripture can limit an assertion  
 of Scripture. Paley tells us, that the will of God universally  
 determines our duty. Where does he learn the will of God on  
 this subject? Where can it be learned but in the Scriptures,  
 and there he has not pretended to find it. “The principle,”  
 he says, “being admitted;” but the principle is not admitted.  
 How is it possible, that when Paul urges submission to the most  
 tyrannical Government that ever existed, on the ground of its  
 being an ordinance of God, it can, at the same time, be his  
 doctrine, that resistance is lawful when it can be made without  
 public inconveniency? You next appeal to the authority of the  
 Associate Presbytery. Do you think that this is a legitimate  
 ground of reasoning? “The present Government of this coun-  
 ‘ try,” you say, “have no right to their places, if these princi-  
 ‘ ples (laid down by the Associate Presbytery) are not true.” Is  
 this sound reasoning? What right then had Cæsar to his place?  
 Christians have nothing to do with the means by which their  
 rulers have come to their power. It is enough for them to  
 know, that by whatever means they have obtained it, they are  
 now, by being in possession, the ordinance of God. “There  
 ‘ is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained  
 ‘ of God.”

I believe it would surpass the power of the most accomplished

Jesuit to preach sedition under a more specious garb than is here employed. Let us only suppose that you had been one of the Council of Papineau, or Mackenzie in Canada, and your opinion had been asked as to the lawfulness of revolt; suppose that they had been solemnly warned of the danger of violating the ordinance of God, and plunging their country in the horrors of rebellion; suppose that, under such circumstances, you are appealed to as an experienced casuist. You eagerly accept the reference; you take for your text the thirteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and you begin by announcing to your auditors that they must clear their heads of the folly of supposing that any thing contained in that chapter is directly obligatory upon them, so as to render rebellion criminal in the sight of God. You farther tell them, that although "Civil Government, *in general*, is of divine appointment," yet it is by no means to be supposed that the English Government is God's ordinance to the Canadians. On the contrary, you declare, that so long as the established Government cannot be resisted or changed without public inconveniency, it is the will of God that it should be obeyed, "*but no longer.*" This you might announce to your audience to be the final settlement of the matter; and it would be therefore for them to weigh well the amount of evils of which they complained, and the probable *conveniences* or *inconveniences* of a general insurrection. You might then declaim against those who, under "pretensions to superior sanctity, keep ever in the back ground," and thus excuse their want of enlightened patriotism and philanthropy, or of hatred of "tyranny and wrong." This, Sir, is no caricature; it is a plain practical statement of your abominable doctrine, and of your shameful perversion of the Word of God. And what might we suppose to be the result of such a discourse on the duty of civil obedience? We may suppose M. Papineau, and his other colleagues in treason, arguing thus: Certainly this is most encouraging doctrine, and such as ought to remove the scruples of all timid and weak consciences. We are all agreed as to our grievances, and as to "the intolerable tyranny of 'the mother country,'" and as for the "conveniences" of a revolt, we could scarcely select a better opportunity,—the Go-

vernment is unprepared, the troops have not been reinforced, the winter is setting in, the frozen St. Lawrence will defend us from all attacks from without; and, to crown the whole, we shall receive succours from our patriotic brethren of the United States. The problem is solved, henceforward, persons "pretending to superior sanctity," may prate of Government being the ordinance of God, but thanks to Dr Brown, as he has shown that we are at perfect liberty to revolt if we can do it "without public inconveniency;" so we see clearly, that it is "no longer" the will of God that the "Government be obeyed," and we therefore resolve "to throw off the baneful dominion of the mother country."

It is true that, in reference to the Government at home, you conclude, after duly considering its principles, its administration, and its capacity of improvement, that on the whole it may, on these doubtful grounds, be considered as the ordinance of God; but as you draw this conclusion not from the authority of Scripture, but by a process of mental reasoning, others may take a different view of the subject, and arrive at a result totally the reverse. Of this you seem yourself perfectly aware, for you thus conclude this part of your subject: "The hazards connected with resistance, while a Government is in any measure what it should be, are, and ought to be so great that no man is likely to make the attempt; and when there is a general disposition to resistance, the crisis is come,—it is time that that Government should govern no more."

Thus you sum up the matter, that the fear of the halter, and not the fear of God, is the best safeguard against rebellion, but that should the spirit of revolt become general, and if personal hazard is consequently diminished or annihilated, *the crisis is come,—it is time that the Government should govern no more.* Did any minister of the Gospel ever promulgate sentiments concerning Civil Government more atrocious than these? According to you, Sir, if the spirit of revolt is only general, no matter what may be the cause, "the crisis is come,—it is time that the Government should govern no more." According to you, when Absalom stirred up a general spirit of revolt against King David, when the monarch fled from his capital with a

small band of faithful followers, and almost all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, were carried away with the delusion, and favoured the conspiracy, *the crisis was come;—it was time that David should reign no longer.* Such sentiments might suit very well with the infidel supporters of the present ungodly school of political philosophers,—to whom Paley, that demi-Socinian utilitarian moralist, belonged,—with whom you are too closely allied. But it is lamentable to think that such false, heretical, pernicious, and abominable doctrines should be proclaimed by one professing to be a minister of the Gospel of Christ.

In the above declaration you bring the will of man into direct collision with the will of God, and the latter you make to give place to the former. God commands obedience to the powers that be, and declares that whosoever resisteth them resists his ordinance. You say, “when there is a general disposition to ‘resistance, the crisis is come; it is time that the Government ‘should govern no longer.” You here teach direct rebellion against the authority of God, and place the will of man above the will of God.

The commandment to Christians to obey the Government under which they live, which is promulgated in the text you have chosen, is as authoritative, as universal, as peremptory, and equally of perpetual obligation with the ten commandments uttered by the voice of God from Mount Sinai; yet you set it aside whenever the general will of the people requires this, and in the same way you may set aside all these commandments. One of them enjoins the duty of keeping holy the Sabbath day. But let there be a general disposition to resist it, and it ought no longer to be obeyed! During the French Revolution this general disposition manifested itself, the crisis was accordingly come; it was time that the Sabbath day should be observed no longer. It was therefore superseded to give way to the decades. According to your principle this was just as it ought to be. If, however, a difference between the duties of the observance of the Sabbath, and obedience to Government, be pleaded, it may be easily obviated. “The magistracy of the ‘Jews,” you tell us, “was the result of direct divine appointment, but not the magistracy of any other people;” and you

inform us as to what is said in Romans thirteenth respecting obedience to Government, first, that the command is addressed to a small body, chiefly of the lower orders, many of them foreigners, under a Heathen Government ; and next, you observe, that “ the whole passage is an answer to the question, are Christians subject to the authority of a Government administered by heathens.” Now, in the same way you may tell us, that the law as to the Sabbath day was of direct appointment to Israel, but not to any other people, and that all that is said of it in the New Testament relates to a few poor people, scattered about in different countries, under a Heathen Government. From all this it follows, that the French nation, when they proclaimed the decades instead of the Sabbath, did nothing wrong !

But, Sir, not content with sowing the seeds of rebellion and disaffection, under the sanction of your character as an expositor of the Word of God, you proceed farther to criminate your brethren who will not unite with you in resisting taxes and countenancing political agitation. The following is the language you adopt :—“ It is the duty of every Christian, in every relation, ‘ to do good to all as he has opportunity ;’ and he who, ‘ in any age calling for vigorous exertion to secure and extend ‘ civil and religious liberty, keeps ever in the back ground, and ‘ excuses his want of enlightened patriotism and philanthropy— ‘ or of hatred of tyranny and wrong—or of mental fortitude to ‘ avow these sentiments, and follow them out to their fair practical consequences, under pretensions to superior sanctity, which ‘ cast reflection on the conduct of his more consistent brethren, ‘ may likely find, at the close of the day, that ‘ He who set his “ own face as a flint’ in the cause of God’s glory and man’s ‘ salvation, and ‘ hid it not from shame and spitting,’ the ‘ Captain of the Lord’s host,’ in apportioning the rewards of his ‘ chosen tribes, will show that he regards with more complacency Zebulun and Naphtali, who ‘ jeoparded their lives in “ the high places of the fields,’ than Reuben, who ‘ abode “ among the sheep to hear the bleating of ‘ the flocks,’ or Dan, “ who remained in ships,’ or Asher, ‘ who continued on the sea- “ shore and abode in his breaches.’ ”

Now, Sir, let me seriously and solemnly ask you, is this the



language of a Minister of the Gospel of Peace? Are these the words of one who has himself "tasted the good word of ' God, and the powers of the world to come ;" of one who has learned something of the vanity of earthly ambition, and the importance of heavenly things? Is this the outpouring of the heart of a faithful pastor, zealous for the spiritual welfare of his flock, eager to win souls to Christ, and save the sinner from the too powerful seductions of the world? Or say, rather, do we not hear some inflamed demagogue, some hot-headed agitator, whose ardour after change and innovation, indicate a mind ill at ease with itself, but resembling the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast forth mire and dirt?

You tell us in this passage that we live "in an age calling ' for vigorous exertion to secure and extend civil and religious ' liberty." One might suppose from the tone you adopt, that we were living in the age of Charles the Second, rather than at the time when civil and religious freedom are in this country enjoyed to an extent almost unparalleled in the history of the world. If your statements be correct, we have still to contend with "tyranny and wrong," and there is a battle to be fought, in which we are to "set our faces like a flint," and, like Zebulun and Naphtali, to *jeopardy our lives in the high places of the field*. Are you in earnest when you thus write—are you indeed sounding the tocsin of rebellion, or are you only pouring forth some schoolboy declamation, and exhibiting all the mock grandeur of a storm in a mill pond? Whatever be your intentions, Sir, and whether you are in jest or earnest, your sentiments are most unbecoming a Christian. Above all, when in speaking of the battle to be fought, you dare to draw an impious analogy between the political struggles of agitating demagogues, and the combat of the Son of God with the powers of hell and darkness; when you venture to speak of the potsherds of the earth, and their striving with the potsherds of the earth, as receiving the approbation of the great "Captain ' of the Lord's host," and meriting rewards at his hands,—we have, in your case, a melancholy instance of the deadening and darkening influence of error and worldly-mindedness upon your spiritual perceptions of truth and soberness.

We can account for and pardon the irritation with which you contemplate the conduct of your brethren who stand aloof from any association with theological agitators, intoxicated with idle dreams of battles to be fought for the defence of civil and religious liberty, of "high places" to be contested, of lives to be jeopardied, and of "tyranny and wrong" to be redressed. If those whom you denounce be ministers of the Secession Church, they may each reply to your censures in the language and spirit of Leighton, when challenged for not preaching to the times, "If so many are preaching to the *times*, why may not one poor brother preach for eternity." The political changes to which you refer in your lecture may be in your eyes of vast importance, but is it fitting that those who scruple not to agitate in such questions should be spoken of as treading in the steps of Him who, "in the cause of God's glory and man's salvation, hid not his face from shame and spitting." Sir, the passage which I have quoted from your discourse, when viewed in its connexion, is not only absurd—it is blasphemous.

But, after all, is it indeed the case that you and other resisters of taxes are the men who are *jeoparding their lives in the high places of the fields*, while those who stand aloof from you resemble Reuben, who abode among the sheep to hear the bleating of the flocks, or Dan, who remained in ships, or Asher, who continued on the sea-shore and abode in his breaches. It is almost as cruel to rob you of your ideal consequence as to rob Don Quixote of his imaginary glory in overthrowing his enemies. But if truth, Sir, must be told, we cannot forget that when the times were less favourable to agitation than they now are, and when sedition or resistance to taxes was repressed with a firmer hand, Mr John Brown abode as quietly "among the sheep, to hear the bleating of the flocks" at Biggar, as ever Reuben did in the land of Gilead, or Dan and Asher by the shores of the great sea. It was not till the times had become more revolutionary—when agitation stalked throughout the country, and resistance to taxation became a passport to celebrity, that Dr John Brown stood forth as a voluntary martyr in a cause which he had so tardily, and under such inglorious circumstances, so publicly espoused. It might be from a want of

“mental fortitude” to avow his sentiments, or it might possibly be from a want of perspicacity to discern that “tyranny and ‘wrong,’” of which he now expresses his hatred. But, assuredly, he is the very last person who ought to reproach his neighbours for “keeping in the back ground,” especially now, when all the merit of self-devotion is lost in the vulgar applause which every mob-orator, and every self-seeking agitator bestows on the minister who teaches, on “Christian principle,” the lawfulness of rebellion, and the duty of “following out principles to their ‘fair and practical consequences.”

Without entering farther at present into the consideration of your revolutionary and Neological discourses, I shall proceed in my next to fulfil the promise I made in my fourth letter, to expose the hollowness and absurdity of the distinction you make between paying taxes for general and for specific purposes.—I am, &c.

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## LETTER VII.

### TAXES FOR GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTS.

March 2, 1838.

SIR,—The artifice practised in your “documents” first published respecting your refusal to pay the Annuity Tax, has been noticed both in the *Scottish Guardian* and *Presbyterian Review*. “Mr Haldane’s *first* letter,” it is said in that Review, “is given, and Dr Brown’s long reply to it. The second letter is withheld, though the remarks which it called forth are published. It might be a mere cowardly feeling which prompted the withdrawment of documents so hard to grapple with; but what will our readers think of the *ingenuousness* of withholding them in a work which professed ‘to lay *the whole* ‘documents before the public.’” In those documents which you have appended to the second part of your lectures respecting civil obedience, although my fourth letter does not appear among them, you refer to it as follows: “Since writing the ‘above I have seen Mr Haldane’s letter of yesterday. Into

‘ the general argument with respect to the limitations of civil  
 ‘ obedience, and of their legitimate application to the payment  
 ‘ of tribute as a particular species of obedience, I intend to go  
 ‘ fully in the lectures which I have announced. Nothing stated  
 ‘ by my opponents seems to me in the slightest degree to shake  
 ‘ the doctrine contained in my first letter.” In my fourth letter, the insertion of which, in these documents, although you thus refer to it, you have prudently omitted, I distinctly stated the grounds of the duty of paying tribute ; but notwithstanding what you have said in your lectures, these grounds still remain unanswered. It was very convenient then, no doubt, simply to assure your readers that nothing therein stated *seemed to you in the slightest degree* to shake the doctrine you supported. To that letter I now refer, if not for your sake, at least to induce the perusal of it by those who feel themselves interested in this discussion. It will there be seen that your doctrine is not merely shaken, but completely overthrown. In the close of it I adverted to the only limitation you contend for in paying tribute, which you find in the distinction between general and specific taxes, and to what you deem to be the proper mode of refusing to pay it, namely in the way of “ a passive resistance.” Your sophistry on these points I promised to expose. To do so I shall now proceed in my present and subsequent letters.

It is obvious that you feel the pressure of the difficulties of your situation. In attempting to palliate your resistance to the Annuity Tax, you are constrained to advocate principles which not only oppose the doctrine of Scripture, but are subversive of Civil Government and social order—principles which, if carried out to their legitimate results, would absolve the subject from the obligation of submitting to every public impost, and place the magistrate at the mercy of every turbulent demagogue, and every capricious or ill-regulated conscience. It therefore argues some skill in polemical strategy, that you have so far extended the line of your defence, which may have the effect of distracting the attention of your opponents, and covering your retreat in a cloud of dust.

I have already exposed some of the erroneous principles, which in both of your discourses you avow in regard to civil

obedience, and the subtle casuistry with which they are inculcated, and also your attempt to limit the apostolic injunctions to the local and peculiar circumstances of the Roman Christians. I have likewise noticed your denunciations against your brethren who shrink from the din of political strife, and are too deeply occupied with the concerns of eternity, and the duties of their spiritual office, to mingle in the ranks of political agitation. My present object is to show the fallacy of your distinction between *general* and *specific* taxes, which is the *only* ground on which the defence of your conduct in not paying the Annuity Tax now rests.

You admit that all general taxes, legally imposed, ought to be paid without hesitation. But you strenuously contend that specific taxes must be paid, or not, only after a due consideration of the merit or demerit of the purposes for which they are designed. When you resorted to this distinction, it is plain that you must have been reduced to great extremity. Common sense and common honesty alike revolt against it, and the feeling of mankind will tell you that it can only be of service in the schools of sophists. Indirect taxes are indeed generally less unpopular than direct property or capitation taxes. But few thinking men have ever ventured to assert, that, in a moral point of view, this could make any difference when considered in reference to the objects for which they were collected. It is important, however, to expose the sophistry which lurks in your distinction, and to demonstrate the extent of your error in asserting that *to submit to a specific impost, whose destination we conscientiously disapprove, is as sinful as to employ our hands in the commission of actual sin.* Than such a proposition none can be more unfounded. The difference between paying such a tax and sinning with our hands is as clear as noon-day.

The destination of a tax may be sinful while its payment is lawful. The guilt of a sinful destination rests upon those by whom it has been determined; but the tax-payer has no concern with its appropriation, and is absolved by the law of God from any farther inquiry than that which concerns the lawfulness of the authority by which it is levied. The Government

demands payment of the tax, but requires from its subjects no sanction of the purposes to which it is applied. These are to be determined by a higher jurisdiction than that of the individual tax-payer, and whether we live under the despotism of an oriental Sultan, or under the benignant sway of a limited monarchy, or under the more lawless rule of a wild democracy, still, in each of these cases, the amount, the nature, as well as the ultimate destination of the public imposts, are all fixed by a superior power, that leaves the most scrupulously conscientious subject no such apology as that which you plead for, in refusing to render "tribute to whom tribute is due." "It is monstrous," you say, "to suppose that, by any mere human arrangement, 'not only may what was not duty become duty, and what was 'not sin become sin; but what was sin become duty, and what 'was duty become sin.'" In this statement is not the spirit of the sophist again discerned amidst the cloud in which he seeks to confound things that differ? If taxes be employed by Government for purposes immoral or impious, the payment by the subject neither sanctions the immorality nor impiety. It was never duty to commit impiety, and no "human arrangement" can justify its guilt. But it is no "*human arrangement*" which has ordained the payment of tribute, and therefore it must ever be criminal to resist this ordinance of God. Extreme supposititious cases may indeed be conjured up to distress the feelings, or perplex the judgment of those who desire to obey the Divine precept in its plain interpretation. But surely it is no symptom of a good cause, when you are reduced to search for arguments drawn even from subjects too sacred and too solemn to be irreverently bandied about as weapons of controversy. To suppose, as you do, a specific tax levied to defray the expenses of the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ, may appear in your own estimation a very clever and ingenious supposition, and one likely to place your opponents on the horns of a dilemma. But so far from producing any such effect, most men will turn from it with feelings of mingled indignation and disgust. The same appeal would equally apply to the payment of *general* taxes, in whose appropriation were included those spectacles at which Christian martyrs were thrown to the

lions. But in regard to all taxes, it is plain, in spite of your sophistry, that there are always two parties who have each separate and distinct duties to discharge. To the subject belongs the duty of paying what the ordinance of God has taken from him and given to his rulers ; to the rulers, on the other hand, belongs the high and solemn responsibility of rightly appropriating their revenue. If, therefore, sin be committed in its application ; if it be made to subserve purposes of immorality, impiety, or irreligion, still these purposes are no more recognised by the tax-payer, who only discharges the debt due to his Government, than the criminal and ungodly purposes to which a landlord or a creditor may apply his rent or debt, are recognised by you when you have paid his lawful demand. It is unnecessary to insist that employing the hands in the commission of sin must, in all cases, and in every circumstance, be sinful.

Your whole argument is based on the utterly fallacious and absurd idea that the payment of a tax is a *voluntary act*. You employ the terms "voluntary" and "giving" in reference to taxes, in almost every page of your discourse. By the use of such terms you may beguile the simple, but you have never ventured fairly to grapple with my argument on the subject, or attempted to overthrow the principle that the payment of taxes is not to be regarded as a voluntary act, but is placed in Scripture on the footing of a *debt*. All your arguments, all your suppositions, even the most revolting of them, are dissipated in a moment when tried by this test. The fact that you have not even dared to confront me on this ground, is the strongest acknowledgment you could make of your inability to refute this principle which I advanced on the authority of God's holy Word. But while you have neither ventured manfully to meet my argument, nor candidly to acknowledge its force, you have not scrupled to cite a passage from "The Philosopher of Malmesbury," in such a connexion as to intimate that, in my opinion, as well as in his, there are cases in which it is not sin to employ the hands in committing sin. Is it truth, Sir, that requires so dishonest a defence ?

In order that what follows may be fully understood, permit me to repeat what you have said in your first letter regarding

general taxes. "I consider Christians," you observe, "as bound to pay conscientiously and cheerfully all taxes imposed for general purposes by the Government under which they live. If the Government misapply the revenue thus raised, for that misapplication *they*, not their subjects, are responsible. Even where the imposts themselves are, in their estimation, exorbitant or unjust, it is their duty to pay them." You here admit that the application of general taxes must be made on the exclusive *responsibility* of Government. If this were not the fact, what a source of perplexity would be opened to every conscientious individual! But if this be the case in regard to general taxes, on what pretence can it be alleged, that in the case of specific taxes the responsibility is transferred to the subject? You confound things that differ when you affirm that the payment of a specific tax appropriated to a sinful purpose, is the same as sinning with our hands. You, on the other hand, distinguish things that have no essential difference, when you assert that it is the duty of subjects to pay all taxes for *general* purposes, while you argue for a limitation in regard to *specific* taxes. As it is upon this distinction that you ground your defence of your refusal to pay the Annuity Tax, it is necessary still farther, not only to expose its fallacy, but its absurdity.

Perplexed by the unbending and peremptory character of the precept, you cast about for any method of reconciling your conduct in resisting a legal impost with the Divine law. Like your predecessor in the same line of argument, the Jesuit Escobar, you invent a nice distinction, and lay down a principle which, if it were admitted, would at once absolve the consciences of thousands from all farther care as to the payment of taxes. You allege that we must not pay a tax which is to be appropriated to a sinful purpose; and although you find nothing in the Bible to justify this exception to the general law, yet you argue for it with a confidence which seems to be exactly in the inverse ratio of its truth. Being persuaded, however, that this principle will carry you rather too far, and being desirous to show that there are some bounds to your disobedience, you invent another distinction, which, instead of supporting your ar-



gument, will prove nothing better than a broken reed to pierce your hand. You consider yourself at liberty to refuse payment of a particular tax, appropriated to a particular object, but you will not withhold a general tax, levied for a general purpose. You quarrel with the Annuity Tax, because it is appropriated to the payment of the Edinburgh Clergy. This is an object which you consider *sinful*, and you will go to prison rather than obey the law which demands tribute for such a purpose. If this were a sound principle, and it were incumbent on you, as a preliminary to its payment, to inquire into the use for which any tax is appropriated, it would be equally your duty to investigate *all* the purposes for which general taxes are applied. This, indeed, you deny, but where is the consistency of your denial?

If a specific tax is to be refused because its purpose is sinful, a general tax ought to be refused because a *part* of its purposes is sinful. A tax for general purposes includes all the purposes for which it is employed, and one sinful particular purpose will, on this ground, contaminate the whole. If a particular tax to support Juggernaut ought to be refused, a general tax, of which the support of Juggernaut is one object, ought likewise to be refused. Your casuistry is mere sophistry.

You tell us that the rulers only, and not the subjects, are responsible for the "misapplication" of a general tax; but it is no misapplication of a general tax to apply it to each of all the various purposes for which it is raised. If one of its objects be the support of Juggernaut, it is no misapplication of that portion of it that is given to this particular purpose. It is a sinful application of the money, but not a misapplication of the tax. The tax is applied according to its avowed purpose. But, Sir, if the subject partakes of the sin of the application of the specific tax, he partakes also of the sin of the application of the general tax. He has no more control over the one than he has over the other. If he ought to refuse the one he ought to refuse the other. If it would be sinful to contribute to a fund whose specific object was to distribute the Apocrypha with the Bible, it would be sinful to contribute to a fund one of whose objects was to distribute the Apocrypha with the Bible. We have no more right to contribute to a fund whose application is

partially evil, than to one entirely evil. There is no essential difference, then, in this respect, between a specific and a general tax. Both general and specific taxes are to be paid without inquiring as to their ultimate destination. The Scriptures make no distinction between them, and the payment of them implies no approbation of that destination—no more sanction of their application, as has been observed, than the payment of a debt.

You not only admit, but assert, that it is the duty of subjects to pay general imposts that are “unjust.” But is not an unjust tax a sinful tax? And if, in paying a general tax which I know to be unjust and sinful, I have no participation in the sin or injustice, by what casuistry will you prove that I am guilty of the sin of a specific tax? If the payment of the tax implies any approbation, in both cases I am equally guilty. If the payment in the one case does not imply my approbation, neither does it in the other. Your limitation on this subject is not merely unsound, it is absurd.

If a tax is levied for one specific object to which you object, would you not equally object to it, if it were levied for many evil purposes? And if this must be your determination, if you would maintain only a decent appearance of consistency, will you affirm that if any single good or indifferent purpose be associated with the evil purposes, then the tax will become justly due, so that if nine-tenths of the amount is appropriated to the purposes of an Established Church, and one-tenth to the defence or other civil purposes of the State, the tax will become payable, although the nine-tenths could not have been justly levied without the addition of the remaining tenth. Into what absurdity would not this line of argument conduct you! But is this a whit more absurd than to maintain that a general tax is to be paid without regard to its appropriation, while the object of any one particular tax is to be carefully sifted. Can any thing be more preposterous than to admit the principle, that the appropriation of the Annuity Tax in favour of the Protestant Clergymen of Edinburgh, is to be questioned and quarrelled with, while the Assessed Taxes are to be submitted to without hesitation, although a part of them is actually employed in educating Popish Priests at Maynooth, and another portion is expend-

ed in the very idolatrous salutes at Malta, in Canada, and elsewhere, to which you make such pointed allusion. No, Sir, your principle is either good to the whole of its extent, or it is unsound at the core. You must either admit the propriety of paying tribute without question as to its object, or you must follow out your principle to its utmost bounds, and assume to yourself the prerogative of sitting in judgment on every tax which affects you, for the purpose of determining whether you will submit to it or not. If you refuse tribute because the whole of it is to be applied for an object you dislike, you cannot with any consistency submit to it when any portion of it is to be devoted to what is objectionable. If you once begin to calculate in this manner, it can make no difference whether nine-tenths or one-tenth, nine-hundredths or one-hundredth are appropriated to purposes of evil. Your principle is either good for all cases, or it is utterly unsound, worthless, and absurd. On this subject you shall hear farther in my next letter.—I am, &c.

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## LETTER VIII.

TAXES FOR GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTS—*continued*

March 6, 1838.

SIR,—In vain do you endeavour to shelter yourself behind the distinction which you draw between general and specific taxes. If you will pay a general tax because only a part of the produce is applied to what you consider sinful purposes, and refuse a specific tax because it is wholly appropriated to objects which you condemn, do you not perceive that you stand upon a most unstable and rotten foundation. What, Sir, is this another of your novel maxims in Christian morality, that a man may do indirectly what he dare not do directly? That he may safely support that which he deems evil, provided it is dexterously mixed up with that which is good? If I had not known the manner in which you acted seven years ago, I should have been at a loss to understand from whence you had derived this

absurd maxim. But, be assured, it is just as bad to do evil indirectly as it is to do evil directly. If it be right to object to a specific tax because it is wholly appropriated to purposes of which you disapprove, it is equally your duty to object to a general tax of which you partially disapprove. Christian morals will not admit of your refined distinctions.

If, again, you object to pay the Annuity Tax, because it is appropriated to a religious purpose, for which you hold that Government has no right to legislate, this objection will equally apply to taxes levied for general purposes. These you deem yourself bound to pay, although they should be "unjust." But if Government has no right to levy taxes for religious purposes, it can have no right to levy taxes for *unjust* purposes. If the one object exceed its delegated powers, so must the other. But an invincible answer to the objection you make on this ground is found in the fact that the Apostle, writing by the Spirit of God, enjoined on all Christians the duty of paying tribute under a Government that employed a part, and a very considerable part of its revenue, in the support both of idolatrous worship and of those horrid orgies and other inhuman spectacles which polluted their temples, disgraced their triumphal processions, and turned into a Golgotha even their most splendid public theatres. If God peremptorily commanded Christians to pay tribute, although it was partly dedicated to "*immoral and impious purposes*" of the most atrocious character, can it be imagined that we are exempt from the payment of taxes employed for the maintenance of the worship of the true Jehovah? If you farther urge that it is unjust to exact tribute from you for the purpose of supporting a mode of religious worship in which you do not participate, while you defray the expense of your own religious services, this objection is at once obviated by the fact that Christians, under a Pagan Government, were not, on this account, exempted from the payment of tribute. When, therefore, you refuse to pay a tax to the existing Government under any of the above pretexts, you are resisting the will of God written as with a sun-beam in his Word, and promulgated in circumstances which place the duty in the strongest light. Had the Apostle been directed to write on

the subject of tribute under such a Government as ours, how much more plausibly might Christians, residing in heathen countries, have argued that it never could be the purpose of God that they should contribute for the support of idolatrous rites. Yet, even in that case, such reasoning would have been utterly fallacious, since the duty of paying tribute is enjoined in so peremptory a manner, and without any exception or limitation either expressed or implied. But how completely are all such refuges of lies swept away when the existing state of things at the period when the Apostle wrote, is taken into view.

When the Apostle commands us to pay tribute to Government, he must include tribute of every kind, since no kind is exempted in the Scriptures. The precept enjoins the payment of specific as well as of general taxes, for it makes no distinction between them. Men have no more right to forge an exception than they have to make a Bible. They who, by doing so, make void the command of God, do it at their peril.

Although it is not material to my argument, and I will not rest it even in the least degree upon any thing but the unerring Word of God, I may here remark, that *special* taxes for the support of idolatrous worship and other "impious and immoral" heathen ceremonies, actually did subsist in the time of the Apostles. In one of the most recent works devoted to the history of the Athenians, Mr Lytton Bulwer traces the different sources of their revenue, and observes as follows:—"The State received the aid of annual contributions, or what were termed *Liturgies*, from individuals for *particular services*." He then enumerates three different species, and concludes—"These three ordinary Liturgies had all a *religious* character; they were *compulsory* on those possessed of property not less than three talents." Now as the Apostle taught the same doctrine, and gave the same commandments "every where and in all places," both the Roman and Athenian Christians, while they might mourn over the superstition of their rulers, and the use to which special taxes were appropriated, must still have paid the exaction with a cheerful obedience to the will of God. You admit that the precept in your text "refers to the existing tributes of the Roman Empire," and the Apostle makes no

exception either as to civil or religious tribute. All were to be paid, and you have not been able to produce a single instance of these tributes being refused by any of the early Christians.

But are not you, Sir, in the habit of paying a tax for a specific object which, in your estimation, is obtained in a manner that is sinful, and which, consequently, on your principle, you ought not to pay? The Post Office revenue is partly made up of the profits of Sunday travelling. When, therefore, your "conscientious convictions" prevent you from paying the Annuity Tax, do they prevent you from paying postages of letters brought to you in this way. If not, where is your consistency? Do you imagine that if these convictions do not operate uniformly, you can obtain credit when you plead them? If you will go to prison rather than pay the Annuity Tax, let us hear that it is your practice never to pay postage for a letter which has been conveyed to you by post on the Sabbath-day.

Were it lawful or incumbent on every tax-payer to resist the payment of taxes according to his own peculiar views of the propriety of their application, the consequences would not only be pernicious but subversive of civil society. "I cannot," you observe, "see how any man can consistently pay taxes levied 'avowedly for the support of an unjust war.'" Now there never is a war when war taxes are not levied. Suppose, then, a property tax exacted as hitherto in the event of a war, before a Christian could conscientiously pay what was thus imposed for a specific purpose, he must ascertain whether the war is one of aggression or defence, whether necessary or unjust. From all such perplexing questions, in the goodness and mercy of God, he has delivered his people, by promulgating a distinct and general law, subject to no exceptions and no limitations. They are thus relieved from all inquiry into cases so complex that for the great body of Christians it would be impossible to discover the path of duty, while a few designing men might mislead them to the ruin of the country. But according to the clear Apostolic precept—equally plain to the learned and the unlearned—the most knowing and the least informed believer pays, in obedience to the King of kings, the tribute demanded

by the Government under which he lives, and thanks God that the responsibility of its application rests in other hands.

The sentiments contained in the following extract from a sermon, to which you refer in terms of high approbation, most explicitly condemn the principle for which you contend, and the course which you now pursue. “As to our duty, my brethren, ‘who are the subjects of Civil Government, one thing must at once be evident to you; that it cannot be the province of each individual to judge for himself what taxes he is to pay, and what to decline. It has been very truly observed, that the precept to pay taxes should be considered by Christians as a blessing. Had not the precept been given expressly, conscientious men might have thought it necessary to know first how the money was to be applied, and to refuse wherever they disapproved of the expenditure. This would have given occasion to endless trouble and contention. But now, in consequence of the express precept, all occasion of scruple or uneasiness is removed. And, as of old, Christians were permitted to buy whatever was sold in the shambles, asking no questions for conscience’ sake; so now whatever is imposed as a tax it is our duty simply to pay, and owe no man any thing, but to love one another.”

Your mistaken view, from first to last, on this subject consists, as I formerly observed, in supposing, that in some way or other, tribute is a voluntary contribution, which is to be paid or withheld, according as you approve or disapprove of its destination. On this supposition you would divide all responsibility of its application with those by whom it is levied. But this view of the case, which leads you to distinguish between general and specific taxes, we have seen to be unscriptural, fallacious, and absurd. The command by Him to whom the silver and the gold belong, and to whom you owe all that you possess, requires you to pay what is exacted by the subsisting Government, which is his ordinance. It is consequently no longer yours, nor in the smallest degree under your control, any more than the money due to your creditor, to whom you are individually indebted. When you have made this payment you have done all that God requires, and as far as concerns your personal respon-

sibility, you have nothing farther to consider or care for. You plead that "no Dissenter is *morally* bound to pay this (Annuity) tax, for no tribute is *due* from him to the City Clergy." Certainly no tribute is due from you to them. The tribute demanded of you is *due* to the Government, and therefore every one of whom it is required, Dissenter or not, is bound to pay it. The duty to do so rests on the authority of God, and whether or not it may appear to us to be right in itself, his command is to be obeyed. When God commanded the Israelites to extirpate the Canaanites, it was their duty implicitly to obey. Without that command such conduct would have involved the deepest criminality, and yet when they failed in this duty, they were justly punished for their disobedience.

The Scriptures contain a clear and precise rule for the guidance of Christians respecting tribute, such as the weakest of them can never mistake, if they simply attend to the law without indulging a spirit of subtle casuistry. But listening to sophistry like yours, the great body of them would be led by speculations that will vary in their results according to the times in which they live, and the systems of political economy which predominate, so that Christianity would in this respect put on as many phases as the moon. Beware, Sir, as to what you are doing, you are breaking the commandments of God, and teaching others to do the same.

The discussion of this question is of deep and permanent interest. It affects principles which have been received and acknowledged since the first introduction of Christianity, and rules of Christian practice which are intimately connected with the progress of the Gospel. It is, indeed, a matter of comparatively little moment, that an individual like yourself, in Edinburgh, resolves to go to prison rather than pay his Annuity Tax. In ordinary times we should smile at your folly, or pity your error. Charity would desire to regard your conduct, not as the offspring of faction, but as the result of a clouded judgment. But your conduct assumes quite a different character when viewed in connection with the circumstances of the times in which we live. Your scruples of conscience were never exhibited to the world, when you would have stood nearly alone



in your refusal to pay any tax. They were allowed to slumber when the political horizon was undisturbed, and the demagogue and agitator were frowned upon in society. These scruples have at length been awakened amidst the din of political strife, and the tumult of contending parties; amidst the agitation produced by men who clamour for the repeal of the union with Ireland, and cheer on those revolutionists who are at length actually in arms to dismember the Empire. Never was there a more unfortunate period for a man to exhibit himself as suddenly impelled in a new direction. The time, the circumstances of your change, are all so peculiar, that they naturally lead us to look with closer attention to the grounds on which they are founded. You put yourself at the head of a party. Cost what it may you declare that you are determined to resist, and whether your going to jail might be the occasion of popular tumult, or whether it might be regarded with indifference or ridicule, you do not care to inquire. Placing yourself in an attitude of defiance, you publicly proclaim that you, at all events, will no longer, in this case, pay the tax which the Government of your country demands—you prove that you will not obey the divine precept, to render tribute to whom tribute is due.

These are the circumstances that render it important that your principles should be fully examined, and their hollowness extensively exposed. If your conduct were followed generally, society could not subsist. Every tax might find conscientious opponents, and Government would be reduced to a perpetual warfare with its subjects. Besides, your principles would materially interfere with the progress of the Gospel in heathen or unenlightened countries. No Christian, whether acting as a missionary or a trader, could live in Turkey were he to practise your theory of considering the purposes for which taxes are levied. The first Christians would never have been able to maintain their blameless character had they refused to pay tribute because it was to be applied either in whole or in part to idolatrous purposes. They would have been prosecuted, and justly, as *rebels*, not persecuted as *Christians*. They would have been punished for resisting the laws of their country, and

not for introducing a new religion. But imitating the conduct of their blessed Master, and obeying his commands, they disarmed their adversaries of any just ground of complaint, and it was equally true of them; as of *Daniel*, that no fault could be found with them except in regard to the law of their God.

The distinction between taxes for general and those for specific purposes, in respect to an obligation to pay them is, as I have stated, the sole ground on which your resistance to the Annuity Tax rests. I care not although you had been successful in establishing the other pleas to which you have resorted for your vindication. Had you succeeded as completely as you have signally failed in what you allege respecting the early Christians and Covenanters, and were the Quakers all on your side, what would it avail? “*To the law and to the testimony : if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*” The “seat,” to borrow your own expression from a former defence, which you have not forgotten, of another instance of your turn for jesuitical sophistry,—the “seat,” the only seat on which you rest in this discussion, is that fallacious and untenable distinction which I have now exposed. This *seat* being taken from under you, your fall is inevitable. In my next letter I shall unmask that flimsy disguise to which you attach so much importance, and which, under the name of *passive resistance*, might in some measure serve to conceal the evil of your pernicious example.

I terminated a former letter by directing your attention to one who was your predecessor in the inculcation of the same doctrine with you respecting the payment of tribute. I conclude the present letter by informing you that you have got a contemporary who agrees with both of you, and seems to have studied in the same school of casuistry. A recent London newspaper contains the following article of intelligence:—“At the petty Sessions of Coleshill, last week, a  
 ‘plumber and glazier was summoned for not having paid his  
 ‘highway rate. Being called upon for his defence he argued,  
 ‘that as he did not keep even a cat or a dog to travel on the  
 ‘Queen’s highway, it was exceedingly unjust that he should  
 ‘be compelled to pay towards keeping it in repair.” This,

Sir, is a modern authority decidedly in your favour. It exactly suits your argument, and is a most apt illustration of what, could it be established, would be its result. Here is a tax for a specific purpose, which this glazier reckons unjust, and against which accordingly, like you, he enters his protest. And why should he not be heard as well as Escobar? Why should he not be allowed to plead his "conscientious convictions" as well as Dr John Brown?—I am, &c.

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## LETTER IX.

### PASSIVE RESISTANCE.

March 9, 1838.

SIR,—It is the inspired maxim of the wisest of men that "the way of transgressors is hard." Every step that you have taken in defence of your resistance to the Annuity Tax, affords a striking illustration of the difficulties which thicken around your advance in the devious path of error. Besides your sophistical distinction between general taxes, and those levied for specific purposes, you have provided for yourself one more covert, under which you seek to disguise your disobedience to the law of your country. You allege that your resistance is passive, and, therefore, is not criminal. But this refuge will not avail you. Instead of shielding you from blame, it can only add the shame of unmanly evasion to the guilt of your original offence.

The expression, *passive resistance*, though not now first invented, has been brought into notoriety by Mr Daniel O'Connell; and is associated with some of the darkest pages in the modern history of Ireland. It is a mode of rebellion against lawful authority worthy of the source from which it proceeds; but that you should have been, in any particular, the imitator or disciple of a turbulent Popish agitator, is a melancholy exhibition of the progress of evil. Passive resistance, Sir, is a contemptuous defiance of the majesty of law; it is rebellion, not

perhaps more ineffectual, and certainly not less criminal, because it is not, in the first instance, accompanied with open violence. It may be the snare of weakness or of folly ; it may also be the refuge of cowardice, which quails before the sword of justice ; but it may likewise be the mask under which the man of deceit conceals his purposes of treason and revolt. It is resistance to Government of a most dangerous and embarrassing description. Every one knows that sullenness in a child is more perplexing and distressing than any other kind of opposition to parental authority. Now, sullenness in a child is precisely that kind of disobedience which is analogous to passive resistance in a subject.

*Passive resistance* is, in effect, a contradiction in terms. Although denominated *passive*, it is real and actual resistance. Resistance of every kind implies opposition, which is the contrary of inaction. Resistance, of whatever description, or however denominated, comes under the sweeping anathema of the Apostle against all who withstand the ordinance of God. If a regiment were ordered to advance, and every man in it stood still, it would be actual disobedience, of which punishment would be the consequence. When the fleet mutinied at the Nore, and the men declared that unless their demands were complied with they would not "lift an anchor," was not this disobedience? When the mutiny was suppressed, the last penalty of the law was exacted, and the ringleaders suffered death. The conduct of Saul, when he forbore to fulfil the Lord's vengeance against Amalek, might be excused on the ground of his disobedience being *passive*. But mark the stern rebuke of Samuel, and observe the distinction he expressly makes between active rebellion and passive stubbornness : " For *rebellion* is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness (*passive resistance*) is as iniquity and idolatry : because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." *Passive resistance* resembles what Dr Johnson called "defensive pride." But pride or resistance to lawful authority, in whatever form, are both denounced in Scripture as abominable in the sight of God.

You are indignant at your conduct being characterised as

rebellion, but is not resistance to the law of the land rebellion? You glory in your resistance, but, because you are pleased to describe it as *passive*, you flatter yourself you can evade the obloquy and punishment of actual guilt. Were you indeed to add violence to your stubbornness, this would, no doubt, aggravate your sin. But in either case, the resistance is real, and will subject you to punishment, not merely from man, which you may escape, but from God. The command is not that we shall not resist in a certain manner, but that we shall not resist at all.

You give it as your opinion, that the man who peaceably submits to the penalty of the law as truly respects it, and submits to the power as he who fulfils it. "Many," you say, "seem to think a man a violator of the law, a rebel, an enemy of good order, one whose principles and conduct lead to anarchy and bloodshed, who even on conscientious principles declines active obedience to the magistrate,—will not obey the law merely because it is the law, though at the same time he is perfectly willing, if 'the ruling powers' see meet, to bear whatever penalty the law allows them to inflict. No well informed man, to whatever religious sect or political party he may belong, if he is not in a passion, can talk or write such absurdity. He who, when he cannot conscientiously actively obey a command of a Government, which he yet in his judgment approves of as a good Civil Government upon the whole, quietly and patiently takes what he cannot help thinking a wrong, is certainly not a bad subject. He honours the law by submitting to it when he cannot obey it. Because it is law he honours it,—because it is law, which he cannot obey without sin, he declines complying with it." Is it possible, Sir, that the large congregation to whom you delivered your discourses, could sit patiently to listen to your perversion of the passage of Scripture which you took for your text, teaching them in what way they might disobey it without guilt, and to hear you gravely propound sentiments so fraught with "absurdity" as those now quoted. But not satisfied with proclaiming them in your discourses, you must introduce them once more in your notes and illustrations: "As every law proposes an

‘ alternative, by acquiescence in *either* part of which the law is  
 ‘ obeyed, and the authority of the lawgiver revered, the  
 ‘ man who peaceably submits to the penalty of the law when  
 ‘ his conscience forbids him to follow its prescription, as truly  
 ‘ respects the law, and submits to the power, as the man who  
 ‘ chooses the other part of the alternative.” This is casuistry  
 worthy of a whole conclave of the disciples of Loyola. It  
 confounds obedience and disobedience, and in fact asserts  
 that where violence is not resorted to, there can be no breach  
 of the law !

You here represent the suffering of the penalty of the law as  
 obedience to the law. The penalty is not a fulfilment of the  
 law, but punishment for the non-fulfilment. You support your  
 opinion by the authority of “ a high church writer ” who asserts  
 that “ obedience has always an alternative.” But obedience  
 has no alternative as obedience. Does the man who suffers  
 death for murder, honour and fulfil the sixth commandment ?  
 Do they who endure everlasting punishment for not obeying  
 the commandments of God, honour and truly respect the law  
 and reverence the lawgiver ? The man who refuses to obey a  
 law, but submits to the punishment, does not honour the law,  
 he dishonours it all in his power, and is forced to submit to the  
 punishment. So far from honouring and truly respecting the  
 law, when his conscience forbids him to follow its prescription,  
 as you confounding right and wrong, and in defiance of every  
 sound principle affirm, he rebels against it, and condemns it as  
 an unjust and sinful law ; and instead of submitting to the power  
 as you also affirm, he tramples, by his disobedience, on the  
 authority of the power. Besides, if the law is sinful, its sanction  
 or penalty is also sinful, and we ought not to honour it in its  
 sanction or penalty, more than in its requirement. On your  
 principle, the transported felon is a most respectable character ;  
 he has only chosen an unpleasant alternative. It is disgusting,  
 Sir, to deal with such paltry sophistry. Your arguments here,  
 as in other places, resemble those of the Pharisees, by which  
 you make void the law of God, as irreverently and as grossly as  
 they did by their traditions.

But let us observe the manner in which, in the exercise of

your *passive resistance*, you prove yourself “not a bad subject,” by “quietly and patiently” taking what you cannot help thinking a wrong, honouring and respecting the law, and reverencing the authority of the lawgiver. The moment the law *prescribes* for you, and its penalty is exacted, you give vent to the most outrageous expressions, in a letter which you publish for wide circulation. “While I take joyfully,” you say, “this spoiling of my goods, I abhor the injustice, and despise the meanness of the system, by one of the ‘beggarly elements’ of which I am ‘legally robbed of my property.’” Passing these virulent invectives against the system you oppose, violent in the extreme, and indecent as they are in whatever light you view it, you declare yourself to be *legally robbed* of your property. And this, according to you, is honouring and truly respecting the law, and submitting to the powers, and reverencing the authority of the lawgiver! You appear, Sir, to understand neither what you say, nor whereof you affirm, nor to know what manner of spirit you are of.

The spendthrift and the miser, in refusing to discharge their personal debts, often have recourse to passive resistance. There are persons, of whom it is said they never pay a debt but by compulsion. They do not rise up against their creditors with arms in their hands, but they withhold what they owe, and in order to bring odium on those to whom their money is due, they will either oblige their creditors to send them to prison, or to distrain their goods, so that, like you in respect to the Annuity Tax, they stigmatize the one “as violence done to their persons,” and the other, as “the spoiling of their goods,” by which they are “legally robbed of their property.”

You may shrink from the thought, that in any case you would carry your resistance so far as to resort to violence; but the man who dares to avow his resistance, in any form, to a special command of God, and to brand the Government as guilty of *legal robbery*, when it exacts from him a legal impost, knows little of his own heart, if he imagines that he would stop if he had a prospect of success at what he calls *passive resistance*. In you, Sir, we see the progress of the principle of resistance. You once thought that protesting against the Annuity Tax was

sufficient. The leaven has, after a little time, produced in your mind a greater degree of fermentation. You now see you were wrong. You had not gone far enough to produce the desired effect. You already begin to utter "great swelling words of 'vanity,' about "jeoparding lives in the high places of the 'field," while you indulge in the most violent invectives; and, I doubt not, that with a little more time, and a better opportunity, the principle of your resistance will be more fully developed; and your principles carried out "to their fair practical 'consequences."

Your conduct by inducing many to follow your example is likely to be extensively mischievous; but, acting on your principles, what disorders must ensue? Under their prevalence Government could not hold together. Anarchy would be the result, and we should discover too late, that even for the maintenance of civil liberty, it would have been a far better, and a far wiser course to have obeyed the Divine command, without torturing our ingenuity to invent plausible limitations and exceptions to its authority.

This passive resistance, this newly discovered power in the science of rebellion, considering the extent to which it is now carried, bids fair to produce, at no distant period, bloodshed and civil war. It has been practised with great success in Ireland. Hitherto it has been chiefly, though not exclusively, confined to tithes; but that man must be wilfully blind who cannot see that it is applicable to any other demand to which he may feel disinclined, whether made by Government, or by a landlord or creditor. In many of those cases in Ireland, in which the lives of the people, or of the police, have been sacrificed in tithe encounters, it was not they who refused payment who committed the actual outrage. Like yourself, perhaps, they resolved to be quiet, but the bells of the Popish chapels rung out to assemble the multitude; rioting, violence, and slaughter succeeded. The blood spilled in such encounters assuredly lies at the door of the persons who proclaimed, as you do, their intention to go to prison rather than submit to the precept "to render tribute to whom tribute is due." It also cries aloud for vengeance against those by whom this plan of opposition to Government has been or-



ganized and encouraged. When Christians become converts to the doctrine of passive resistance to the laws of their country, and in doing so, scruple not to pervert the Scriptures, it seems to forebode the approaching overthrow of all authority and rule.

In my two preceding letters I have exposed the hollowness and absurdity of your distinction between the obligation of paying taxes for general, and those for specific purposes. I have now exhibited the dishonourable and dangerous subterfuge to which you resort, under the denomination of passive resistance, a mode of procedure to which you attach so much importance, that, in your protest, you have introduced it over and over again. Your conduct, Sir, in this affair, is much worse than many, even of those who disapprove of it, are aware; and more disgraceful to the Christian name, and hazardous to the peace of mankind, than has been generally imagined. I marvel not that you have striven so hard, though in a way not very honourable, to prove that you are acting in accordance with the example of the early Christians. But their whole conduct, in relation to the subject in question, demonstrates, as with a sun-beam, that they would have held such proceedings as yours in utter abhorrence. With what indignation would they have spurned at your attempt to prove that they were guilty of direct disobedience to the Divine law, in a matter in which their submission to its authority was most exemplary. The man who seeks to vindicate his refusal, in any form or under any limitations, to pay tribute to the Government under which his lot is cast, has "broken a hedge" which God has set around one of his principal restraints on human depravity. He may sport himself with his own deceivings, but he is trampling under foot the law of Christ, and for this he must answer.

You take credit for your willingness to pay the penalty annexed by the laws of your country to their violation. But if you shall be sent to prison for your disobedience, do not enter it with the expectation of being speedily released through the interference of friends, who may be already prepared to come forward and pay the tax which you have refused. In one view, this would only be a pitiful farce, deserving of contempt, if, after a few days or hours of confinement, you should march out in

mock triumph amidst the shouts of the mob, as one who had suffered for conscience' sake, and worn the crown of martyrdom. In another point of view, an exhibition like this, would furnish a melancholy example of conduct, in the last degree unchristian and unprincipled. For would it not argue the vilest hypocrisy if a man were found to denounce the payment of the Annuity Tax as sinful, and, at the same time, to take advantage of the wilful commission of this sin by others? The same principle will apply should you permit your friends to pay the tax in order to prevent your incarceration, or to purchase your goods when distrained, to save you from loss. Such paltry and criminal proceedings could not fail to excite a feeling of indignation in all who know the difference between right and wrong, between honesty and hypocrisy. Instead, then, of betaking yourself to any of these criminal and disreputable shifts, if you will incur the penalty, by all means meet it like a man. If immured in a prison, to which the violated laws of your country have consigned you, remain in that confinement, till after serious consideration, you are convinced of the evil of trampling on the ordinance of man and the ordinance of God. In experiencing the painful effects of the one, you may be led to ponder the more serious and awful consequences of the other. But better would it be, and more honourable to yourself and the character of the religion you profess, were you at once to retrace your steps, and, by submitting yourself, give to others an example of submission to the Divine will.

But it is now reported, Sir, that you are about to quit your present residence, and get beyond the reach of the Annuity Tax, by removing yourself out of the bounds of the Royalty. Is it credible that you should act such a part after the example you have set to your congregation? You have instructed your people to resist the payment of it as a matter of conscience—a part of Christian duty. You have proclaimed yourself a self-devoted martyr in the cause of resistance, one who is ready to endure bonds and imprisonment, and the spoiling of his goods, nay, even death itself, rather than submit to the Annuity Tax. Having done this deliberately and publicly, not, it is to be presumed, in mere

bravado, who would have anticipated that you were to become a fugitive from the field, and were about to steal away from your flock, whom you had, by your example and your precepts, urged to share your post of danger? Even if you had been invited to retire from the lists which you had so pompously entered, might it not have been expected that you would have replied with somewhat of the spirit of a martyr, like Nehemiah of old, "Should such a man as I flee?" May it not be asked, is it well to leave those whose circumstances do not permit to desert the scene of trial, to encounter the storm which you have raised? Does it evince a proper spirit, proper feeling, proper regard to duty, to stimulate others to engage in a quarrel from which you, who began it, ignominiously retire? If there was something very sinful in your exhortations to resist the Annuity Tax, must it not also be held sinful and highly disgraceful to desert the field in such a crisis, and abandon your flock to those consequences which you professed yourself willing to encounter? It really appears, Sir, so ridiculous for Dr John Brown first to assume the character of a martyr, and then to fly the field, that of this report which has been circulated it may in the meantime be said, as of many other reports, that it wants confirmation. In my next letter I shall recal to your recollection the case of Tertullian and the early Christians, and especially the history of the new auxiliary of whom you vaunt—Marcus, Bishop of Arethusa.—I am, &c.

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## LETTER X.

DR CAVE, TERTULLIAN, AND MARCUS OF ARETHUSA.

March 13, 1838.

SIR,—In your efforts to vindicate your resistance to the *Annuity Tax*, it is melancholy to witness the extraordinary shifts to which you resort. Unable to derive any consolation from the Scriptures of truth, but unawed by their stern condemnation of your evil example, you explain away the Apostolic

precept of civil obedience, and represent it as addressed exclusively to a “small body—chiefly of the lower orders—many ‘of them foreigners,” at Rome. Baffled in this daring attempt to nullify the clear and precise language of the Word of God, you take another adventurous flight into the airy regions of romance, and, in defiance of all history and all authority, you gravely attempt to prove, that in your disobedience to the laws of your country, you are only treading in the footsteps of the early Christians.

In your letter of the 21st of November, you asserted that “a tax for a specific purpose, which they accounted sinful, they ‘did not, they would not pay.” This most erroneous statement was fully refuted in a paper subjoined to my letter of the 24th November. It was there proved that your assertion was entirely groundless, and that the authority with which you attempted to support it was only Dr Cave’s paraphrastic translation of a passage in Tertullian, which you were reminded it was not very scholar like to take at second hand. It was farther remarked that it was especially unworthy of an individual engaged in the office of theological tuition to hold out, as an authority, a writer so notoriously inaccurate as Cave in many of his statements; while it was still more discreditable to your candour to have extracted an incorrect translation of Tertullian favourable to your views, and to have suppressed the testimony of Justin Martyr, and Tatian, who, in the very paragraph from which you quoted, state the readiness of the early Christians freely to pay *all taxes and tributes*, without any qualification or exception whatever. It was likewise affirmed that Dr Cave had wholly misapprehended Tertullian, and that in the original there is nothing at all about taxes rated for religious purposes in the sense in which you employ the words—not a single word about the Christians refusing to pay the taxes rated upon them for the maintenance of the heathen temples, nor any approach to such an idea. “And, besides,” it was added, “can a single example be produced in which any of the ‘first Christians acted upon the principle ascribed to them? ‘We defy Dr Brown to produce an instance. The matter; ‘however, need not be left to a mere challenge. We have

‘ the most irresistible evidence that it was not their practice to  
 ‘ resist any tax. Among all the charges brought against them  
 ‘ by their enemies, they are never accused of disobedience in  
 ‘ this respect. We hold it then demonstrated that it is a libel  
 ‘ against the Christians to represent them as refusing to pay  
 ‘ any tax they were rated with. Dr Brown’s own gloss, or  
 ‘ rather his friend the *Archbishop’s* gloss, of an isolated passage  
 ‘ will stand him in no stead. We have the direct testimony of  
 ‘ the fathers that they readily paid all taxes without any excep-  
 ‘ tion, and that their worst enemies never charged them with  
 ‘ any thing so extravagant and ridiculous as might be construed  
 ‘ into a precedent for the Edinburgh Voluntaries. His (Dr  
 ‘ Brown’s) statements upon this subject are grossly inaccurate,  
 ‘ and the manner in which he conducts this part of his argu-  
 ‘ ment is equally discreditable to him as a man and a scholar.”

Now, Sir, in what way did you attempt to vindicate yourself from these heavy charges? You come forward in your note of Nov. 28, with “all that you think necessary in the way of remark.” And what do you think necessary? Do you refer to the passage in Tertullian, and show that Dr Cave’s account of it is correct? Do you prove that Tertullian had a different object from that stated in the charges brought against you? Do you adduce any instances of resistance to taxation on the part of the Christians? or do you show that the view given of the way in which the ancient Heathen worship was supported is incorrect? No, you do none of these things. Your answer is as follows:—“Dr Brown might have given Tertullian’s words (for they were before him) and his own translation of them, (for he really can ‘do into English’ a passage of not very difficult Latin,) but as comparatively few of his readers could readily understand the original, he preferred giving it in the “vulgar tongue,” and though he did not greatly admire Cave’s translation, yet being that of a true Churchman, he thought it would be less liable to suspicion, than one made for the occasion by a Voluntary.” Is not this, Sir, the language of a man self-condemned, who knows he is wrong, without having the candour to acknowledge it?

It might be supposed that you must have felt ashamed of the

manner in which you had misrepresented the conduct of the early Christians by means of a garbled translation of Tertullian, and that as this was clearly brought home to you, there remained no alternative but to confess your error “with befitting humility,” as you expressed yourself respecting your miserable mistake in raising Cave to the dignity of an Archbishop—and to apologise for your misrepresentations. But what, Sir, must be the degree of hardihood that could lead you to acknowledge that you had the *original* before you when you imposed upon your readers the erroneous version, or rather paraphrase of Dr Cave. You say you “did not greatly admire Cave’s translation.” In plain English, you were aware that it was incorrect. What excuse, then, do you make for giving it to the public in proof of what you wished to establish as a fact? You “thought,” you say, “it would be less liable to suspicion than one made for the occasion by a Voluntary.” Does this mean, that under the cover of Dr Cave’s name, you thought his misrepresentation of Tertullian would not be suspected, and might escape detection? Or is it your meaning that you thought it right to treat your readers like fools who would be satisfied with a false rendering, because it came from one whom you had promoted to the dignity of an Archbishop? But you even venture to advance a step farther, and actually to assert that the fact as to the early Christians stands as it did. After this, was I wrong in reminding you of a former occasion on which you were told, that yours was “one of the most audacious attempts ever made by a Christian minister to carry a point by mere hardihood of reckless asseveration.” “The *fact*,” you add, “after all the learning wasted on its obscuration, remains as it did. *The Christians of the earlier ages refused to contribute of their substance to the support of a mode of worship of which they conscientiously disapproved, by whatever authority exacted.*” “Let this be granted, and Dr Brown does not much concern himself how his learned antagonist disposes of Tertullian.” Here you either change your ground, or have expressed yourself in a way calculated to mislead, by appearing to re-assert, while in fact you do not, what you had formerly advanced. The early Christians did not indeed contribute of their substance to support the

worship of the Heathen temples in paying the assessments chargeable only on their frequenters. But this no more proves that they refused to pay the public taxes, than that those who do not worship in the Established Churches in Edinburgh refuse to pay the city assessments because they do not contribute to the seat rents of these Churches. The fact, then, in the sense in which in your first assertion you intended it to be understood, is not and cannot be *granted*. The contrary has been proved. You say it does not much concern you, how your antagonist disposes of Tertullian; but if he has so disposed of him as to show that you have misquoted his testimony, and that he does not say a single word that serves your purpose, it concerns you greatly both as a man of truth and a theological teacher, for it was on Tertullian's testimony alone that you rested your groundless assertion.

You have now, Sir, placed the controversy in a much more unfavourable light for your own character than could have been supposed possible. It might have been hoped that you had been misled by Cave; but now it appears that this was not the case, and that you deliberately published what you knew to be an incorrect account of Tertullian's statement. In disclaiming the apology of ignorance, you have surrendered your pretensions to candour. It is almost worse than idle to argue with a man who can unblushingly come before the public in this manner.

It would appear, however, that you have felt the moral discomfort of the position in which your disingenuousness has placed you. Although you had told the public in your note of November, that it contains all that you think necessary in defence of what you had advanced respecting the early Christians; yet in the appendix to your last discourse on Civil Obedience, you have made a strenuous effort to extricate yourself, proving that you now think that something more is necessary, while you have not succeeded in setting aside any one of the charges brought against you. You there introduce a long and elaborate note, in which you furnish three translations of the passage in Tertullian, besides Cave's paraphrase formerly given. Having produced these translations, you are compelled to admit, that "there are no words in the original answering exactly to the

phrase, “*refused to pay the taxes rated upon them for the maintenance of the heathen temples, which Dr Cave uses.*” Why, then, did you give these words as a part of Tertullian’s testimony—which, in order to draw particular attention to them in your letter, you printed in italics—while, as you now inform us, you had Tertullian before you? A charge too was brought against you of giving a partial extract from Cave. You defend yourself by intimating that the passage omitted, containing extracts from Justin Martyr, and Tatian, referred to taxes “of a civil kind;” but it contains no such restriction. Your bold averment, then, that a tax for a specific purpose, which the early Christians accounted sinful, they did not, they would not pay, has ended in your confusion.

To one challenge, however, that was given, you do respond. “Can a single example,” it was said, “be produced, in which any of the first Christians acted upon the principles ascribed to them?” namely, of refusing to pay taxes. To this you reply in a tone of triumph: “I have been defied to produce a single instance among the early Christians of a refusal to pay money exacted by the recognized authorities; and, in answer to the defiance, I bring forward the indomitable old man, Marcus, Bishop of Arethusa.” Here allow me, in the first place, to remark the disingenuous art employed in this answer. The challenge to which you profess to reply, referred, as you well know, exclusively to *taxes*. But here you employ phraseology of a more general import, and by this evasion you make way for the introduction of the case of Marcus, which has no more to do with the payment of taxes than with the discovery of America. But let us attend to the history of this Marcus.

Marcus, Bishop of Arethusa, was, it appears, a Semi-Arian, and, like the rest of these heretics, a persecutor. In Sozomen’s account of him, which you have given, it is said, that “under the reign of Constantius, he had been more than ordinarily zealous in employing means to convert heathens to Christianity, going somewhat beyond mere persuasion, and had even destroyed their temple, which was an exceedingly splendid and costly edifice.” Or, as Gibbon expresses it, “Marcus,



‘ Bishop of Arethusa, had laboured in the conversion of his  
 ‘ people with arms more effectual than those of persuasion.”  
 Sozomen adds, that he was “condemned, according to royal  
 ‘ edict, either to pay the estimated expense of the temple, or to  
 ‘ rebuild it.” “The Magistrates,” says Gibbon, “required  
 ‘ the full value of a temple which had been destroyed by his in-  
 ‘ tolerant zeal : but as they were satisfied of his poverty, they  
 ‘ desired only to bend his inflexible spirit to the promise of the  
 ‘ slightest compensation.” This, it must be admitted, was a  
 very lenient sentence ; but in consequence of his refusal to sub-  
 mit to what was required, he experienced from the multitude  
 the most cruel treatment, which he bore with remarkable forti-  
 tude. “The Arians,” says Gibbon, “celebrated the virtue of  
 ‘ their pious Confessor ; and the Catholics,” he adds, (to their  
 shame be it spoken if it really was so,) “ambitiously claimed  
 ‘ his alliance.”

Here, Sir, we have indeed an example of one who refused  
 “to pay money exacted by the recognised authorities.” But  
 for what purpose was it exacted ? Was it for the payment of  
 taxes ? No, but as a remuneration justly due to others for the  
 destruction of their property. This is an account too not of  
 any of those “simple-hearted Christians” to whom you former-  
 ly referred, but of one who lived in the fourth century, in a  
 period of great degeneracy. It is, besides, the account not of  
 a Christian but of a Semi-Arian, whose name, except owing  
 to the outrage he committed, and the excessive barbarity with  
 which he was treated, would probably have been lost in oblivion,  
 or recorded only as that of a turbulent corrupter of the Gospel.  
 Yet this is the man for whom you profess the most profound  
 reverence ; and although he *laboured in the conversion of his  
 people with arms more effectual than those of persuasion*, you  
 represent him as “remarkably zealous in promoting the interests  
 ‘ of Christianity,” and as “seeking and finding the crown of  
 ‘ martyrdom !”

In speaking of the endowment applied for to Government by  
 the ministers of the Established Church—which you so strenu-  
 ously oppose, although not one word do you say against a much  
 larger endowment bestowed annually for the education of Popish  
 priests—in speaking of that endowment, you denounce the

motives of those who are applying for it in no measured terms. "A more monstrous cold-blooded attempt," you say, "to injure a set of men who, by their assiduous labours, have deserved well of their country, and who are guilty of no crime but that they are not of the Established Church, was never formed." Now, let us suppose a church to be built near to yours, with the aid of the funds supplied by Government, and that you, summoning an assembly of your congregation, denounced to them this new erection, telling them that a *more monstrous* cold-blooded attempt to injure them was never formed. And supposing that, inflamed by your invectives, and animated by your example, they should, with you at their head, rush torch in hand, and set fire to the obnoxious building; and that in consequence of your thus showing yourself "remarkably zealous in promoting the interests of Christianity," the magistrates were to require you to make remuneration for the damage you had occasioned, and you refused, like Marcus, to give even "one obolus" for such a purpose; or if, on account of this outrage, they visited you, as an incendiary, with the last penalty of the law, ought it to be said that you had "*sought and found the crown of martyrdom.*"

Or, let us suppose that you had become "more than ordinarily zealous in employing means to convert" Roman Catholics, and "going somewhat beyond mere persuasion," had "destroyed" their "splendid and costly" chapel in your neighbourhood, would you, in consequence of this exploit, expect that your name should be transmitted with honour to posterity, and yourself designated, that "indomitable old man, Dr Brown?" It would only be doing you justice to say, that to this appellation you would be equally well entitled as that "venerable old bishop," Marcus of Arethusa.

Apart from the disingenuousness of the manner in which you introduce this disgraceful history, were you not ashamed, Sir, to speak as you have done of one who was guilty of such a flagrant violation of duty? Even if you could succeed in rendering his Semi-Arianism doubtful, which you have attempted, it would not diminish his sin, or detract from the wickedness of his example. Were those means which he employed such as are prescribed in the Gospel for the conversion of men? Were

they not abhorrent to every principle of Christianity? Was Marcus of Arethusa a follower of Him who solemnly rebuked his disciples when they desired that he would permit them to command fire to come down from heaven, and consume his opposers? Was he a follower of the Apostles, who were “not ‘robbers of Churches,” and who declared that *the weapons of their warfare were not carnal*? But your catching, in this manner, at the semblance—and you must have known that it was only the semblance of an example—to support your assertion, that the early Christians refused to pay certain taxes, proves to what extremity on this point you are driven. The inaccuracy of Cave, whom you had quoted, you are compelled to admit. Tertullian has failed you; and though, no doubt, you have done your utmost to discover a solitary instance to serve your purpose and save your credit, not one are you able to produce. In my next, and last letter of this series, I shall request your attention to the subject of *railing*, of which you have so often accused me.—I am, &c.

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## LETTER XI.

### ON RAILING.

March 16, 1837.

SIR,—When you made up your mind to enter on the vocation of an agitator, by your *active* denunciation of the Annuity Tax, and your passive “resistance” to its payment, you broke through so many of the barriers interposed by the Scriptures, that I can hardly feel surprised at any step which you may take in defence of your conduct. You stand upon such hollow and slippery ground, that it is impossible you should not feel the precariousness of your footing, and if the memory of your past faults has not added to your circumspection, it seems to have operated still less beneficially on your temper. While the position you have assumed cannot endure the light of divine truth, instead of confessing your error and exhibiting your contrition; instead of retracing your steps, and endeavouring to undo the mischief

of your example, it appears to be your desire to divert observation from the real merits of the case, and distract the attention of the public by loading your reprovers with false accusations.

With more sagacity than ingenuousness, you provided in your first letter against the anticipated contingency of a defeat, and the necessity of replying to the refutation with which you had good reason to expect you would be met. You announced in a tone of discourtesy, that I had "got my answer," and that if not satisfied, I might, "uninterrupted and unreprieved by you, 'rail on.'" Anxious to clear away all mere personalities, I shortly disposed of this easy method of attack in a separate letter, preparatory to that in which I meant to grapple with the only semblance of argument in your apology. You had announced that I was to be uninterrupted and unreprieved, if I railed on. But how did you keep this gratuitous promise. In the face of your professions to the contrary, as soon as you found you had no argument to contend with, you instantly endeavoured still farther to perplex the controversy by renewed accusations, as groundless and uncalled for as before. "It is," you say, as you "anticipated, Mr Haldane rails on." You add, "while he 'continues to calumniate, Dr Brown hopes he will be enabled to continue to forgive. His assailant seems determined 'that he shall not soon want opportunity for the performance of 'this Christian duty.'" For your forgiveness, had I needed it, I should have felt obliged, if the expression of it had come in a less questionable shape, instead of being intermingled with bitterness, and associated with charges of calumny and railing. Even if I had afforded you just ground of offence, it would have been difficult to determine whether you intended to forgive or to vituperate, to perform an act of Christian duty, or gratify a vindictive feeling. Beware, Sir, of self-deception. Beware, lest in your affected forgiveness there rankles not the spirit of enmity and uncharitableness: lest in sounding a trumpet before you to announce your obedience to a Divine command, you do not insult the very precept which you would appear to honour.

From the manner in which you reiterate the charge of railing, which in your last letter you repeat for the third time, it seems that you do not understand the import of the term. According to your interpretation the Apostles were railers. According to

you Paul might have been held up to the early Christians as a *railer* by those false teachers and deceivers, whose conduct and character he so emphatically denounced, and whose departures from the truth he so unsparingly condemned. The Apostle James must in like manner be regarded as a railer, when in the fifth chapter of his epistle he directs his strong censures against those who lived in rebellion against God. Peter, even in the very chapter where he speaks of not bringing *a railing accusation*, must, on your principles, be condemned as practising what he so pointedly reproveth. Jude, too, who in the same way refers to the example of the Archangel, will be censured as railing from the beginning to nearly the end of his epistle. Even the Apostle John, remarkable as he is for inculcating the grace of love, will be condemned as a railer for the manner in which he denounced the agitating and ambitious Diotrophes.

Your often repeated charges against me of having railed at you are altogether groundless. I have indeed exposed your conduct in the light of truth, and expressed my strong conviction of its criminality in the sight of God. But it is one thing to follow the Scriptural command, "Them that sin rebuke before all," and quite another thing to incur the guilt of railing. No, Sir, I have not *railed* at you, unless it be "railing" to convict you of a violation of the Divine law; unless it be railing to hold up your evil principles to the light of truth; unless it be railing to take away from you the last shred of apology by which you endeavour to cloak the sinfulness of your proceedings as a subject and a minister.

Had you, Sir, been treading in the footsteps of your respected fathers, had you not departed from their principles and doctrines, I should have been amazed at this disingenuous method of sheltering yourself from merited rebuke. But when I consider the downward path you have trod, formerly as a vindicator of the corruption of the Word of God, and now as a perverter of that Word, and a leader in agitation against paying tribute, it is but a small matter to find that one who has desecrated and wrested the Scriptures should deal so unscrupulously with the words of a fellow-creature. But, Sir, while I repudiate your charge of having railed at you, I will show you what is railing.

At the public meeting held in October last to consider the propriety of forming a Society for the Abolition of the Annuity Tax, you pleaded your "conscientious conviction" that it was contrary to your duty to pay that tax, while at the same time you spoke favourably of "some" of the ministers of the Established Church in this city. But in what terms did your associates at that meeting speak of the *whole* of them? "The rotten Town Councils of Edinburgh"—mark the elegance of the expression—"The *rotten Town Councils* of Edinburgh, which, with the *aid of the clergy* of Edinburgh, had been the means of extending and consolidating the Annuity Tax. There was no rational individual, no religious man who could defend a tax which was so unequal in its purpose, and so *fraudulent* with reference to the means of its imposition.—(Cheers.) This notable result" (of being employed for the behoof of the additional clergy,) "was accomplished by a sort of *juggle* betwixt the Town Council and the clergy, who entered into a *combination* for the *robbery* of the citizens. In consequence of this *combination*, the Annuity Tax was extended and consolidated on its present basis." This clause in the Tax "had been *surreptitiously* carried, as having been written by themselves, (the clergy,) and introduced at their own special request. (Cheers.) No, the truth was spoken; very unpalatable it was, no doubt, to the Church Extenders, who would *willingly have hid* from public observation the *blessings* which were showered on the people of Edinburgh by those ministers. The goods of the citizens would be *taken* and sold in the market-place. The campaign was now carried on as vigorously as ever by the clergy—and all this for the glory of God, and the good of the Church. (Cheers.) The clergy were resolved to exact their pound of flesh; and there was no alternative but resistance. Let him not be told that the clergy of Edinburgh were personally humane and mild men—protectors of the orphan and widow, while all the time they were living on the *spoil* of the orphan and widow. If there were a widow with but one cruse of oil in the city of Edinburgh, the clergy would not scruple to *take it from her*, in payment of the Annuity Tax. They were guilty of *robbery*

‘and *spoil*; and had made the table and meat of the Lord  
‘*contemptible.*’

Is it possible for any man of right feeling or sound principle to listen to this tissue of scurrility, this catalogue of abominable calumnies, this train of palpable and profligate falsehood, without experiencing a thrill of indignation and horror. The clergy of Edinburgh are in your presence, Sir, held up to public abhorrence, as monsters of wickedness, as destitute of every moral and religious feeling, as guilty of hypocrisy, covetousness, extortion, chicanery, robbery, and the most heartless and deliberate villany. While, as the climax of this tirade of wickedness, the name of God is profanely introduced! And not only is this torrent of abuse poured out upon the clergy, to the outrage of every principle of Christianity and common decency, it is also directed against the magistracy of Edinburgh, in utter contempt and defiance of the warnings of Scripture. I am, indeed, fully aware that, by some of your associates at that meeting, an appeal to Scripture on this or any other subject will be treated with ridicule and scorn.

These atrocious invectives, not more disgusting for their vulgarity than distinguished for their contempt of truth, were heaped on the *whole* of the Established Clergy of Edinburgh. They are calumnies which would not apply to the whole of the worst set of convicts in the hulks, under sentence of banishment. Here, then, is an example of railing,—*railing* of such a description that, considering the character of those against whom it was directed, is without a parallel,—railing that remains to this day uncontradicted and unrebuked. It was uttered at a meeting at which you bore a very conspicuous part, and has been circulated far and wide. But you, Sir, have been silent. Not a word of disapprobation escapes your lips; not a line have you penned, amidst all your discourses and letters, to intimate your abhorrence of these monstrous calumnies. You have seen these railing accusations associated in the newspapers with the report of your own speech; yet from you no voice of reprobation, not a whisper of shame or contrition has reached the public ear. But the moment that your own indefensible conduct is assailed, all your sensitive feelings are aroused; you are loud and earnest in proclaiming your abhorrence of railing; and your own incapacity

to contend in that kind of warfare. "I must not," you say, "render railing for railing;—in such a combat I would be sure 'to come off at the worse.'" But after receiving such a lesson from your friends, and witnessing such an exhibition, you cannot plead that you have not studied in a good school, and under the tuition of accomplished masters. Nor can it be said, that to yourself it has been without profit, for in what terms have you spoken in the appendix to your discourses, in a passage to which, in a preceding letter, I have referred, of the whole of the clergy of the Established Church in Edinburgh, and elsewhere? In alluding to their purpose to extend the preaching of the Gospel, you express yourself in the following words:— "A more monstrous cold-blooded attempt to injure a set of 'men who, by their assiduous labours, have deserved well of 'their country, and who are guilty of no crime but that they 'are not of the Established Church, was never formed." A sentence expressive of deeper malignity, and grosser exaggeration, evincing at the sametime a more daring disregard of the command not to "judge," it will be impossible to produce. And again, with what violence, on another occasion, have you vented your indignation at once against the law and the Government of your country! Upon your goods being distrained on account of your rebellion against that law, while you proclaim it in terms the most bitter and virulent, you complain that you are "legally 'robbed!" These specimens sufficiently prove that you are no mean practitioner at railing. But as to the aforesaid meeting, do not flatter yourself that you can be exonerated from the guilt of participation in all that belongs to it. You stand in the position of him of whom it is said, "When thou sawest a 'thief, then thou consentedst with him." At your meeting, too, as is well attested, sentiments of the most seditious description were uttered, and to crown the whole, you, Sir, in the midst of this shameful scene, arose and proclaimed your deliberate determination to bid defiance to the laws of your country.

Is this, Sir, a specimen of the meetings of those who, like yourself, choose to be distinguished by the appellation of "Voluntaries?" Then, let not all who conscientiously differ from the Established Church, be supposed to be involved in the degradation of such a confederacy. Many of them, shocked as



they are with conduct like yours, and abhorring proceedings so diametrically opposed to the Word of God, so contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, and the mind that was in Christ, will, from the bottom of their hearts, exclaim with the patriarch of old, "O, my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united!"

Now, Sir, it may be asked, independently of the extraordinary part you acted in asserting your rebellious purpose to resist the payment of a legal tax, was it proper in you to countenance such a meeting by your presence? Was it giving such an example as was becoming, or might have been expected, of a minister of the Gospel? What effect is your presence, in agitating meetings, calculated to produce in your own congregation, and on Christians in general? Has their attendance at such meetings, has their association with scoffers, and brawlers, and utterers of sedition, a tendency to promote in them the fear of God? Is it calculated to induce them to "lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty," to be thankful to God for the high and distinguished privileges they enjoy—privileges such as Christians in no other country and no other age of the world ever enjoyed for so long a period. Does not their listening to exaggerated statements, inflammatory harangues, and deliberate falsehood, tend to stir up in them the most malignant passions, to teach them to become "murmurers, and complainers, walking after their own lusts?" You have appealed, but for a very different purpose, to the practice of the early Christians. Is there any thing like that turbulence of spirit which is fostered at such meetings, countenanced by their example, or by the instructions which they received from the Apostles of the Lord? Were they not, on the contrary, distinguished as the "quiet in the land?" This, Sir, it is as completely beyond your power successfully to controvert, as it is to establish your assertion, that they ever refused to pay tribute.

What a melancholy spectacle was presented by the conduct of some professed Christians, who, not very long ago, did not scruple to unite in this city with Papists, Socinians, and Infidels, with unbelievers in religion, and the disaffected in politics, for the purpose of doing honour to Mr O'Connell in his journey

through Scotland. They appeared to lose sight of their duty towards God, and their obligations towards the Government and Constitution of their country. They seemed to merge, in the excitement of the moment, all recollection of the blood-stained career of that turbulent agitator. But these, Sir, are the effects of examples like yours, and of such Neological expositions of the Scriptures as your discourses exhibit. It is time for all who fear God, and have hitherto been seduced from the path of duty, to withdraw themselves from scenes so dishonourable to Him whom they profess to serve, so abhorrent to every Christian principle, and so ruinous to their own souls.

In conclusion, I remark that there is not an argument contained in your publications which can be regarded as furnishing an apology for your most unjustifiable resistance to the Annuity Tax. You have resorted to every method which perverted ingenuity and practised sophistry could invent, to perplex your antagonists and shelter yourself from blame. But, Sir, your efforts have been fruitless. The weakness of your arguments, the disingenuousness of your statements, and the inaccuracy of your facts have all been exposed. Your attack upon the universality of the Apostolic precept, must, so long as it is unrepented of, remain a blot on your character as a theologian, and proves you to be an unsound expositor of the Scriptures, a most insufficient and dangerous guide. Your libel on the early Christians, in like manner, testifies against your honesty as a disputant; while your misquotation of Tertullian proves your disregard of candour. Deeply impressed with the evils of which you have made yourself publicly guilty, and with the danger of your example, both as a member of civil society, and a perverter of the Word of God, I have considered it to be my duty to speak of your aberrations in strong language. But I have not railed at you. This charge I have answered, and have shown with what grace it comes from one who bore so prominent a part at the meeting in October to promote the abolition of the Annuity Tax—from you, Sir, who, notwithstanding the atrocious calumnies then uttered—calumnies that not only dishonour Christianity, but are a disgrace to a civilised country—have never raised your voice against them; but, on the contrary, have since contributed to them from your own stores an im-

portant addition. You have said that your "position is not, in itself, an enviable one." That you must indeed feel this there can be little doubt; in the end, however, it may prove to you beneficial. Your conduct, in this business and the discussion to which it has given rise, will be the means, it is to be hoped, of leading others who, without due consideration, had entered on the same path with yourself, and been swayed by your example, to reflect on what they have been doing. It may produce in their minds a salutary and permanent conviction that the authority of Civil Government, as the ordinance of God, is not to be resisted, nor the law of their country, as the ordinance of man, violated with impunity.

Be assured, Sir, you entered on no enviable path when you resolved to refuse the payment of a tax, and bid defiance to the laws by which you are protected. You may, indeed, be greeted with the applause of political zealots and factious partizans, but this will be a poor compensation for the sacrifice of your duty and the prostitution of your sacred calling. It may not be agreeable to you to have your determination spoken of as criminal in the sight of man, and rebellious towards God. You may strive to palliate the guilt you are contracting by the unwarranted limitations and exceptions by which you make void the Divine law. And, finally, you may think to silence the voice of rebuke by calumniating the motives of your opponents. You may mistake rudeness for dignity, and the language of vituperation for the triumphant tone of confidence inspired by a good cause. But all will not suffice. You cannot shroud yourself from censure beneath the cloak of indifference; and, undeterred by your invectives, I shall not be prevented at any proper time, or in any proper place, from fully commenting, as I once before did, on your public conduct, whenever it may appear that, in so doing, I shall be enabled to counteract the evil of your example, to rebuke open sin, and subserve the cause of righteousness and truth.

For the present I have concluded my intended remarks on your conduct, unless by any reply you may make, or, owing to other circumstances, it shall appear necessary to say more. In your note of November 28, you allude to a passage in your former history to which I judged it proper to recal your atten-

tion, inasmuch as it relates to conduct for which you have never expressed your contrition, although it was attended with circumstances of no ordinary criminality. It is indeed matter of astonishment, after all that then took place, that you should have the courage to come forward as a leader in resisting the Annuity Tax, or in any other cause. You say "Dr Brown is 'quite ready to stand by the award of any unprejudiced judge, 'who may think it worth his while to read the documents to 'which Mr Haldane has referred." This language does not indicate a very confident persuasion that you could pass through this ordeal like gold from the furnace. But I beg to remind you that the question as to your conduct, on that occasion, is of a public nature, and, if it is again to be made the subject of investigation, it must not be privately dealt with, but publicly and fully canvassed, and the documents must all be exhibited. This is the more necessary, as it has a very direct bearing on your present proceedings, especially regarding the nature of your two discourses.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant.

ROBERT HALDANE.

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*P.S.*—Since the above letters have appeared, Dr Brown has published a short advertisement, stating that he deems it unnecessary to reply, and *asserting* that the main argument in his Lecture has been evaded, and every thing like reasoning in them answered by anticipation. This will probably remind the reader of a remark which has been noticed in these letters, in relation to a former passage in Dr Brown's history, respecting another of his *assertions*, that it was "*one of the most audacious 'attempts ever made by a Christian minister to carry a point 'by mere hardihood of reckless asseveration.*"



The EVIDENCES and AUTHORITY of DIVINE REVELATION; being a View of the Testimony of the Law and the Prophets to the Messiah, with the subsequent Testimonies. By ROBERT HALDANE, Esq.

*The following is an extract from a review in the Christian Observer of the first edition of this work, which in the present edition is greatly enlarged.*

“ It is not our design to institute a comparison between Mr Haldane and his predecessors; but thus much we may confidently affirm, because we are fully borne out in the statement by the work before us, that in a deep sense of the importance of the subject, in extensive acquaintance with the best authors, both ancient and modern, whose information and reasonings it was important to collect, or whose errors and heresies it might be useful to expose or refute,—in powers of discriminating between genuine truth and its counterfeits, and of presenting his matter in a clear and convincing light,—in these qualifications for such an undertaking, and unquestionably these are in the first class of qualifications, Mr Haldane has been surpassed by few of those who have gone before him. . . We must close our remarks on these interesting volumes. It seems to have been the Author’s design to set forth the Gospel both as the truth of God and as the grace of God, which bringeth salvation. In that design he has completely succeeded.”

*Also, in royal 18mo., price 3s. 6d., Fourth Edition, enlarged.*

On INSPIRATION; or, the BOOKS of the OLD and NEW TESTAMENTS proved to be canonical, and their verbal Inspiration maintained and established: with an account of the introduction and character of the Apocrypha. By ROBERT HALDANE, Esq.

*Extract from the Presbyterian Review.*

“ The number of editions through which this volume has already passed, indicates sufficiently the estimation in which it is held by the public. The author is right when he states, that the subject is one of the very highest importance; and perhaps he is right also in thinking, that the exigencies of the times call for such a publication. Upon the whole, if we may venture to judge from our own experience, we promise our readers much gratification from the perusal of this volume. It is a well written book, on a most important subject.”

*The First Edition of*

EXPOSITION of the FIVE FIRST CHAPTERS of the EPISTLE to the ROMANS; with Remarks on the Commentaries of Dr Macknight, Professor Tholuck, and Professor Moses Stuart. By ROBERT HALDANE, Esq. 12mo., pp. 501. (The Third Edition of this Volume will be Published in a few days.)

HAMILTON, ADAMS, and Co., Booksellers, Paternoster Row, London; WHYTE, Edinburgh; and CARSON, Dublin.

*Extract from the Presbyterian Review and Religious Journal.—May, 1836.*

“ We took up this volume with no ordinary expectations. Its author’s works on the Evidence of Christianity and the Inspiration of the Scriptures, have proved him to be so able a maintainer and defender of the truth, and have been so distinguished for comprehensive and vigorous thinking, that an announcement of a comment on Romans, from his pen, was identified in our mind with the promise of a bold and successful vindication of the leading doctrines of the Gospel. Our anticipations have been more than realized. There is, in this Exposition, all his usual simplicity and terseness of statement, and all his usual

firmness and faithfulness of adherence to evangelical doctrine, with even more than his usual grasp and compass of thought. Occasioned principally by the republication in this country, under high auspices, of Professor Stuart's work on the Epistle to the Romans, it has especial reference to the errors of that calm and unimpassioned, but inaccurate and dangerous writer; while it contains many most just and useful animadversions on the subdued Neology of Tholuck, and the frigid criticism and strange perversions of Macknight. On all the topics of great and fundamental moment, which meet us in the first five chapters of the Epistle, it presents us with the largest and loftiest views. It holds forth the genuine doctrines of grace in their due prominence, and unfolds, with singular beauty and effect, the way in which every part of the Divine dealings with man contributes to their illustration. And although, being chiefly intended as a counteractive to doctrinal errors, and being founded on a purely doctrinal part of the Epistle, its main character is that of a work in dogmatic theology,—still Mr Haldane has never fallen into the too common mistake that, in order to be rational, we must be cold—that, in order rightly to investigate, we must cease to feel—that, in order to ascertain what the mystery of Christ imports we must set aside, for a time, its warm and living influence on the active principles of the inner man. On the contrary, amid much of clear and sound statement, of acute analysis, and of strong and energetic controversial writing, we meet, not unfrequently, with profound practical remarks, with glowing and ardent descriptions of Gospel blessings, with those gentle breathings of sweetness, which show how fragrant to the mind of the writer is the message of mercy which is engaging his meditations. Although we love philology in its own place, we can imagine nothing more refreshing than, after being engaged for a time on the dry discussions of Tholuck, or the still more sterile pages of Stuart, to turn to the rich and fertile veins of thought which are opened up in the volumes of Calvin and Haldane. When commentary is written in the style which the former class of writers have adopted, the mind, occupied with the minutiae of language, overlooks the great lineaments of thought, and, having little nutriment ministered to it, is never brought to stretch and expand itself; in that pursued by the latter class, while the signs obtain a due measure of regard, and abundant exercise is given for closeness of attention, the thing signified is viewed in all its multiplied relations, and a light is thrown upon it, not merely by the minute research of the scholar, but by the enlarged contemplations of the divine.... Of the learning which appears in Stuart and Tholuck, it (Mr Haldane's work) embodies the results, while it wants the ostentation. In ingenuity, it is equal to Turretine; in theological accuracy, superior. Equally sound with Brown of Wamphray, it has none of its wearisomeness. It is at least as judicious as Scott; and more terse, pointed, and discursive. The only commentary of Romans that we have read which it does not excel, is that of Calvin. Had Melancthon been less scholastic, and on some points more decided, his comment, with its noble prolegomena, might have held as high a place as any. But as the case is, Calvin and Haldane stand alone—the possessors, as expositors of this Epistle, of nearly equal honours. . . The two, taken together, will come near our conception of a perfect commentary; and the reader, who wishes completely to master the doctrine of justification as developed by Paul, we strongly recommend to study them both."

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Reviews of Volume Second of EXPOSITION of EPISTLE to the ROMANS. Chap. vi.—x. Second Edition. By ROBERT HALDANE, Esq.

*Extract from the Covenanter.—Belfast, July, 1837.*

“ Mr Haldane's former works have done valuable service to the Church: they are so full, perspicuous, and masterly, that they deserve to be regarded as

standard works on the subjects which they discuss. The Exposition of the Romans we consider to be one of the most useful, as it is one of the ablest of Mr Haldane's works. The author's views are eminently Scriptural, and accord with those of our excellent Westminster Standards. In all cases he states, with admirable precision and accuracy, the sense of the inspired writer, and the connection of isolated expressions with his arguments; the errors of former commentators are explicitly stated, and ably refuted; and the practical reflections are brought forward with much cogency and earnestness. We give it our warmest recommendation. Under the blessing of the Church's Head, we look to it as a means well adapted to arrest the progress of those loose and dangerous sentiments, to which an overweening fondness for German critics and expositors has given currency, in our day, and to expose the specious sophistry of the Arminian delusion. We know no better book on the subject to recommend to students for the ministry, and to ministers who are set for the defence of the truth: and it goes forth with our earnest desires, that, through the blessing of the Spirit, it may powerfully tend to elucidate and recommend the faith which was once delivered to the saints."

*Extract from the Edinburgh Christian Instructor.—August, 1837.*

"We desire to bless God that it hath pleased him to raise up such an advocate for sound doctrine, and such an able opponent of error as Mr Robert Haldane. We have examined the second volume of his Exposition with care, and we have no hesitation in pronouncing it to be an able, and truly Scriptural illustration of the word and truth of God. We can safely say that the work before us is far more than a merely orthodox exposition. It is clear and masterly in its development of principles. It is bold and decided in its tone, because the Word of God which it illustrates and defends, is so. Among the many excellent practical illustrations of *particular topics* with which it abounds, we notice specially those on adoption; on assurance; on the inward conflict betwixt the flesh and Spirit; and on the distinctive features of Christian obedience. We recommend the work most cordially to the attention of ministers, preachers, and students in Theology; satisfied as we are, that even the 'scientific Theologian' may ponder its pages without any detriment either to his science or his taste; while we are sure that its lessons will tend, by the blessing of God, to refine the one, and to sanctify and ennoble the other."

*Extract from the Presbyterian Review.—November, 1837.*

"We had, not long ago, the pleasure of introducing to our readers the first volume of Mr Haldane's valuable Exposition,—we have now the pleasure of announcing his second. We welcome him again into this field of labour as cordially as before; and we are sure that those of our friends who have any right idea of what sort of expositor he is, will heartily join us in this welcome.... We regard this part of the work (on the seventh chapter) as a very full and rich exhibition of Christian experience, as the former parts had been of Christian doctrine.... Here (the eighth chapter) we think Mr Haldane peculiarly admirable. As usual, he investigates each clause, analyzes each expression.... Mr Haldane has most ably defended (in the ninth chapter) the plain and literal interpretation of the verses in question.... We trust that it (this work) is destined to give a tone to the hermeneutics of our age, to prevent any contamination with the noxious influences of a Continental atmosphere. It may be, that God may have raised up Mr Haldane, and sent him forth as His instrument for recalling us to the freshness of our first love, and the purity of our first faith."