

without which men cannot be other than slaves, be the form of government under which they live what it may.

Be it remembered too, that, whatever we of the present age may think of our church, our fathers thought much of it. It was for two whole centuries the most popular of all establishments, and stamped its own character on that of the people. The law of patronage, as re-established by Oxford and Bolingbroke, first lowered its efficiency; not altogether so suddenly, but quite as surely, as these statesmen had intended. From being a guide and leader of the people, it sunk, in no small degree, into a follower and dependant on the government and the aristocracy. The old Evangelical party dwindled into a minority, and in the majority of its Church of Scotland became essentially unpopular and uninfluential. More than one half our church stood on exactly the same ground which had been occupied by the curates of half a century before; and the pike and musket were again employed in the settlement of ministers, who professed to preach the gospel of peace. A second change for the worse took place about fifty years ago, when the modern system of agriculture was first introduced, and the rage for experimental farming seemed to pervade all classes,—ministers of the church among the rest. Many of these took large farms, and engaged in the engrossing details of business. Some were successful and made money, some were unfortunate and became bankrupt. Years of scarcity came on; the price of grain rose beyond all precedent; and there were thousands among the suffering poor who could look no higher in the chain of causes than to the great farmers, clerical and lay, who were thriving on their miseries. It is a fact which stands in need of no comment, that the person in the north of Scotland who first raised the price of oatmeal to three pounds per boll was a clergy-