

should return to the Church of England, whose doctrines they had never renounced. But the most signal instance of a fixed determination to prevent any one congregation from changing its mind in regard to any dogma or rite, until all the others associated with it are ready to move on in the same direction, has been exemplified in our times by the Free Kirk of Scotland. More than a million of the population suddenly deserted the old establishment, and were compelled to abandon hundreds of ecclesiastical buildings, in which they had worshiped from their childhood. Some of these edifices remained useless for a time, locked up, and no service performed in them, because the minister and nearly all the parishioners had joined in the secession. It was necessary for the separatists to erect 700 or 800 new edifices and school-houses, on which they expended several hundred thousand pounds, having often no small difficulty to obtain new sites for churches, so that their ministers preached for a time, like the Covenanters of old, in the open air. It was under these circumstances, and at the moment of submitting to such sacrifices, that their new ecclesiastical organization was completed, providing that if any one of several hundred congregations should hereafter deviate, in ever so slight a degree, from any one of the numerous articles of faith drawn up nearly three centuries ago, under the sanction of John Knox, or from any one of the rules and forms of church government then enacted, they should be dispossessed of the newly erected building, and all funds thereunto belonging. Had any other contract been proposed, implying the possibility of any future change or improvement in doctrine or ceremony, not a farthing would have been contributed by these zealous Presbyterians; nor have they acted inconsistently, inasmuch as they are fully persuaded that they neither participate in an onward or backward movement, but are simply reverting to that pure and perfect standard of orthodoxy of the middle of the sixteenth century, from which others have so sinfully departed.

It is only in times comparatively modern, that the opinion has gained ground in Europe, and very recently in Scotland, that in the settlement of landed property there should be some limitation of the power of the dead over the living, and that a testator can