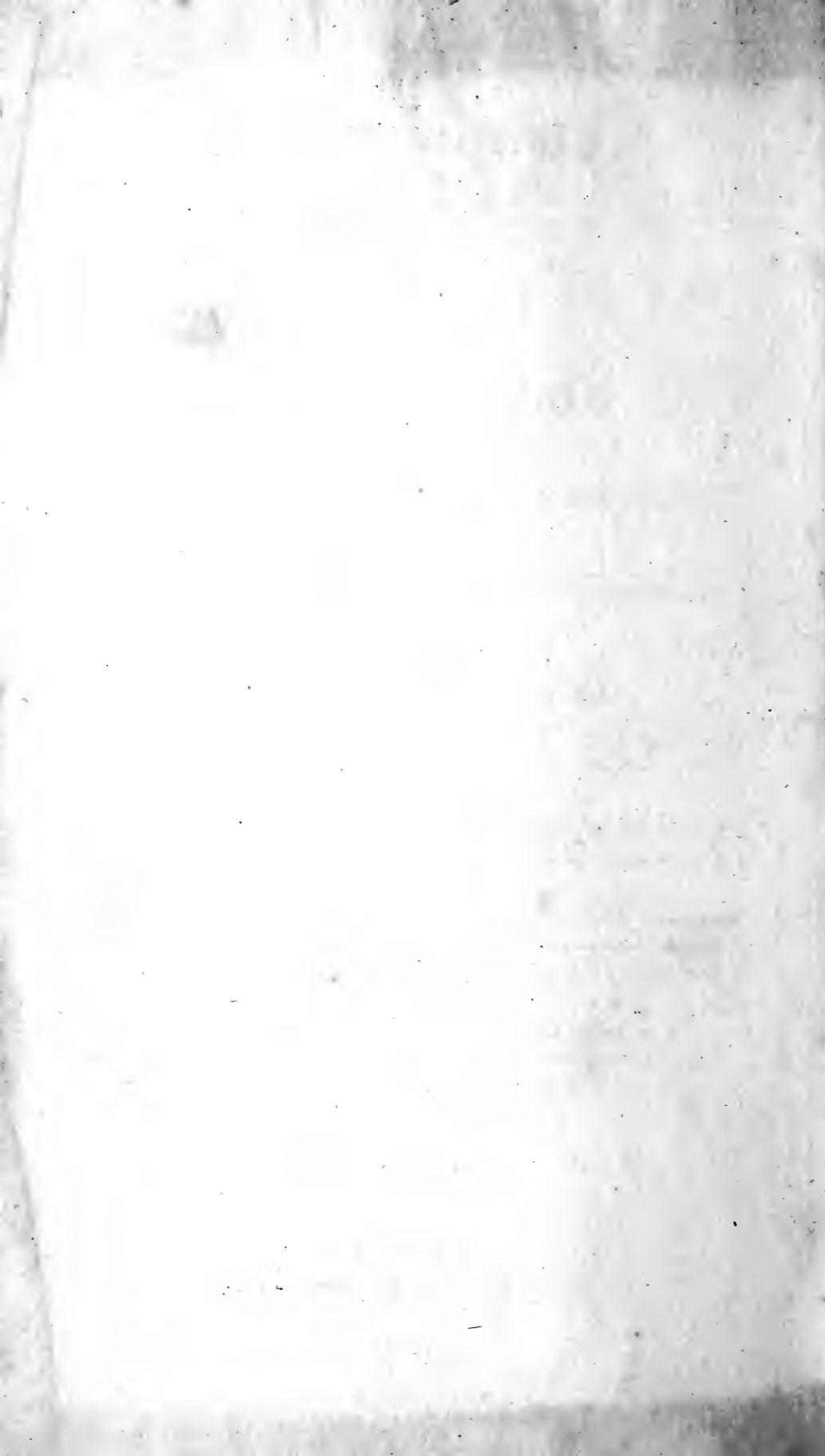




John A. McLean







THE  
**Christian Selector,**  
FOR 1810.



A PERIODICAL  
**COMPILATION,**

DESIGNED TO SUBSERVE  
**THE INTERESTS OF RELIGION AND MORALITY,**  
AGREEABLY TO  
THE WORD OF GOD AND THE SUBORDINATE STANDARDS  
OF THE  
**CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.**



.....

Let us choose to us judgment: let us know among ourselves what is good.  
JOB xxxiv. 4.

Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things  
are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatso-  
ever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any  
praise, think on these things. . . . . PHILIP. iv. 8.

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and  
love which is in Christ Jesus. . . . . 2 TIM: i. 13.

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◀ VOL. I. ▶

PAISLEY:  
PRINTED BY STEPHEN YOUNG.  
.....  
1810.

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# ADDRESS.

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**I**N a country where books abound on every subject, and a competent education is easily obtained, a considerable number of people incline to devote a portion of their time to some kind of reading. Comparatively few, however, can afford the means to procure, or the time to peruse large systems. Periodical publications, containing a pleasing variety of important information, are much better suited to the circumstances of the greater part of society; and the increasing number and circulation of such productions, in the various departments of useful knowledge, clearly attest their acceptability to the public in general. Possessing advantages common to all periodical works, those of the religious kind are capable of eminent utility. The subjects of which they treat are of superior importance, and highly interesting to every person.

The **CHRISTIAN SELECTOR** is designed to subserve the interests of religion and morality on their surest basis, and in their purest forms. Attentive to the nature of God, the nature of man, and their relation to each other, as ascertained by the supreme standard of all moral excellence, this *Compilation* is intended to contain an assemblage of whatever in the word, works, and providence of God may seem more directly calculated to promote love and duty to God and man—a miscellany of whatever shall appear particularly

adapted to illustrate and establish the doctrine of salvation by grace, and to point out its influence on holiness of life.

Carefully guarding against every thing which may tend to licentiousness, the CHRISTIAN SELECTOR will be always accessible to that candid statement, and calm discussion of the topics on which the friends of Calvinistic doctrine differ, which may happily bring them to greater unanimity of sentiment—render them more formidable to the common enemy—and better able to propagate the truths for which they contend. This liberality, however, does not imply the editor's approbation, or disapprobation, of the particular sentiments that may be stated on either side of the dispute; nor render personal controversy and debate admissible. He wishes it to be well understood, that nothing can be admitted which, in matter or manner, is calculated to irritate and divide the friends of reformation principles, rather than promote union and godly edification.

When the deceptive arts of concealment and misrepresentation are so dexterously exercised in the subversion of truth, there appears an absolute necessity for using every proper mean to unite its friends, and to arouse them into that bold discriminating spirit, which so remarkably characterized our honoured ancestors, in the glorious work assigned them by God.

To revive and invigorate in the minds of the present generation, that love of pure religion and moral order—that ardent attachment to reformation principles, which so eminently distinguished our forefathers; and to impress upon the minds of our children, a just sense both of their privilege and of their duty, will always be a principal consideration; and no opportunity will be



neglected which may afford the prospect of promoting an effect so important.

The compiler of this work is influenced by no unfriendly disposition toward any of the respectable periodical publications of the day. With much satisfaction, he has regularly read some of these since their commencement; and, wishing to avail himself of their able assistance, means to co-operate with them, so far as he is satisfied they are calculated to promote the interests of the truth as it is in Jesus. Several of these are works of great merit, and of long established respectability. If this selection, however, although much inferior, and possessing only very faint shades of distinction in favour of our excellent reformation standards, shall be well received, find access and do good to a class of readers, perhaps not otherwise favoured with any work of the kind he will be glad. Of his competence or insufficiency for the undertaking it would be useless to say much. Of these others will form their judgments as they see meet. Great pretensions he does not make. He requests and expects help. The greatest simplicity in every respect is intended, and suggested improvements will be kindly received.

The CHRISTIAN SELECTOR will contain original pieces, extracts, interesting occurrences and transactions illustrative of theological subjects, and of scripture inspiration, in the fulfilment of its predictions relative to persons, families, cities and nations; the coming and work of Messiah, the rejection of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles, the rise and fall of Antichrist, the restoration of the Jews, and the latter day glory. To render the work thus a proper channel for communicating the result of private study, reading and obser-

vation, the editor warmly solicits the aid of all the friends of Scotland's covenanted reformation, of whatever name. He casts a wishful eye toward the ministers of Jesus who support a banner for that noble cause. On their assistance, he is humbly sensible, both the value of the proposed work, and the esteem in which it will be held by the public greatly depend. He lays his design at their feet, respectfully requesting their attention to it as their own. Something similar has repeatedly been suggested; and, as the clear profits of the publication may be appropriated to such pious and charitable purposes as the proprietors shall think proper, were ministers and people *so* to unite their respective exertions, under the favour of Providence, it might certainly be the happy mean of relieving the distressed—diffusing knowledge—counteracting the influence of error—edifying themselves—and extending Messiah's kingdom.

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THE  
CHRISTIAN SELECTOR.

No. I,

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WEDNESDAY, JAN. 31. 1810.

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ON GOD'S EXISTENCE.

*“ Let us begin with God; all things are full of God.”*

HESIOD.

**T**HAT *God is*, is the first principle. It is the supreme truth, and fundamental to all religion. All the truths of religion spring from this as their common principle: Without a firm faith in this truth no religious worship can be performed aright. All would be but foolish custom and empty formality. A belief of this great truth ought, therefore, to rest on undeniable evidence. *“ He that cometh to God must believe that he is.”*

God properly denotes a being of infinite perfection, who created, preserves and governs all things. As God possesses a nature far beyond the comprehension of any of his creatures, of course, that nature is inexplicable. All our knowledge of invisible objects is obtained by analogy; that is, by the resemblance they bear to visible objects; but as there is in nature no exact resemblance of the nature of God, an attempt to explain the Divine nature is absurd and impracticable. All similitudes, therefore, which are used in attempting to explain it must be rejected. Though we cannot fully understand God's nature, yet there is something of him we may know. He hath been pleased to discover his being and per-

fections, in some measure, by his works and by his word. These, therefore, we ought to study, in order that we may obtain accurate and becoming thoughts of him. To his works we chiefly turn our attention at present.

The methods usually followed in proving the existence of God are two; the first called *argumentum a priori*, which, beginning with the cause, descends to the effect; the other *argumentum a posteriori*, which, from a consideration of the effect, ascends to the cause. The former of these hath been particularly laboured by some writers; but after all they have said, the possibility of any one's being convinced by it hath been questioned. The more general proofs are the following.

All nations, Heathens, Jews, Mahometans, and Christians, harmoniously consent that there is a God, who created, preserves, and governs all things. To this it has been objected, that there have been, at different times, and in different countries, men who denied the existence of God. These have been so few, however, and by their opinions have shown that they rather denied the particular providence than the existence of God, that it can hardly be said to be an exception to the argument stated. And even if men were bold enough to assert it, it would be no absolute proof that they really believed what they said, since it might proceed from a *wish* that there were no God to whom they must be accountable for their sin, rather than a *belief* of it. It has also been objected, that whole nations have been found in Africa and America, who had no notion of a Deity. This, however, has never been proved: on the contrary, upon accurate inspection, even the most stupid Hottentots, Saldanians, Greenlanders, Kamtschatkans, and savage Americans, are found to have some idea of a God. We never read or heard of any nation so barbarous as not to acknowledge a God. Rather than have no God they would have a false one. A belief in God's existence is least discernible where, and in those who through ignorance are almost similar to beasts, which plainly manifests it to be an inseparable ingredient of reason. What prejudice of fear, of fancy, or of education, could answer the taste of every nation, every person, in every age of the world,

in favour of this persuasion, if it were not well founded? How could any one prince impose it on all men? Or, when, and where did several princes meet to contrive and establish it? Or, if princes or priests imposed the belief of this on others, as a state trick to keep them in awe, how came they also to believe it themselves?

It is argued from the law and light of nature. There is a natural impression of the existence of God on the minds of all men—an indistinct idea of a *Being of infinite perfection*, and a readiness to acquiesce in this truth whenever they understand the terms in which it is expressed. Whence, but from the power of the truth itself, can this impression proceed, even in the minds of such, whose affections and carnal interests dispose them to believe the contrary? It has been observed by some writers, that there are no innate ideas in the minds of men, and particularly concerning God; but this is not easily proved, since an inspired apostle assures us that even the Gentiles, destitute of the law of Moses, have the "*work of the law written in their hearts.*"

The works of creation plainly demonstrate the existence of a God. The innumerable alterations and manifest dependence, every where observable in the world, prove that the things which exist in it neither are, nor could be from eternity. It is self-evident that they never could form themselves out of nothing, or in any of their respective forms; and that *chance*, being nothing but the want of design, never did, nor could, form or put any thing into order; far less such a marvellous and well connected system as our world is. Though we should absurdly fancy *matter* to be eternal, yet it could not change its own form, or produce life or reason; nothing being capable to confer that which it hath not in itself, either formally or virtually. Moreover, when we consider the diversified and marvellous forms of creatures in the world, and how exactly their forms and stations correspond with their respective ends and uses; when we consider the marvellous and exact machinery, form, and motions of our own bodies; and especially, when we consider the powers of our soul, its desires after an infinite good, and its close union with, and

incomprehensible operations on our bodies, we are obliged, by the light of evidence, to admit a Creator of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness. Though we can conceive a succession, a very long succession of animal production, we cannot conceive how that production could be effected by the animals themselves, independently of any other; and still less, how that successive production could extend unto a proper eternity, or commence without the agency of a self-existent, self-sufficient, almighty, infinitely wise and benevolent Creator. It is further observable, that a tradition of the beginning of the world hath every where prevailed among mankind.

The world is like a great book wherein God hath set forth himself: and the great diversity of creatures in it, are as so many letters out of which we may spell his name. Man is the epitome of the world, and contains in himself the substance of all natures. All the perfections of the several natures in the world meet in him. In his soul, he partakes of heaven; in his body of earth. In him is the life of plants, the sense of beasts, and the intellectual nature of angels.—The soul is the greatest glory of the lower world—and, as one says, There seems to be no more difference between a soul and an angel, than between a sword in the scabbard, and when it is out of it.—Certainly such a noble being cannot be the effect of any material cause.—Such a spiritual nature must proceed from a higher spirit than itself, and of a transcendant perfection above it.—Consider the union of the noble, active and immortal soul, to a dull earthly body.—This must be the effect of an infinite power. Who but a God could so closely unite such different substances?—We need go no farther than ourselves to behold a God. We must flee from ourselves before we can put off the notions of a Deity.

It is argued from the support and government of all things. The motion of the heavenly luminaries, exactly calculated for the greatest advantage of our earth, and its inhabitants;—the exact balancing and regulating of the meteors, winds, rain, snow, hail, vapour, thunder, and the like;—the regular and never-failing returns of summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, day and night;—the astonishing and diversified for-



mation of vegetables;—the propagation of herbs, almost every where, that are most effectual to heal the distempers of animal bodies in that place;—the almost infinite diversification of animals and vegetables, and their pertinents; that, notwithstanding an amazing similarity, not any two are exactly alike, but every form, member, or even feather or hair of animals, and every pile of grass, stalk of corn, herb, leaf, tree, berry, or other fruit, hath something peculiar to itself;—the making of animals so sagaciously to prepare their lodgings, defend themselves, provide for their health, produce and protect, and procure food for their young;—the direction of fishes and fowls to, and in such marvellous and long peregrinations, at such seasons, and to such places as best correspond with their own preservation and the benefit of mankind;—the stationing of brute animals by sea and land, at less or greater distances as is most suited to the safety, subsistence or comfort of mankind; and preventing the increase of prolific animals, which are hurtful; and making the less fruitful ones, which are useful, exceedingly to abound;—the so diversifying the countenances, voices, and hand-writings of men, as best secures and promotes their social advantages;—the holding of so equal a balance between males, and females, while the number of males, whose lives are peculiarly endangered in war, navigation, &c. is generally greatest;—the prolonging of men's lives, when the world needed to be peopled, and now shortening them, when that necessity hath ceased to exist;—the almost universal provision of food, raiment, medicine, fuel, &c. answerable to the nature of particular places, cold or hot, moist or dry;—the management of human affairs, relative to societies, government, peace, war, trade, &c. in a manner different from, and contrary to, the carnal policy of those concerned;—and especially the strangely similar, but diversified erection, preservation and government, of the Jewish and Christian churches,—clearly manifest the existence of an infinitely wise, powerful, merciful, and good God, who preserves and governs the world, and every thing in it.

“ From dearth to plenty, and from death to life,

“ Is nature's progress, when she lectures man

" In heavenly truth; evincing, as she makes  
 " The grand transition, that there lives and works  
 " A soul in all things, and that soul is God."——  
 " The Lord of all, himself through all diffus'd,  
 " Sustains, and is the life of all that lives.  
 " Nature is but a name for an effect,  
 " Whose cause is God."——  
 " But all are under one. One Spirit—His  
 " Who wore the platted thorns with bleeding brows  
 " Rules universal nature. Not a flow'r,  
 " But shows some touch, in freckly streak or stain,  
 " Of his unrivall'd pencil. He inspires  
 " Their balmy odours and imparts their hues,  
 " And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes  
 " In grains as countless as the sea-side sands,  
 " The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth.  
 " Happy who walks with him! whom what he finds,  
 " Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flow'r,  
 " Or what he views of beautiful or grand  
 " In nature, from the broad majestic oak  
 " To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,  
 " Prompts with remembrance of a present God!  
 " His presence, who made all so fair, perceiv'd,  
 " Makes all still fairer. As with him no scene  
 " Is dreary, so with him all seasons please.  
 " Though winter had been none, had man been true,  
 " And earth be punish'd for its tenant's sake,  
 " Yet not in vengeance; as this smiling sky,  
 " So soon succeeding such an angry night,  
 " And these dissolving snows, and this clear stream  
 " Recov'ring fast its liquid music, prove.  
 " Who then, that has a mind well strung and tun'd,  
 " To contemplation, and within his reach  
 " A scene so friendly to his fav'rite task,  
 " Would waste attention at the chequer'd board,  
 " His host of wooden warriors to and fro  
 " Marching and counter-marching, with an eye  
 " As fixt as marble, with a forehead rig'd  
 " And furrow'd into storms, and with a hand  
 " Trembling, as if eternity were hung  
 " In balance on his conduct of a pin?"—— COWPER.

God's existence may also be argued from the holy scriptures. There is such a book as the Bible; therefore there must be a God. If there were no God, this book could never have had a being; seeing no creature nor company of creatures, good or bad, could be the authors of it. The Bible bears a clear stamp and impress of God upon it; and hath in it such lively marks and characters of a Deity, as are not to be found in all the works of nature. The incomparable excellencies of the holy scriptures abundantly prove their divine descent and original; and that there exists a God of infinite perfection from whom they proceed.

The marvellous events, which have happened in the world; such as the overflowing the earth by a flood—the confusion of languages—the burning of Sodom and the cities about by fire and brimstone from heaven—the plagues of Egypt—the dividing of the Red sea—raining manna from heaven, and bringing streams of water from flinty rocks—the stopping of the course of the sun—quenching of the violence of fire—shutting of the mouths of hungry lions—raising of the dead—healing of diseases, even the most desperate, without any application of natural remedies—terrible apparitions in the air, or on the earth, before the overthrow of cities or nations, also irrefragably demonstrate the existence of God.

His existence no less clearly appears from the exact fulfilment of so many and so particularly circumstantiated predictions, published long before the events took place; *viz.* predictions concerning mankind in general—the descendants of Noah, Lot and Abraham—Canaanites, Syrians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Turks, Jesus Christ, Antichrist, New-testament church, &c. It is impossible that these predictions, which were so exactly fulfilled in their respective periods, and of the fulfilment of which there are, at present, thousands of demonstrative and sensible documents in the world, could proceed from any but an all-seeing, infinitely wise, and almighty God.

The existence of God farther appears from the fearful punishments which have been inflicted upon persons, and especially upon nations, when their immoralities became exces-

sive, and that by very unexpected means and instruments; as in the drowning of the old world—the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah—plagues of Pharaoh and his servants—overthrow of Sennacherib and his army—miseries and ruin of the Canaanites, Jews, Syrians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Saracens, Turks, Tartars and others.

The existence of God may be farther argued from the terror and dread which wound the consciences of men, when guilty of crimes which other men do not know, or are not able to punish or restrain; as in the case of Caligula, Nero, and Domitian, the Roman emperors; notwithstanding their earnest labour to persuade themselves and others that there is no God. Hence their dread of *thunder*, or to be alone in the dark, &c. God hath not left himself without a witness in men's own breasts: yea, every man's conscience is as a thousand witnesses of this grand truth, that *God is*.

As to the *modus* of the Divine existence, it would be presumption to attempt to explain it. That he exists, is clear from the foregoing arguments; but the manner of that existence is not for us to know. Many good men have uttered great absurdities in endeavouring to explain it, and after all none of them have succeeded. The wisest of men never made the attempt. Moses began his writings by supposing the being of a God; but did not attempt to explain it. Although many of the inspired writers asserted his existence, and, to discountenance idolatry, pleaded for his perfections, yet no one of them ever pretended to explain the manner of his being. Our duty is clear. We are not commanded nor expected to understand it. All that is required is this; “*He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*”

Here, indeed, the truth of God's existence is proposed to our faith; for although it is known by the light of nature, and consequently is an object of natural knowledge; yet the same truth may, in diverse respects, be an object both of faith and of reason; when that which is discoverable by natural reason, is more clearly and distinctly proposed to faith by divine reve-

lation: as for example, “*Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God.*” We understand this, even by natural reason; but we understand it more clearly and distinctly, by faith founded upon divine revelation. In this case, though a man assent to a truth on principles of reason; yet the new evidence given to it by divine revelation, confirms his mind more in the persuasion of it. So here, *the being of God*, is an article, both of our reason, as it shines forth to us in the creatures; and an article of faith, as it breaks forth upon us in the holy scriptures. It is true, faith is properly only of those things that are above reason, and depend merely upon revelation; what is demonstrable by nature’s light is properly an object of reason: yet in regard of the new and clear evidence given to it by divine revelation, it is also an object of faith. There is a great difference between assenting to a truth, upon principles of reason, and assenting to the same truth upon divine testimony. A man may yield a moral and transient assent to the being of God on principles of reason; but he cannot yield a spiritual and saving fixed assent to it without faith. We must have a divine revelation, ere we can savingly believe this truth, that *God is*.

The apostle is here speaking of such a belief of God’s being as encourages sinners to come to him, and is founded on divine revelation. We must believe that *God is* in such a manner as he hath revealed himself in the holy scriptures, otherwise we form an idol to ourselves. We do not believe the existence of the only true God, unless we believe the existence of that God who is one in three persons: and the belief of this is founded only upon divine revelation.

*See Buck’s Theo. Dict.; Brown’s Syst. of Div.; Wisheart’s Theo.*

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## ON ATHEISM.

*Hence! far hence, O ye profane!* VIRGIL.

**A**N Atheist is one who denies the existence of God. This is called speculative atheism. Professing to be

lieve in God, and yet acting contrary to this belief, is called practical atheism. Absurd and irrational as atheism is, it has had its votaries and martyrs. In the seventeenth century, Spinoza, a foreigner, was its noted defender. Lucilio Vani-  
 ni, a native of Naples, also publicly taught atheism in France; and, being convicted of it at Toulouse, was condemned and executed in 1619. It has been questioned, however, whether any man ever seriously adopted such a principle. The pretensions to it have been generally founded on pride or affectation. The open avowal of atheism by several of the leading members of the French Convention seems to have been an extraordinary moral phenomenon. This, however, as we have seen, was a principle too vague and uncomfortable to last long.

Archbishop Tillotson justly observes, that speculative atheism, is unreasonable on five accounts. 1. Because it gives no tolerable account of the existence of the world.—2. It does not give any reasonable account of the universal consent of mankind in this apprehension, that there is a God.—3. It requires more evidence for things than they are capable of giving.—4. The Atheist pretends to know that which no man can know.—5. Atheism contradicts itself. Under the first of these he thus argues:—"I appeal to any man of reason whether any thing can be more unreasonable than obstinately impute an effect to chance, which carries in the face of it all the arguments and characters of a wise design and contrivance. Was ever any considerable work, in which there was required a great variety of parts, and a regular and orderly disposition of those parts, done by chance? Will chance fit means to ends, and in ten thousand instances, and not fail in any one? How often might a man, after he had jumbled a set of letters in a bag, fling them out upon the ground before they would fall into an exact poem; yea, or so much as make a good discourse in prose? And may not a little book be as easily made by chance as the great volume of the world? How long might a man be in sprinkling colours upon canvass with a careless hand, before they would happen to make the exact picture of a man? And is a man easier made by chance than



his picture? How long might twenty thousand blind men, which should be sent from several remote parts of England, wander up and down before they would all meet upon Salisbury plain, and fall into rank and file in the exact order of an army? And, yet, this is much more easy to be imagined than how the innumerable blind parts of matter should rendezvous themselves into a world. A man that sees Henry the Seventh's chapel at Westminster might with as good reason maintain (yea, with much better, considering the vast difference betwixt that little structure and the huge fabric of the world) that it was never contrived or built by any means, but that the stones did by chance grow into those curious figures into which they seem to have been cut and graven; and that upon a time (as tales usually begin) the materials of that building, the stone, mortar, timber, iron, lead, and glass, happily met together, and very fortunately ranged themselves into that delicate order in which we see them now, so closely compacted, that it must be a very great chance that parts them again. What would the world think of a man that should advance such an opinion as this, and write a book for it? If they would do him right, they ought to look upon him as mad; but yet with a little more reason than any man can have to say that the world was made by chance, or that the first man grew up out of the earth as plants do now. For, can any thing be more ridiculous, and against all reason, than to ascribe the production of men to the first fruitfulness of the earth, without so much as one instance, and experiment, in any age or history, to countenance so monstrous a supposition? The thing is, at first sight, so gross and palpable, that no discourse about it can make it more apparent. And, yet, these shameful beggars of principles give this precarious account of the original of things; assume to themselves to be the men of reason, the great wits of the world; the only cautious and wary persons that hate to be imposed upon; that must have convincing evidence for every thing; and can admit of nothing without a clear demonstration for it."

The best and greatest men of all ages, and of all nations, seem to have had their minds thoroughly seasoned with reli-

gion. It is indeed a melancholy reflection that any nation which is now at a greater height of glory for its councils and conquests than it ever was before, should distinguish itself by a certain looseness of principles, and a falling off from those schemes of thinking which conduce to the happiness and perfection of human nature. This evil comes upon us from the works of a few solemn blockheads, that meet together with the zeal and seriousness of apostles, to extirpate common sense, and propagate infidelity. These are the wretches, who, without any show of wit, learning, or reason, publish their crude conceptions with an ambition of appearing more wise than the rest of mankind, upon no other pretence than that of dissenting from them. One gets by heart a catalogue of title-pages and editions, and immediately to become conspicuous, declares that he is an unbeliever. Another knows how to write a receipt, or cut up a dog, and forthwith argues against the immortality of the soul. I have known many a little wit, in the ostentation of his parts, rally the truth of the scripture, who was not able to read a chapter in it. Those poor wretches talk blasphemy for want of discourse, and are rather the objects of scorn or pity than of our indignation: but the grave disputant that reads and writes, and spends all his time in convincing himself and the world that he is no better than a brute, ought to be whipped out of a government, as a blot to a civil society, and a defamer of mankind. I love to consider an infidel, whether distinguished by the title of Deist, Atheist, or Freethinker, in three different lights, in his solitudes, his afflictions and in his last moments.

A wise man, that lives up to the principles of reason and virtue, if one considers him in his solitude, as taking in the system of the universe, observing the mutual dependence and harmony, by which the whole frame of it hangs together, beating down his passions or swelling his thoughts with magnificent ideas of Providence, makes a nobler figure in the eye of an intelligent being than the greatest conqueror amidst all the poms and solemnities of a triumph. On the contrary, there is not a more ridiculous animal than an Atheist in his

retirement. His mind is incapable of rapture or elevation; he can only consider himself as an insignificant figure in a landscape, and wandering up and down in a field or a meadow, under the same terms as the meanest animals about him, and as subject to as total a mortality as they; with this aggravation, that he is the only one amongst them who lies under the apprehension of it.

In distresses, he must be of all creatures the most helpless and forlorn; he feels the whole pressure of a present calamity, without being relieved by the memory of any thing that is past, or the prospect of any thing that is to come. Annihilation is the greatest blessing that he proposes to himself, and an halter or a pistol the only refuge he can fly to. But if you would behold one of these gloomy miscreants in his poorest figure, you must consider him under the terrors, or at the approach of death.

I was once on shipboard with one of these vermine, when there arose a brisk gale, which could frighten nobody but himself. Upon the rolling of the ship, he fell upon his knees, and confessed to the chaplain, that he had been a vile Atheist, and had denied a supreme Being, ever since he came to his estate. The good man was astonished, and a report immediately ran through the ship that there was an Atheist upon the upper deck. Several of the common seamen who had never heard the word before, thought it had been some strange fish; but they were more surprised when they saw it was a man, and heard out of his own mouth, that he never believed, till that day, that there was a God. As he lay in the agonies of confession, one of the honest tars whispered to the boatswain, that it would be a good deed to heave him over board. But we were now within sight of port, when of a sudden the wind fell, and the penitent relapsed, begging all of us that were present, as we were gentlemen, not to say any thing of what had passed.

He had not been on shore above two days, when one of the company began to rally him upon his devotion on shipboard, which the other denied in so high terms, that it produced the lie on both sides, and ended in a duel! The Atheist

was run through the body, and after some loss of blood, became as good a christian as he was at sea, till he found that his wound was not mortal. He is at present one of the free-thinkers of the age, and now writing a pamphlet against several received opinions concerning the existence of fairies.

There are even zealots in Atheism. One would fancy that these men, though they fall short, in every other respect, of those who make a profession of religion, would at least outshine them in this particular, and be exempt from that single fault which seems to grow out of the imprudent fervors of religion: but so it is, that infidelity is propagated with as much fierceness and contention, wrath and indignation, as if the safety of mankind depended upon it. There is something so ridiculous and perverse in this kind of zealots, that one does not know how to set them out in their proper colours. They are a sort of gamesters who are continually upon the fret, though they play for nothing. They are perpetually teasing their friends to come over to them, though, at the same time, they allow that neither of them shall get any thing by the bargain. In short, the zeal of spreading atheism is, if possible, more absurd than atheism itself.

Since I have mentioned this unaccountable zeal which appears in Atheists, and infidels, I must further observe that they are likewise in a most particular manner possessed with the spirit of bigotry. They are wedded to opinions full of contradiction and impossibility, and, at the same time, look upon the smallest difficulty in an article of faith as a sufficient reason for rejecting it. Notions that fall in with the common reason of mankind, that are conformable to the sense of all ages and all nations, not to mention their tendency for promoting the happiness of societies, or of particular persons, are exploded as errors and prejudices; and schemes erected in their stead that are altogether monstrous and irrational, and require the most extravagant credulity to embrace them. I would fain ask one of these bigotted infidels, supposing all the great points of atheism, as the casual or eternal formation of the world, the materiality of a thinking substance, the mortality of the soul, the fortuitous organization of the body,

the motions and gravitation of matter, with the like particulars, were laid together and formed into a kind of creed, according to the opinions of the most celebrated Atheists. I say, supposing such a creed as this were formed, and imposed upon any one people in the world, whether it would not require an infinitely greater measure of faith, than any set of articles which they so violently oppose? Let me therefore advise this generation of wranglers, for their own and for the public good, to act at least so consistently with themselves, as not to burn with zeal for irreligion, and with bigotry for nonsense.

A believer may be excused by the most hardened Atheist for endeavouring to make him a convert, because he does it with an eye to both their interests. The Atheist is inexcusable who tries to gain over a believer, because he does not propose the doing himself or believer any good by such a conversion.

The prospect of a future state is the secret comfort and refreshment of my soul; it is that which makes nature look gay about me: it doubles all my pleasures and supports me under all my afflictions. I can look at disappointments and misfortunes, pain and sickness, death itself, and what is worse than death, the loss of those who are dearest to me, with indifference, so long as I keep in view the pleasures of eternity, and the state of being, in which there will be no fears nor apprehensions, pains nor sorrows, sickness nor separation. Why will any man be so impertinently officious, as to tell me all this is only fancy and delusion? Is there any merit in being the messenger of ill news? If it is a dream let me enjoy it, since it makes me both the happier and the better man.

I must confess I do not know how to trust a man who believes neither heaven nor hell, or, in other words, a future state of rewards and punishments. Not only natural self-love, but reason directs us to promote our own interest above all things. It can never be for the interest of a believer to do me a mischief, because he is sure, upon the balance of accounts, to find himself a loser by it. On the contrary, if he considers his own welfare in his behaviour towards me, it will lead him to do me all the good he can, and at the same time



restrain him from doing me an injury. An unbeliever does not act like a reasonable creature, if he favours me contrary to his present interest, or does not distress me when it turns to his present advantage. Honour and good-nature may indeed tie up his hands; but as these would be very much strengthened by reason and principle, so without them they are only instincts, or wavering unsettled notions, which rest on no foundation.

Infidelity has been attacked with so good success of late years, that it is driven from all its out-works. The Atheist has not found his post tenable, and is therefore retired into deism, and a disbelief of revealed religion only. But the truth of it is, the greatest number of this set of men, are those who, for want of a virtuous education, or examining the grounds of religion, know so very little of the matter in question, that their infidelity is but another term for their ignorance.

As folly and inconsiderateness are the foundations of infidelity, the great pillars and supports of it are either vanity of appearing wiser than the rest of mankind, or an ostentation of courage in despising the terrors of another world, which have so great an influence on what they call weaker minds, or an aversion to a belief that must cut them off from many of those pleasures they propose to themselves, and fill them with remorse for many of those they have already tasted.

The great received articles of the christian religion have been so clearly proved, from the authority of that divine revelation in which they are delivered, that it is impossible for those who have ears to hear, and eyes to see, not to be convinced of them. But were it possible for any thing in the christian faith to be erroneous, I can find no ill consequences in adhering to it. The great points of the incarnation and sufferings of our Saviour produce naturally such habits of virtue in the mind of man, that, I say, supposing it were possible for us to be mistaken in them, the infidel himself must at least allow that no other system of religion could so effectually contribute to the heightening of morality. They give us great ideas of the dignity of human nature, and of the love which the supreme Being bears to his creatures, and consequently



engage us in the highest acts of our duty towards our Creator, our neighbour, and ourselves. How many noble arguments has St Paul raised from the chief articles of our religion, for the advancing of morality in its three great branches? To give a single example in each kind: What can be a stronger motive to a firm trust and reliance on the mercies of our Maker, than the giving us his Son to suffer for us? What can make us love and esteem even the most inconsiderable of mankind, more than the thought that Christ died for him? Or what dispose us to set a stricter guard upon the purity of our own hearts than our being members of Christ, and a part of the society of which that immaculate person is the head? But these are only a specimen of those admirable enforcements of morality which the apostle has drawn from the history of our blessed Saviour.

If our modern infidels considered these matters with that candour and seriousness which they deserve, we should not see them act with such a spirit of bitterness, arrogance, and malice; they would not be raising such insignificant cavils, doubts, and scruples, as may be started against every thing that is not capable of mathematical demonstration; in order to unsettle the minds of the ignorant, disturb the public peace, subvert morality, and throw all things into confusion and disorder. If none of these reflections can have any influence on them, there is one that perhaps may, because it is adapted to their vanity, by which they seem to be guided much more than by their reason. I would therefore have them consider, that the wisest and best of men in all ages of the world have been those who lived up to the religion of their country, when they saw nothing in it opposite to morality, and to the best lights they had of the Divine nature. Pythagoras' first rule directs us to worship the gods as it is ordained by law; for that is the most natural interpretation of the precept. Socrates, who was the most renowned among the heathens, both for wisdom and virtue, in his last moments desires his friends to offer a cock to *Æsculapius*; doubtless out of a submissive deference to the established worship of his country. Xenophon tells us that his prince (whom he sets forth as a pattern

of perfection), when he found his death approaching, offered sacrifices on the mountains to the Persian Jupiter, and the Sun, according to the customs of the Persians; for these are the words of the historian. Nay, the Epicureans and anatomical philosophers showed a very remarkable modesty in this particular; for, though the being of a God was entirely repugnant to their schemes of natural philosophy, they contented themselves with the denial of a Providence, asserting at the same time the existence of gods in general: because they would not shock the common belief of mankind, and the religion of their country.

The following account of the Atheist's creed, drawn up by Archbishop Tillotson, will show us how unreasonable, disinteresting, and uncomfortable, such a system must be. "The Atheist believes that there is no God, nor possibly can be; and consequently that the wise as well as unwise of all ages have been mistaken, except himself and a few more. He believes that either all the world have been frightened with an apparition of their own fancy, or that they have most unnaturally conspired together to cozen themselves; or that this notion of a God is a trick of policy, though the greatest princes and politicians do not at this day know so much, nor have done time out of mind. He believes either that the heavens and the earth, and all things in them, had no original cause of their being, or else that they were made by chance, and happened, he knows not how, to be as they are; and that in this last shuffling of matter, all things have, by great good fortune, fallen out as happily and as regularly, as if the greatest wisdom had contrived them; but yet he is resolved to believe that there was no wisdom in the contrivance of them. He believes that matter of itself is utterly void of all sense, understanding, and liberty; but, for all that, he is of opinion that the parts of matter may now and then happen to be so conveniently disposed as to have all these qualities, and most dexterously to perform all those fine and free operations which the ignorant attribute to spirits." Such is the Atheist's creed, from whence we learn that he must be weak, credulous, and absurd.

Of all principles, that of atheism is the most incongruous to the nature of man, and the most inimical to true happiness. Without the belief of a God, and the hope of immortality, the miseries of human life would often be insupportable.

The following observations of Dr Beattie relative to characters professing such principles are truly admirable. “Carressed by those who call themselves the great, engrossed by the formalities and fopperies of life, intoxicated with vanity, pampered with adulation, dissipated in the tumult of business, or amidst the vicissitudes of folly, they perhaps have little need and little relish for the consolations of religion. But let them know, that, in the solitary scenes of life, there is many an honest and tender heart pining with incurable anguish, pierced with the sharpest sting of disappointment, bereft of friends, chilled with poverty, racked with disease, scourged by the oppressor, whom nothing but trust in Providence, and the hope of a future retribution, could preserve from the agonies of despair. And do they, with sacrilegious hands, attempt to violate this last refuge of the miserable, and to rob them of the only comfort that had survived the ravages of misfortune, malice, and tyranny? Ye traitors to human kind, how can ye answer for it to your own hearts? Surely every spark of your generosity is extinguished for ever.—Let not the lover of truth, however, be discouraged. Atheism cannot be of long continuance; nor is there any danger of its becoming universal. When men have retrieved the powers of serious reflection, they will find it a frightful phantom, and the mind will return gladly and eagerly to its old endearments.” Truth will arise, and vindicate her rights, notwithstanding all opposition: it must and will prevail.

The fool says, There is *no God*: but the truly wise improves the whole universe as the temple of a *present God*. In every creature he discerns a Maker, a Saviour's perfections. The ear that is always attentive, never hears a voice that speaks not of God; the soul, whose eye is intent, never sees an atom wherein she doth not discern her best beloved.

See *Spect.*; *Buck's Theo. Dict. and Anec.*

## THE ATHEIST CONVINCED.

*An Anecdote.*

**T**HE famous astronomer Athanasius Kircher, having an acquaintance who denied the existence of a supreme Being, took the following method to convince him of his error upon his own principles. Expecting him upon a visit, he procured a very handsome globe of the starry heavens, which, being placed in a corner of the room in which it could not escape his friend's observation, the latter seized the first occasion to ask from whence it came, and to whom it belonged. "Not to me," said Kircher, "nor was it ever made by any person, but came here by mere chance." "That," replied his sceptical friend, "is absolutely impossible: you surely jest." Kircher, however, seriously persisting in his assertion, took occasion to reason with his friend upon his own atheistical principles. "You will not," said he, "believe that this small body originated in mere chance; and yet you would contend that those heavenly bodies, of which it is only a faint and diminutive resemblance, came into existence without order and design." Pursuing this chain of reasoning, his friend was at first confounded, in the next place convinced, and ultimately joined in a cordial acknowledgment of the absurdity of denying the existence of a God.

*See Buck's Anec.*

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### ON GOD'S NATURE AND PERFECTIONS, IN GENERAL.

"Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" JOB.

**S**IMONIDES, being asked by Dionysius the tyrant what God was, desired a day's time to consider of it before he made his reply. When the day was expired, he desired two days; and afterwards, instead of returning his answer, demanded still double time to consider of it. This great poet and

philosopher, the more he contemplated the nature of the Deity, found that he waded but the more out of his depth; and that he lost himself in the thought, instead of finding an end of it.

If we consider the idea which wise men, by the light of reason, have framed of the divine Being, it amounts to this: that he has in him all the perfections of a spiritual nature; and since we have no notion of any kind of spiritual perfection but what we discover in our own souls, we join infinity to each kind of these perfections, and what is a faculty, in a human soul, becomes an attribute in God. We exist in place and time, the divine Being fills the immensity of space with his presence, and inhabits eternity. We are possessed of a little power and a little knowledge, the divine Being is almighty and omniscient. In short, by adding infinity to any kind of perfection we enjoy, and by joining all these different kinds of perfections in one being, we form our idea of the great Sovereign of nature.

Though every one who thinks must have made this observation, I shall produce Mr Locke's authority to the same purpose, out of his Essay on Human Understanding. "If we examine the idea we have of the incomprehensible supreme Being, we shall find, that we come by it the same way; and that the complex ideas we have both of God and separate spirits, are made up of the simple ideas we receive from reflection: *v. g.* from having what we experience in ourselves, got the ideas of existence and duration, of knowledge and power, of pleasure and happiness, and of several other qualities and powers, which it is better to have, than to be without; when we would frame an idea the most suitable we can to the supreme Being we enlarge every one of these with our idea of infinity; and so putting them together, make our complex idea of God."

It is not impossible that there be many kinds of spiritual perfection, besides those which are lodged in a human soul; but it is impossible that we should have ideas of any kinds of perfection, except those of which we have some small rays and short imperfect strokes in ourselves. It would be therefore a very high presumption to determine whether the su-

preme Being has not many more attributes than those which enter into our conceptions of him. This is certain, that if there be any kind of spiritual perfection which is not marked out in a human soul, it belongs, in its fulness, to the Divine nature.

Several eminent philosophers have imagined that the soul, in her separate state, may have new faculties springing up in her, which she is not capable of exerting during her present union with the body; and whether these faculties may not correspond with other attributes in the Divine nature, and open to us hereafter new matter of wonder and adoration, we are altogether ignorant. This, as was said before, we ought to acquiesce in, that the sovereign Being, the great Author of nature, has in him all possible perfection, as well in kind as in degree; to speak according to our methods of conceiving. I shall only add under this head, that when we have raised our notion of this infinite Being as high as it is possible for the mind of man to go, it will fall infinitely short of what he really is. There is no end of his greatness; the most exalted creature he has made, is only capable of adoring that which none but himself can comprehend.

The advice of the son of Sirach is very just and sublime in this light. "By his word all things consist. We may speak much, and yet come short: wherefore in sum, he is all. How shall we be able to magnify him? For he is great above all his works. The Lord is terrible and very great; and marvellous in his power. When you glorify the Lord, exalt him as much as you can; for even yet will he far exceed. And, when you exalt him, put forth all your strength, and be not weary; for you can never go far enough. Who hath seen him, that he might tell us? and who can magnify him as he is? There are yet hid greater things than these be, for we have seen but a few of his works."

I have here only considered the supreme Being by the light of reason and philosophy. If we would see him in all the wonders of his mercy, we must have recourse to revelation, which represents him to us, not only as infinitely great and glorious, but as infinitely good and just in his dispensations



toward men. But as this is a theory which falls under every one's consideration, though indeed it can never be sufficiently considered, I shall here only take notice of that habitual worship and veneration which we ought to pay to this almighty Being, We should often refresh our minds with the thought of him, and annihilate ourselves before him in the contemplation of our own worthlessness, and of his transcendent excellency and perfection. This would imprint in our minds such a constant and uninterrupted awe and veneration as that which I am here recommending, and which is in reality a kind of incessant prayer, and reasonable humiliation of the soul before him who made it.

This would effectually kill in us all the little seeds of pride, vanity, and self-conceit, which are apt to shoot up in the minds of such whose thoughts turn more on those comparative advantages which they enjoy over some of their fellow-creatures, than on that infinite distance which is placed between them and the supreme model of all perfection. It would likewise quicken our desires and endeavours of uniting ourselves to him by all the acts of religion and virtue.

Such an habitual homage to the supreme Being would, in a particular manner, banish from among us that prevailing impiety of using his name on the most trivial occasions.

Every one knows the veneration which was paid by the Jews to a name so great, wonderful, and holy. They would not let it enter even into their religious discourses. What can we then think of those who make use of so tremendous a name in the ordinary expressions of their anger, mirth, and most impertinent passions?—of those who admit it into the most familiar questions and assertions, ludicrous phrases, and works of humour? not to mention those who violate it by solemn perjuries. It would be an affront to reason to endeavour to set forth the horror and profaneness of such a practice. The very mention of it exposes it sufficiently to those in whom the light of nature, not to say religion, is not utterly extinguished.

God's eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen and understood by the things that are made. He has legibly written

the knowledge of himself in the great volumes of creation and providence. These he opens to all the world. All the creatures in general, and every one of them in particular, declare “*God made us and not we ourselves;*” and that the same God who made them, upholds and governs them to the end for which they were made. Although the works of creation and providence undeniably demonstrate the existence of God, and afford some imperfect glimpses of his eternal power, wisdom, greatness and goodness; yet it is only by the scriptures of truth, that correct notions of God, and of his perfections can be attained.

In the scriptures, there are various names given to God, though, properly speaking, he can have no name; for he is incomprehensible; he is not nominable; and being but one, he has no need of a name to distinguish him; nevertheless, as names are given him in the scripture, to assist our ideas of his greatness and perfection, they are worthy of our reverential consideration: These names are, *El*, which denotes him the strong and powerful God, Gen. xvii. 1. *Eloah*, which represents him as the only proper object of worship, Psalm xiv. 6, 7. *Shaddai*, which denotes him to be all-sufficient and all-mighty, Exod. vi. 3. *Hhhehjon*, which represents his incomparable excellency, absolute supremacy over all, and his peculiar residence in the highest heaven, Psalm l. 11. *Adon*, makes him the great connector, supporter, Lord, and judge of all creatures, Psalm cx. 1. *Jah*, which may denote his self-existence, and giving of being to his creatures; or his infinite comeliness, and answerableness to himself, and to the happiness of his creatures, Exod. xv. 2. *Ehjah*, *I am*, or *I will be*, denotes his self-existence, absolute independency, immutable eternity, and all-sufficiency, to his people, Exod. iii. 14. *Jehovah*, which denotes his self-existence, absolute independency, unsuccessive eternity, and his effectual and marvellous giving of being to his creatures, and fulfilling his promises, Gen. ii. 4, &c.

In the New Testament, God is called *Kurios*, or *Lord*, which denotes his self-existence, and his establishment of, and authority over all things; and *Theos*, which represents



him as the maker, pervader, and governing observer of the universe.

In the holy scriptures, Christ, the Son of God, reveals his Father to men. “*No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son of God, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*” He savingly teaches his genuine disciples by his word and Spirit. “*The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.*” The scriptures declare that “*God is light*”—“*God is love*”—“*God is a spirit.*” He is *light*—a God of infinite purity and omniscience; and is the fountain and Father of all *light*, whether material, natural, gracious, or glorious. God is *love*. Agreeably to the manifestation which he makes of himself in Christ, *love* is the reigning perfection of his nature—tinctures all his other perfections; and hence they are all exercised in *love* for the salvation of sinners. God is a *spirit*—a living substance; incorruptible; incorporeal, without flesh, bones or bodily parts. When bodily parts, such as, eyes, mouth, hands, feet, &c. are ascribed to God in scripture, they are spoken of him after the manner of men, in condescension to our weakness, because we cannot conceive of God, nor of the things of the Spirit of God, but by metaphorical similitudes. It is absolutely unlawful and idolatrous, however,—condemned in the second precept of the moral law, and other scriptures, to form any external image of God with the hands, or any internal imaginary idea of him in the fancy. Man cannot form any imaginary idea of his own soul or spirit, far less of him who is the Father of spirits. “*God is a Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.*” Although a comprehensive knowledge of God is impossible, yet, besides the speculative and merely rational knowledge of him, which may be attained by the light of nature, a saving and satisfactory knowledge of him is attainable, and is promised in the word. The saving knowledge of God is like the *white stone* and *new name*, which no man knows but he that receiveth it; and he that attains it cannot make language of it,

but silently admires what he cannot comprehend. There is no saving knowledge of God, but in and through Jesus the Saviour. The language of the soul that knows God savingly in Christ, is, "*Who is like unto thee, O Lord, who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?*" "*This God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our guide even unto death.*"

The rays of Divine glory in the face of Jesus Christ, whereby we come to know God savingly, are the attributes and perfections of his nature, by which he is pleased to manifest himself; such as, that he is infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. The attributes of God are not distinct things from God himself, or the Divine essence. *Whatever is in God is God himself*; and therefore the infinity of all perfection, is inseparable from the Divine essence. All perfections whatsoever being inseparable from God, must also be inseparable from one another; for though we, through weakness, must think and speak of them separately, yet all of them taken together, are, properly speaking, but the one infinite perfection of the Divine nature, which cannot be separated therefrom, without denying that God is infinitely perfect, which would be the height of blasphemy. The perfections of God are called his attributes, because they are attributed or ascribed to him, as the essential properties of his nature. The attributes of God are commonly divided into incommunicable and communicable. The incommunicable attributes of God are, his infinity, eternity, and immutability. They are called incommunicable because there is not the least resemblance of them to be found among the creatures. The communicable attributes of God are, his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth, and are called communicable because there is some faint resemblance or similitude of them observable among the creatures, namely angels and saints; hence they are proposed for our imitation. "*The righteous Lord loveth righteousness—Be ye holy for I am holy.*" Those communicable attributes, however, cannot be ascribed to any creature, as they are in God. They are in him infinitely, eternally,

and unchangeably: which would be blasphemy to affirm of any creature: hence it is said, “*There is none good but one, that is God.*”—none infinitely, eternally, unchangeably and independently good, but he only.

See *Buck's Theo. Dict.*; *Addison's Evid.*; *Fisher's Cate.*

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## REGULATIONS OF THE

### BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

—“*The word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified.*”—

PAUL.

I. **T**HE Designation of this Society shall be THE BRITISH & FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY, of which the sole object shall be, to encourage a wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures. The only copies in the languages of the United Kingdom to be circulated by the Society, shall be the authorized version, without note or comment.

II. This Society shall add its endeavours to those employed by other Societies, for circulating the Scriptures through the British dominions; and shall also, according to its ability, extend its influence to other countries, whether Christian, Mahometan, or Pagan.

III. Each Subscriber of One Guinea annually, shall be a Member.

IV. Each Subscriber of Ten Guineas at one time, shall be a Member for life.

V. Each Subscriber of Five Guineas annually, shall be a Governor.

VI. Each Subscriber of Fifty Pounds at one time, or who shall, by one additional payment, increase his original subscription to Fifty Pounds, shall be a Governor for life.

VII. Governors shall be entitled to attend and vote at all Meetings of the Committee.

VIII. An Executor paying a bequest of Fifty Pounds, shall be a Member for life; or of One Hundred Pounds, a Governor for life.

IX. A Committee shall be appointed to conduct the business of the Society, consisting of Thirty-six Laymen, Six of whom shall be Foreigners, resident in London or its vicinity, half the remainder shall be Members of the Church of England, and the other half Members of other denominations of Christians. Twenty-seven of the above number, who shall have most frequently attended, shall be eligible for re election for the ensuing year. The Committee shall appoint all Officers, except the Treasurer, and call special General Meetings, and shall be charged with procuring for the Society suitable patronage, both British and Foreign.

X. Each Member of the Society shall be entitled, under the direction of the Committee, to purchase Bibles and Testaments at the Society's prices, which shall be as low as possible.

XI. The Annual Meeting of the Society shall be held on the first Wednesday in May, when the Treasurer and Committee shall be chosen, the Accounts presented, and the Proceedings of the foregoing year reported.

XII. The President, Vice-Presidents, and Treasurer, shall be considered, *ex officio*, Members of the Committee.

XIII. Every Clergyman or Dissenting Minister who is a Member of the Society, shall be entitled to attend and vote at all Meetings of the Committee.

XIV. The Secretaries, for the time being, shall be considered as Members of the Committee; but no person deriving any emolument from the Society shall have that privilege.

XV. At the General Meetings and Meetings of the Committee, the President, or in his absence the Vice-President first upon the list, then present; and in the absence of all the Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer; and in his absence, such Members as shall be voted for that purpose, shall preside at the Meeting.

XVI. The Committee shall meet on the first Monday in every Month, or oftener if necessary.

XVII. That the Committee shall have the power of nominating such persons who render essential services to this Institution, either MEMBERS FOR LIFE, OR GOVERNORS FOR LIFE,

XVIII. That the Committee shall also have the power of nominating HONORARY MEMBERS from among Foreigners who promote the objects of this Society.

XIX. The whole of the Minutes of every General Meeting shall be signed by the Chairman.

*See Fifth Report of the Society.*

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## FACTS RELATIVE TO THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

—“*Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.*” DAVID.

**T**HE British and Foreign Bible Society was instituted in the year 1804. Its exclusive object is to promote and assist the circulation of the Scriptures both at home and abroad. The only copies to be circulated in the languages of the United Kingdom, are those of the authorised version, without note or comment.

The object of this Society being so simple, and the sphere of its proposed employment so extensive, it has been judged expedient to engage in its support, all denominations of Christians who profess to regard the Holy Scriptures as the proper standard of religion.

Such a constitution of the Society, while it secures an adherence to the authorised version, by the mutual jealousies of its members on all matters of construction and comment, provides, at the same time, for employing in its behalf more zeal and resources than could be expected from its appropriation to any particular description of Christians.

Within the short space of four years, the Society has succeeded in accomplishing many important parts of its comprehensive design. This will appear from the following facts:

It has produced by its aid and encouragement, societies similar to itself in Germany and Prussia. By the former of these, 5000 copies of a German Protestant New Testament have been printed; and types have been lately set up for the purpose of printing successively a supply of German Bibles

for many generations: by the latter, an edition of the Bohemian Bible is in a course of printing for the use of the Protestants in Bohemia, Berlin, and elsewhere.

2000 copies of St John, in the Mohawk language, have been printed in London, at the Society's expense; 500 of which have already been distributed, with great acceptance, among the Mohawks settled on the Grand River; and 500 more are about to be sent, for the use of the Roman Catholic and other Mohawks lower down the St Lawrence, in consequence of an application to that effect.

3000 copies of the Icelandic New Testament, have been printed in Copenhagen, at the Society's expense, 2000 of which have been bound and forwarded to Iceland; and very recently the sum of £390, has been granted by the Society, in aid of a fund now raising in Denmark, for printing the whole Bible in the Icelandic language.

Two separate sums of £1000 each, have been granted towards the translations of the Scriptures now going on in Bengal, into ten Oriental languages, among which are the Shanscrit and the Chinese. Specimens of these Translations have been received; they are in different degrees of forwardness, and some are actually completed.

Arabic types and paper have been granted by the Society, for the purpose of printing 5000 copies of the New Testament in the Turkish language at Karass, on the borders of the Caspian sea; a favourable opportunity having offered for introducing the Scriptures among a people amounting to nearly 30 millions, who speak that language, and who inhabit from the banks of the Wolga to the shores of the Euxine.

5000 copies of the Spanish Testament have been printed by the Society; 7000 of the French have been ordered at different times; and preparations are now making for procuring a stereotype edition of the latter.

Several thousand Welsh Testaments have been furnished to Wales; larger supplies are in a course of preparation, besides 20,000 copies of a Welsh Bible, which will be completed with all despatch.

English New Testaments have also been supplied to Ire-



land; and 20,000 copies of a neat Gælic Bible for the Highlands of Scotland, are now passing through the press.

The English and Welsh Bibles and New Testaments are all printed by stereotype, under the direction of the University of Cambridge.

To the above series of facts it may be added, that the Society has furnished copies of the New Testament, and occasionally of the whole Bible, AT HOME—to the convicts at Woolwich; the prisoners in Newgate, and other jails; the German soldiers and seamen at Margate, Gosport, Guildford, Dublin, and other places; the sea-fencibles on the Essex coast; and the French and Spanish prisoners of war; and ABROAD—to the British soldiers at the Cape of Good Hope; the inhabitants of Newfoundland, Halifax, and Nova Scotia; the settlers at Van Dieman's land; the French at St Domingo; the Spaniards at Buenos Ayres; the colonists of New South Wales; and to different parts of France, Switzerland, and Germany.

The Society has already expended between 5 and £6000, in accomplishing these several objects, and stands farther pledged for very considerable sums, on account of the many important undertakings in which it is now engaged.

Farther, The Directors have granted a considerable supply of English Testaments and Bibles, for 74 flourishing Sunday-schools in Ireland, consisting of about 4000 scholars; and 1000 Testaments to a Member of the Society, for distribution in that kingdom. Aid has been afforded to the establishment of Bible Societies in Ireland, by which a more extensive circulation of the Scriptures will be promoted in that country.

7000 copies of the French Testament have been voted to the French prisoners of war, whose number at present in Britain, amounts to about 30,000.

5000 copies of the Danish Testament, for the use of the Danish prisoners, &c.

And, in the currency of the year, 1808, Gælic Scriptures, to the number of 15,000 copies, were sent to the different Gælic Parishes in Scotland, 7000 of which have been distri-



buted among the Highlanders in Glasgow, Greenock, and the West Highlands. A quantity of Gælic Bibles and Testaments, have also been voted to different Correspondents residing in Nova Scotia and Canada, for sale or gratuitous distribution among the Highlanders who have emigrated to that country. In order that the Scriptures in the Gælic language may be sold cheap to the lower classes among the Highlanders, the Society has sustained a loss of £1300; upon the edition lately printed.

The Committee, independent of numerous grants of Bibles and Testaments in special cases, has lately voted from 3 to £4000, to print the following translations of the Scriptures: *viz.*

I. £600 to the Berlin Bible Society, towards printing an edition of the Bible in the Polish language. By late advices, this Society has, notwithstanding the distressed and disturbed state of that part of Europe, succeeded in distributing an entire edition of the Bohemian Bible, which the British and Foreign Bible Society enabled them to print.

II. £250 for printing 5000 copies of the New Testament into the Lapland tongue.

III. £450, cost of stereotype plates, for printing 5000 copies, the third edition of the Spanish New Testament, the second edition having, in the course of last year, upon the first opening of a friendly intercourse with Spain, been sent to Spain, Minorca, &c. and from the facilities expected of introducing the Scriptures into Spain, it is probable the Society may be called upon to print 20 or 30,000 more.

IV. £500 for an edition of 5000 copies of the New Testament in the Portuguese language; and it is expected, there may be wanted from 10 to 15,000 more.

V. £500 for an edition of the New Testament in Italian, part of which is forwarding to a respectable Clergyman at Malta, for sale or gratuitous distribution.

VI. £550 for an edition in the Danish language.

VII. £500 for one in Dutch.

VIII. The Committee has it under consideration, printing the New Testament in Greek, for the benefit of the Greek Islands, Asia Minor, which it finds will cost about £600.

Add to this, a large sum has been expended, in reducing

the price of various editions in English, to Subscribers, to encourage the increased circulation of the Scriptures at home.

Still farther, information has been received by the British and Foreign Bible Society, from India, of the most interesting nature, relative to the translations going on there, in the various languages of the East, and to the progress made by Europeans in the acquisition of the Chinese language.

The Directors of the British and Foreign Bible Society, contemplating the magnitude of such undertakings, have, at their meeting upon the 2d January, last, resolved, that over and above £2000 voted to these translations in 1806 and 1807, another aid should be given of £1000 for 1808, £1000 for 1809, and £1000 for 1810.

Lastly, information has been received, That the German Bible, for which the Society had granted considerable aid has been completed—

That for printing 4000 copies extra of the New Testament in the Polish language, the Society has voted £200 in addition to its two recent grants of £300 each—

That to a Bible Society formed at Philadelphia, composed of various denominations, the Society has also voted £200, and encouraged them to expect an extension of its aid in proportion as they can extend the sphere of their exertions—

That accounts have been received from Gibraltar that the Spaniards are discovering great eagerness to possess the New Testament, and that great numbers of the inhabitants had come to the Garrison, and at their earnest request were supplied with copies, in consequence of which, the Society has voted a considerable quantity additional to be sent to Gibraltar, in order to be conveyed into the interior of Spain, and distributed as widely as possible through the various parts of that extensive country—

That accounts have been also received that a Society has been recently formed in Sweden, under the direct sanction of the King of Sweden.—And that to this Institution has been attached, with the full approbation of His Swedish Majesty, the printing and extensive distribution of the Holy Scriptures in that kingdom.

And, That in consequence of the progress of religious knowledge, as it is presumed, a spirit of piety and unexampled liberality in the Christian church, appears to have revived and to be spreading wide through all parts of the Continent.

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A plan of such extended benevolence, in bestowing a blessing of the richest value, such as the sacred Scriptures, to every nation, and in every language, in their native simplicity and purity, without note or comment, is the object of the British and Foreign Bible Society. This that Society hath attempted, and by the brief account above, is carrying forward with great success.

The execution of such a plan, it is evident, must be attended with immense labour, and great expense. This expense a generous nation, which has long experienced the happy influence of the sacred Scriptures, upon its civil, moral, and religious interests, will not withhold; as it hath, it will continue to bestow, with a liberal hand, what is necessary, for the support of the British and Foreign Bible Society, until its exertions be crowned with the universal diffusion of the word of God, to all nations, tongues, and languages, upon the face of the earth.

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In 1809, the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society close the Report of their domestic occurrences, by stating, That every Annual Report has hitherto amply verified the prospective intimations held out at the General Meetings, of the increasing utility of the Institution. Its example still continues to stimulate zeal, and to excite emulation; and when the editions of the Scriptures, now in the press, shall be completed, the British and Foreign Bible Society will be entitled to the credit of having, directly or indirectly, produced, or assisted in producing, editions of the Bible, either in whole or in part, in no less than *seventeen* of the languages and dialects current in Europe. If to those be added the Mohawk version of the Gospel by St John, the Kalmuc of the Gospel by St Matthew, and the Oriental Translations carrying on in Bengal, to promote which the Society has so largely contributed, the number will be *twenty-six*.—

That the field of exertion is still ample; and the Committee are persuaded, that the Society will not consider it exhausted, while the inhabitants of any part of the Globe, who are able to read *the things belonging to their peace*, are in want of its assistance.

They farther observe, That the gospel of salvation was a free, unmerited boon to mankind; let us therefore rejoice, that, under Providence, we are become the honoured instruments of its dispersion. It must be most gratifying to the Members of the Society, to receive application for its aid and support dictated by a spirit of christian confidence and unity, from their fellow-labourers in the same cause, dispersed through various parts of the world; but it is still more gratifying to possess the disposition to comply with them, and the means of indulging that disposition to the most liberal extent. Let us therefore hope that neither will ever be wanting. Five years only have elapsed since the British and Foreign Bible Society was established; and during that period, the calamities of war, from which Providence has mercifully protected our Country, have been more or less felt in every kingdom of the Continent. But these calamities, even when they have operated with the greatest pressure, have not been able to extinguish that zeal, which the Society had either kindled, or promoted, for the circulation of the Holy Scriptures; insomuch that the institution of the British and Foreign Bible Society has become a central point of union for individuals and societies animated with the same spirit, however variously circumstanced, or widely dispersed. Like a city set on a hill, it has become conspicuous; and the rays of light which have flowed from it have been reflected with undiminished lustre. What success may attend the operations of the British and Foreign Bible Society for improving the religious and moral state of mankind, cannot be ascertained. But surely it may be permitted to hope, that the blessing of God will not be wanting to an Institution which has for its single object to promote His glory by the circulation of the Holy Scriptures; nor its endeavours in this line of duty be unattended with correspondent success. At present the Mem-

bers of the Society may be allowed to enjoy the gratification of knowing, that it has been the instrument of communicating the words of eternal life to cottages and prisons, to kindred and aliens, to the poor and the afflicted; in our own and foreign countries; and that, through its means, *the people which sat in darkness have seen a great light, and to them which sat in the shadow of death, light is sprung up.*—

And, That many tracts are yet unexplored; and it may be necessary to retrace some which have been already pursued: but, whatever the variety or extent of them may be, the Committee have the fullest reliance, that the zeal of the friends of religion will supply means adequate to increasing exigencies. Nor can any inducement be wanting to those who remember the words of the Prophet, peculiarly styled Evangelical:—  
*“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”*

*See Statement, by the Presb. of Paisley, &c. 1809.*

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### *Suppression of Religious Orders in Naples.*

The following is part of the decree lately issued by Murat, King of Naples:—“Upon the report of our ministers of worship, of justice, and of finance, we have decreed, and do decree as follows: Throughout our whole kingdom the following religious orders are suppressed:—The Dominicans, and all the detached monks of their order, the Minorites, the third Order of St Francis, the Minimists, the two Carmelite orders, the Brethren of St Peter of Pisa, the Servites, the Brethren of St John of God, the Trinitarians of Mercy, (Spanish and Italians), the Augustines, the Sylvestrians, the Basilians, the Theatins, the Regular Minorites, the Cross Bearers, the Clerks of the Mother of God, the Barmalites, the Samaschians, the Priests of St Roche.”

While the Pope is immured at Avignon, the Conclave of Cardinals is ordered to assemble at Paris. The object of this extraordinary convocation is not hinted at; but it relates, in all probability, to the election of M. FESCH (Bonaparte's uncle) to the Papal dignity; and possibly, if it be found practicable, the removal of the Papal See to Paris.

A letter from Rome states, that all the heads of Religious Houses throughout the whole of the Papal States, have been carried to France under an escort.

[*See Christ. Mag. for this Month.*]

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WEDNESDAY, FEB. 28. 1810.

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ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

CHAP. I.

*State of the Church from the Fall of Man until the Law was given  
by Moses at Mount Sinai.*

**I**N proportion as objects exceed in grandeur, they demand the admiration of the human mind. And there is not among the ranks of created being one object worthy of comparison, in respect of sublimity with the Christian church. A moral empire, consisting of members animated by the eternal Spirit, the mediatory person God manifest in the flesh at its head, the vast machinery of creation moving in regular subordination to its interest, and exhibiting the ineffable glory of the Divinity, is an object to be contemplated with admiration and awe. “*Out of Zion the perfection of beauty God hath shined.*”

The church is the centre, around which the Creator causes all terrestrial things to revolve. Our views, therefore, of the present world, must be indistinct, unless we perceive its relation to the kingdom of Christ. The history of nations must be imperfect and erroneous unless it refers to the secret spring by which every motion is directed—the purpose of God to glorify himself in the salvation of his church. This is the meridian line which the Former of all things strikes out thro’



the vast and crowded map of time, and to which every figure, however apparently indistinct and unconnected, is directed by an unerring hand.

The heavens and the earth were created by Jehovah, and each place is adapted by infinite wisdom to the end which it is designed to answer. The first man Adam was appointed to take possession of the earth, for himself, and the whole human race, represented by him, and to descend from him. The tenement was wisely fitted for the occupant. The earth was clothed with verdure; every vegetable in full maturity, and every tree laden with his fruit. The atmosphere was in its best state; and the various kinds of animals, in the perfection of their respective natures, came at the direction of the Creator to testify their submission to man.

A body formed of the earth, and organized upon principles of astonishing wisdom; capable of dissolution, but endowed with a natural immortality; being animated by an immaterial soul, constituted upon principles of necessary immortality, distinguished the common father of our family.

This man God took into covenant. Adam was naturally and necessarily bound to obey all the commandments of God; but as a moral agent he also had power to consent to the terms proposed by his Creator, and to promise obedience. A covenant between God and man consists in a proposal made by God, and a corresponding engagement on the part of man.

In the first covenant, perfect obedience was required of man. The law of nature, reduced into a covenant form, had a positive precept annexed. *“Thou shalt not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”*

Adam, under the united temptation of Satan and of Eve, who had herself been first in the crime, transgressed the covenant of life, and incurred the penalty of death. As the representative of the human race he fell, and all mankind fell in him. This fatal event proved the mean of a further manifestation of the boundless perfection of God. The plans of Heaven were not frustrated. It had from eternity been the



purpose of the God-head to exhibit mercy as soon as man should have become miserable.

The event of the fall was foreknown, and the remedy was predestinated. It was predestinated, too, upon the footing of a solemn covenant: and this gracious covenant is eternal.

There never was a time in which the Divine mind was undetermined. He is of one mind; and his purpose is unalterable. Each divine perfection, and the harmony of all the divine attributes, are to be exhibited in one system, which shall, at the same time, confer unbounded happiness upon that part of the intelligent family of God which are immediately included in it, and offer to the universe an object of contemplation, which is in reality the perfection of beauty.

There is a covenant of grace between God the Father and his eternal Son, for the redemption of human criminals. The magnitude and the condescension of this plan is an unparalleled instance of the grandeur of the conception of the Divine mind. The immense distance between the creature and the Creator is filled up by the mediatorial person, Jesus Christ, who, as the second Adam, undertakes to assume the human nature, complete in soul and body, into a union with his divine nature; and by suffering as a substitute, secures the salvation of those whom it was purposed he should represent. God made a covenant with his chosen, promising, upon condition that he should make his soul an offering for sin, to confer eternal life upon all his spiritual seed.

No sooner was our family involved in sin and misery, than this covenant was revealed. When the first pair felt the operation of the curse, the Redeemer himself, the *personal voice or word of God*, appeared upon the earth, now preserved by his power as the theatre upon which he is about to exhibit the most astonishing instances of majesty and condescension. He conversed with them, and in the same sentence pronounces the punishment, and proclaims the pardon. *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.*

The covenant of grace was now for the first time revealed, and a suitable dispensation is made of it to fallen man. To this dispensation Adam professedly submits, and in evidence of

his faith, calls his wife by the name of EVE, the mother of all living. Both submitted again to the government of God, upon the footing of the revelation of his grace, when they became clothed in those skins which were at once a present earthly benefit, and a type of that justifying righteousness, by which all believers are effectually preserved from condemnation. Immediately did the Redeemer thus dispense, as a new covenant benefit, *bodily raiment*, and a significant religious rite. Sacrifices typical of the sufferings of Christ, were then first instituted. The original pair, our common father, and our common mother, were the first church, and the blessed Redeemer himself the first preacher and the first priest, who directed the worship of God upon the footing of the revelation of his grace. Mercy flows through a covenant system, and it is externally exhibited under a covenant form. The visible church, as a society, is in covenant with God. The covenant between God and his church consists, in God's proposing a certain form of religion as the external dispensation of his grace, and the church professing to receive, and engaging to perform, in the strength of promised grace, every part of religious worship, agreeably to that very form which God has appointed.

Not only are the saints interested in the covenant of grace, but the church, as a visible society, is a *covenant society*.

The visible church, thus erected as a covenant society, waits for the accomplishment of the promise of God, in the use of the instituted means of grace. The children are included with the parents in the ecclesiastical covenant; the sabbath is observed, and sacrifices are offered. On the seventh day of the week, in scripture language, *the end of days*, Cain and Abel presented their offerings to the Lord. God was present in his church, and familiarly conversed with men, and by this extraordinary condescension supplied the want of other means of increasing in religious knowledge. Immediate revelations and domestic instruction supplied the church, during this early period, with adequate information.

The whole of the human family was at first in the church, but this did not continue a long time to be the case. Abel

by faith offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than his elder brother, Cain was wroth, and the Lord reproved him. Instead of reformation, however, the reproof administered by the Head of the church himself, had a bad effect upon this unworthy member. He determined upon revenge, and he murdered his brother.

God called the murderer to an account, spared his life, but secluded him from all further connexion with his covenant society. This excommunicated vagabond, despising ecclesiastical censures, although pronounced by God himself, and solicitous only about the effect as it respected the concerns of his body, went out from the presence of the Lord, and together with his offspring, lived in the total neglect of all religious ordinances.

The church progresses, however, through the medium of the other children of Adam, but especially in the line of Seth. In the days of Enos, who was born in the 235th year of Adam's life, men began to be called by the name of the Lord.\* Church members are God's children in a special sense, and the disciples as they are now called christians, were then called the sons of God, to distinguish them from the accursed offspring of Cain. The information and the wisdom which Adam obtained by his frequent conversation with God, and his own long experience, were calculated to render him highly useful in the church. The age of the patriarchs, before the flood, being generally nine centuries, rendered them living libraries

\* The marginal translation is preferable to that of the text, Gen. iv. 26. In the text the translation is, "then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." In the margin it is, "to call themselves by the name of the Lord." The professors of religion, now publicly renewing their covenant with God, are called by his name; and from this period until the days of Job, the discriminating title of the godly continued to be, *the sons of God*. Gen. vi. 2, Job i. 6. The covenanters, at this time, were called by the name of the Lord, as they afterwards surnamed themselves by the name of Israel. Isaiah xlv. 5.

The best critics confirm this explanation of Gen. iv. 26. Tum ceptum est appe lari de nomine Jehovæ. Quæ versio hoc tempore doctis interpretibus merito probatur. VITRINGA.

Nomen suscepisse peculiare cultorum seu filiorum Dei—et Dei nomine vocati sunt. OWEN.

of sacred knowledge. Two eminent prophets, Noah and Enoch, were also inspired to make further revelations. And in this manner did the church proceed, until, by the impiety of its members, forming intimacies with the wicked offspring of Cain, the power of religion, became almost unknown. God was provoked to overwhelm ungodly professors, and open despisers of his mercy, in one common deluge.

Determined to punish such general corruption, and yet preserve his church, the Lord renewed his covenant, establishing it with Noah and his family. Several pious persons were then living upon the earth, but they were not admitted into this covenant. They were all to be admitted into heaven before Noah should enter the ark. Methuselah died immediately before the flood.

The saints were preserved. Noah and his family were under divine protection. There was not any one of the election of grace found among the rest of the human family. No child of the new covenant was ever afterwards to descend from their families. They are all destroyed by the judgments of God. The covenant of works procures their death; but the dispensation of the covenant of grace preserves Noah and his family. He by faith prepared an ark for the saving of his house.

The church is again reduced to a small compass. Eight souls only are saved in the ark. God renews again his covenant with Noah and his sons, and in this dispensation of his everlasting covenant of free grace, engages to preserve the world from any similar destruction, and to continue both seed-time, and harvest, in their seasons.

The church in a short time increased in numbers, and degenerated in practice. As nations were multiplied, men began to be guilty of idolatry. God, nevertheless, provides for his covenant people his protection. The truly devout found him an exceeding great reward. And they continue to inculcate upon their children the maxims of virtue, to observe the external forms of religion, prayer, conversation, offering sacrifices, and the observation of the sabbath. Eminent men were raised up as types of the Saviour, and the church was instructed

by the transactions of God with these eminent characters. After Noah, Melchisedeck, Abram, Isaac, and Jacob, were types of Christ.

God's covenant with Abraham commences a distinct era in the history of the church. The seed which was sown in the constitution of the church is now expanded. The visible church, as a covenant society, is already bound to submission to all the institutions of the Lord. These institutions are adapted by infinite wisdom to the state of his church. As the term of human life diminishes, domestic instruction becomes more precarious, and less effectual. As nations become more distinct, and have separate interests, there is the greater need of a more regular organization for the church, that its unity may be preserved. And it is always proper that such ordinances as are conducive to edification, and the preservation of an evident distinction from the world, be observed by the disciples of the Lord. The covenant with Abraham was to himself personally interesting. It was a dispensation of the covenant of grace, in which he had already trusted. And, as a type sealed by a bloody rite, it pointed out the covenant of grace to others also.

It is, moreover, a renovation of the ecclesiastical covenant, with some appropriate variations. It is promised to Abraham, that from him the Messiah is to proceed, and that in his family the church shall hereafter continue.

His first name, Abram, signified an eminent patriarch, and being changed by God into Abraham, the father of many people, it became still more significant. This distinguished character travels through the nations, and is universally known. Social worship continues to be conducted in the church as it formerly had been, by the observation of the sabbath, sacrifice, domestic education, prayer, and conference. But God's gracious dispensation to Abram established a more compact ecclesiastical organization than any which preceded it. The Abrahamic covenant has the seal of circumcision affixed to it, and the promised seed is limited to the line of Isaac and Jacob. By this mean intimation is given to all men, that in these families the church is in future to be preserved,



and in due time to be erected into a more regular visible organization. Although all the children of Abraham, and even his adopted offspring, his servants, are constituted members, and receive the seal of circumcision; yet it is well known that both these, and the other pious families which then lived, are, after the elect are carried to heaven from among them, to dwindle away from the visible church, and become extinct as to covenant connexion with God. Shem himself, who lived fifty years after the covenant was established with Abraham, Melchisedeck, and his pious connexions Job and Jethro, and all other good men who believed in God and worshipped him accordingly, are continued in the visible church, according to its ancient patriarchal form; but are excluded from the more compact order, the foundation of which was laid in the covenant of Abraham, and which was at the appointed time to be completely established. Under every form of administration, the immediate children are included with the parents, in the visible covenant society, and every dispensation is introduced so gradually, as that they who lived under the former dispensation shall not lose any of their privileges; and thus the unity of the visible church, although it experiences the necessary alterations in external form, may be constantly preserved. Four centuries did the arrangements made with Abram, as the representative of the church, remain for the consideration of the saints, before they were fully put in practice. Circumcision was indeed practised in his family; but the visible church was not yet so organized as that all others were without its pale, and their forms of worship rejected of God. Prophets and priests were occasionally commissioned immediately by God to instruct, and conduct the devotion of certain parts of his church. During this period there was no written revelation, nor were the forms of worship such as required a regular stated ministry. This patriarchal dispensation, adapted wisely by the Redeemer to the state of the world, continued in operation until the law was given by Moses at Mount Sinai. During this period the church looked forth as the morning.

*(To be Continued.)*

## GOD'S CARE OVER THE SCRIPTURES.

—“ *One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law.*”—

MATTHEW.

**T**HE Providence of God is particularly manifested in the preservation of the Holy Scriptures. To the Jews were committed the Oracles of God, and so faithful have they been to this sacred trust, that when copies of the law or the prophets were transcribed, they not only diligently compared the one with the other, but even counted the number of letters in each book, and compared the numbers.

After the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, Ezra collected as many copies of the sacred writings as he could find, and out of them all prepared a correct edition, arranging the several books in their proper order. These were 22 in number, corresponding to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and divided into three parts; the *Law*, the *Prophets*, and the *Hagiographs*, or holy writings. The *Law* contained 5 books, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy:—the *Prophets* 13, Joshua, Judges with Ruth, Samuel, Kings with Chronicles, Isaiah, Jeremiah with his Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, the twelve minor prophets, Job, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther:—the *Hagiographs* 4, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastics, Song of Solomon. Thus, *the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms*, to which our Saviour refers, were comprehensive of the whole. The book of Jasher, the Wars of the Lord, and the Annals of the kings of Judah, never having more than human authority, are now lost. Neither are the Apocrypha of higher original; and it is a dishonour to christians that ever they were supposed canonical, or bound up among the Oracles of God.

No sooner did the gospel spread through the nations, than it was found necessary to translate the Bible for each into its proper language. Some affirm that the five books of Moses and that of Joshua were translated into Greek before the days of Alexander the Great. But the most remarkable translation of the Old Testament is called the Septuagint, which, if the opinion of some eminent writers is to be credited, was made



in the reign of Ptolmey Philadelphus, about 280 years before the Christian era. At any rate, it is undoubtedly the most ancient that is now extant, and on many accounts deserving notice, though not to be put on a level with the Hebrew text, as has been sometimes done.

Other translations of the Old Testament into Greek were made, from A. D. 128 to 200. It is generally believed that the church of Antioch was favoured with a Syrian version of the Bible, in the year 100. The Ethiopians, of Abyssinia, have a version of the Bible, which they ascribe to Frumentius, of the fourth century. Chrysostom, who lived in the end of the fourth, and Theodoret who lived in the middle of the fifth century, both inform us, that they had the Syrian, Indian, Persian, Armenian, Ethiopic, Scythian, and Samaritan versions. The ancient Egyptians had the Scriptures translated into their language. The Georgians have a version in their ancient language. The Old Testament of all these versions, except the Syrian, is taken from the Septuagint.

The famous Latin translation of the Bible, called the Vulgate, which is now, and has been for many ages, of authority in the church of Rome, is of great antiquity. It is by some said to have been written, or at least copied and improved, by St Jerom in the fourth century; probably the last was the case, for there existed before his time a Latin version, which Augustine calls the Italian, Jerom the Vulgate, and Gregory Nazeazen, the ancient version. In the year 1290 Peter De Vaux translated the Bible into French; and about the same time the Spanish translation was made. There have been many translations both into the French and Spanish since that time. The Polish version was published A. D. 1390; and the first Italian version A. D. 1471. Luther composed his version of the Bible, in the German language, between the years 1521 and 1532; and what is remarkable, not only the Popish translations, but those of the Protestants, for a considerable time after the reformation, were made, not from the Hebrew of the Old, and Greek of the New Testament, but from the Latin of the Vulgate. We are told that early in the sixteenth century the Bohemians took their first version from

the Vulgate: but that towards the close of that century eight divines were employed to compose another from the original text.

We will now give some account of the translations of the Bible into the English language. There have been some who affirmed that Adelme, Bishop of Sherborn, who lived in the beginning of the eight century, translated the Psalms into the Saxon tongue. That however is uncertain, as some of the best historians make no mention of it; yet it is possible, as he was man of great parts, and of great learning for these times, and said to be the first Englishman who wrote in the Latin language. About the same time, or a little after, Bede, commonly called the venerable Bede, translated some parts of the New Testament, some say the whole Bible, but that is not probable. Near two hundred years later king Alfred translated the Psalms into the same language. In 1382, Wickliff finished his translation of the Bible, which is yet extant; that is to say, there are copies of it in some public and private libraries. All these translations were made from the Vulgate. In the reign of Henry the VIII, several editions of the Old and New Testaments were published in English; one of the most remarkable is that of William Tyndal in 1530. The translation of the New Testament was made from the original Greek, but probably the Old Testament either from the Latin of the Vulgate, or the Greek of the Septuagint. This was soon followed by the improvements of Coverdale and Matthews. By order of the king, Tonsal Bishop of Durham, and Heath Bishop of Rochester, made a new translation, which was published in 1541; but not pleasing Henry, was suppressed by authority. In the reign of king Edward the VI, another translation was made, two editions of which were published, one in 1549, and the other in 1551. In the reign of queen Elizabeth, another translation was made, which, being revised by some of the most learned of the Bishops, went by the name of the Bishop's Bible. This professed to be translated from the Hebrew of the Old Testament, and the Greek of the New, though in some instances, when there was a difference, it preferred the Septuagint to the Hebrew.

This last circumstance, with some others, induced king James the I, to select fifty-four persons, eminent in learning, and particularly well acquainted with the original languages in which the Old and New Testaments were written, to make a new translation of the whole Bible. In the year 1607, forty-seven of those persons, the other seven probably having died, assembled together, and arranged themselves into committees, to each of which a portion was given to translate. They were favoured not only with the best translations, but with the most accurate copies, and the various readings of the original text. After about three years' assiduous labour, they severally completed the parts assigned them. They then met together, and while one read the translation newly formed, the rest had each a copy of the original text in his hand, or some one of the ancient versions, and when any difficulty occurred they stopt, till by common consultation it was determined what was most agreeable to the inspired Original. This translation was first published A. D. 1610, and is the one that has been, ever since that time, printed by public authority, and generally used in the British dominions.

*See Address prefixed to an American edition of the Bible.*

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## CONSTITUTION OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY,

*Instituted in Philadelphia, 12th Dec. 1808.*

**T**HE Subscribers having taken into consideration the inestimable value of the Revelation, which it pleased God to make to our world, of his existence, character, will, works, and grace, in Jesus Christ, in the Bible, and of the great benefits to be expected from the distribution of it among persons who are unable, or not disposed, to purchase it, have agreed to form themselves into a Society for that purpose, to be called THE BIBLE SOCIETY, the Constitution of which shall be as follows:—

I. The Bible selected for publication or distribution shall be without notes. Copies of it, in all the languages in which

it is calculated to be useful, shall be distributed when deemed necessary.

II. Each person who becomes a Member of the Society shall pay Five Dollars at the time of subscribing the Constitution, and Two Dollars every year afterwards. Persons who subscribe Fifty Dollars, or more, shall be Members during Life, without any further contribution.

III. The bussiness of the Society shall be conducted by Twenty-four Managers, who shall, after the first election, be chosen annually, by ballot, by the Members present, on the first Monday in May; and who shall, within three days afterwards, meet and choose a President, Four Vice-Presidents, Two Secretaries, and a Treasurer, out of their own body. Seven of the Managers shall be a Board for all transactions, except the appropriation of Money above the sum of 500 Dollars, when Thirteen shall be necessary to constitute a Board. They shall make Bye-Laws for the government of the Society, to correspond with other Bible Societies, keep an Account of the Receipts and Disbursements of Money, and lay them annually before the Public, with an account of the issue of their labours in the great object of the Society.

IV. A special Meeting shall be called, at any time, by the President, or by any Three Managers, with the concurrence of the President, or one of the Vice-Presidents.

V. No alteration of this Constitution shall be made without the concurrence of a majority of the Members met after due notification.

*See Fifth Report, &c.*

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## EXTRACT FROM AN ADDRESS OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY

*Established at Philadelphia, to the American Public.*

**T**HE Bible Society, established at Philadelphia, solicit the serious attention of the christian public, to a short statement of the *origin* and *design* of their institution, &c.

Its *origin* is unquestionably to be attributed to the example

offered, and the efforts made by "The British and Foreign Bible Society," instituted in London about five years since. The plan of that Society, now that it is delineated and carried into effect, is seen to be so important, so practicable, and productive of so much good, that we hardly know how to account for the fact, that it was not sooner devised and executed. Centuries have elapsed since the revival of letters and the art of printing have rendered it an enterprise less difficult than many which have been achieved, to furnish Bibles in all the languages, and to distribute them into all the parts of protestant christendom. Yet, during that period, millions of those who have borne the christian name, have lived and died without a Bible, for the want of some such association as has lately been formed in Britain. The example there set has already been followed in several countries of Europe, and we trust will soon be imitated in various parts of these United States. From the time that it was known in this city, it attracted the marked attention of several persons accustomed to take an interest in whatever is calculated to extend the influence of revealed truth. It was immediately seen that the necessity for such an institution was the same here as in Europe, and that there was every reason to believe that if suitable exertions were made, it could not fail of encouragement. The principal difficulty was to concert the most promising plan for rendering the contemplated charity extensively useful. Two systems were deliberately considered. One was to endeavour to form a large association, consisting of members selected from all the states in the American union, to raise a common fund, and to distribute Bibles in every part of our country. The other was to establish a society, on a smaller scale, in Philadelphia, the attention of which should be principally directed to the state to which the city belongs, and to those portions of the states of Jersey and Delaware which are contiguous to Pennsylvania. The latter system, on mature consideration, appeared, in every view, to claim the preference; and it has accordingly been adopted. A society for the whole of the United States seemed liable to almost insuperable objections. It was thought to be scarcely possible to

form it in such a manner as not to occasion some dissatisfaction, even at the outset. It would be difficult and expensive for the members to attend the meetings. It would not be easy to agree on a place at which they should stately convene, nor to distribute Bibles, with sufficient care, through so wide a region as the plan would require. It was believed, in a word, that such an institution would never be conducted with vigour, nor be likely to continue for a length of time. An institution with more confined views would be easy to manage, and, within its proposed sphere, more efficient in its operations. It could more exactly ascertain where the supplies of the Word of Life were needed, and could furnish them with greater speed and certainty. But the most powerful inducement of all to the preference given, was the confident hope, that similar institutions would be established in a number of other places in the United States, which, by acting with spirit and unanimity, each in a narrower compass, would ultimately produce a much greater amount of benefit, than if a general society should be organized for the country at large. If as many Bible Societies should be instituted as there are states in the union, the number probably would not be too large; and we cannot but think that they would contribute essentially, both to the glory and the safety of the American confederacy. It is our opinion, however, that the boundaries of states ought not to be scrupulously regarded in the formation of these establishments. There are many and obvious advantages resulting from their existing in large towns or cities; from which, as from a centre, the circumjacent regions, intimately known, because constantly traversed on errands of business and commerce, can be easily and effectually furnished with the requisite supply of the Sacred Volume. We shall venture then to say, (confiding that the suggestion will be received with the fraternal spirit with which we are conscious it is offered) that we hope the time is not distant, when we shall see institutions similar to our own, in the town of Boston, and in the cities of New-Haven, New-York, Baltimore, Richmond, Charleston, and Savannah, and in the town of Lexington, in the state of Kentucky. To these places it



is our intention that this address shall be immediately forwarded; and let it be distinctly understood, that it is with the most earnest desire that our christian brethren there may be sharers with us in the good work in which we have engaged; that we cordially invite them to co-operate in it; and that we will esteem it a favour to maintain a friendly correspondence with them, and to unite our counsels and our endeavours with theirs. Nor let it be supposed that in specifying the cities and towns which have been named, we have any intention to intimate, that there may not be other places equally suitable for the establishments in question. Of this their own citizens will judge, and we will at all times be ready cordially to greet as a sister institution every Bible Society, in whatever place, or part of our country, it shall appear.\*

The *design* of our Society has been partially explained in stating its origin. We farther remark more particularly, that it is a fundamental article of our constitution, that all the copies of the Bible which we distribute shall be separated from all notes and commentaries whatsoever, and, except the contents of the chapters, shall contain nothing but the sacred text. It is therefore manifestly a design in which all denominations of christians, without exception, may unite. They all profess to derive their creeds and sentiments from the Sacred Writings. They all profess to believe that those writings contain the fountain of life, which, of course, they are equally bound to open, to those who may be perishing, under maladies which nothing else can relieve.

It is the design of the Society, moreover, to endeavour, within its prescribed bounds, to distribute the Bible in the native speech of all who shall be disposed to read it, so that, if possible, it may not remain a sealed book to any who desire to understand its contents. The English and German languages are the most generally used in Pennsylvania and its neighbouring states, and arrangements have already been

\* Perhaps it will be found expedient in some cases that a number of branch societies, in several parts of a state or region of country, should be formed and connected with a principal one, where the funds may be deposited and the Bibles purchased.

made to obtain a large number of Bibles in each of these tongues. It is known likewise, that Bibles in Welsh and in French will be in demand, and it will be our endeavour that they shall not long be demanded in vain.

It is also the intention of the Society to offer the Bibles which they disperse, as the sacred treasure which they contain is offered, "*without money and without price.*" No worldly gain, either direct or consequential, is to accrue to the individuals of the Society from any of its transactions. Every member at present, not only pays his contribution, but renders every service he performs without prospect or expectation of pecuniary emolument; and whenever it shall become necessary to indemnify any individual for the time and labour he may devote to the service of the institution, or to take any measures calculated ultimately to benefit the funds, the managers pledge themselves that the most rigid principles of economy shall direct their proceedings.

It was the discriminating character of the gospel at its first publication, that it was preached to the poor; and it is to the poor chiefly that we have it in expectation to send the inspired and authentic records of that gospel—To present to them in the sacred pages, the offer of "*the pearl of great price;*" of which, however they may have slightly heard, many of them will never be able to read, if a Bible be not given them—To enable them to see for themselves the provision made by the Father of mercies, to sustain them under the privations and sufferings of time, by the hope of happiness in eternity.

While the poor, generally, will thus claim the peculiar notice of the Society, a still more special regard may be shown to those who suffer from confinement or from crime, as well as from poverty. We cannot express it without emotion, that we hope the time is at hand when the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, reflected from the Holy Scripture, will penetrate and cheer the gloom of every prison in the state of Pennsylvania. The system of penal law, at present existing in this state, contemplates the reformation of criminals, as a part of the design of their punishment. And how is reforma-

tion to be produced or expected, without the influence of inspired truth! But beside criminals, there are in places of confinement, in poor houses and in hospitals, a large number by whom the gift of a Bible will be estimated highly;—not a few, we trust, contemplated in the memorable and affecting declaration of our common Lord: “I was sick and in prison and ye came unto me.” To accommodate the aged and infirm of this description, Bibles printed with a large type and on good paper will be procured for their special use.

The Society do not propose, however, to restrict themselves so rigorously in the gift of the Holy Scriptures, as never to offer them to an individual able to purchase for himself. There are many families in which a Bible is not to be found, the heads of which might probably, without any great inconvenience, give for the book the price at which it is sold; and yet, partly through poverty, and principally through indifference, this possession, so necessary to every family, and so inexpressibly important to youth, never makes a part of their property. Families thus circumstanced, the Society will consider and relieve. They will even inquire after them, in hope that they may not only supply the wants that shall appear, but may also remind the careless of neglected duty, and thus prompt them to reformation.

The soldiers and sailors of our country would, we are persuaded, often prize the gift of a Bible, and find in it the best support and solace of their hazardous and laborious occupations. To them therefore we propose, so far as our means may permit, to present this invaluable article of equipment.

On the frontiers of our country, where books of every kind are scarce, and where religious knowledge and instruction, in any form of communication, are scantily imparted, there will be a wide field, in which to scatter this precious seed of eternal truth and life. Under the auspices of several religious denominations, the civilizing and christianizing of the Indians is at present going forward, with the fairest prospects of success. It will be with us a favourite object to furnish, to the extent of our ability, those copies of the Sacred Scriptures, which will doubtless be in demand in the progress of this in-

teresting work. Nor will the poor Africans, not only of Pennsylvania but of some other states, fail to share in our special regard.

It is, indeed, not easy to foresee all the cases which may occur to demand the attention of the Society. As they arise, they will be distinctly considered, and the general rule of proceeding will be,—wherever the Bible ought to be possessed, and cannot or will not otherwise be obtained, there to bestow it freely.

*See Fifth Report, &c.*

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## CIRCULATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

*“ Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth.”* ISAIAH.

**A** GREEABLY to the most excellent subordinate standards of the Church of Scotland, “ the word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.” For this exalted purpose, man’s unassisted reason is utterly inadequate. God alone comprehends himself, and none else can prescribe the way in which he is to be glorified and enjoyed. This he has mercifully done in the sacred writings, the divine original and descent of which is demonstrable beyond all reasonable contradiction. The scriptures contain the whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary to be known, relative to his own glory, and man’s salvation, faith and life. These are so clearly recorded in one place of the inspired oracles or other, that, by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, even the unlearned, in the due use of ordinary means, may attain a sufficient knowledge of them. The Spirit of God, every where present, can make even the reading of his word “ an effectual mean of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort; through faith unto salvation. “ *Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me — Thou hast known the*

*holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus—Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”—but, “where there is no vision the people perish.”* How important, therefore, to have the Scriptures extensively circulated.

Certainly christians, acting in character, having felt the divine salubrity of scripture on their own souls, will gratefully embrace every uncircumscribed opportunity to promote the distribution of that inestimable treasure, in its naked simplicity, among perishing sinners of every description. This heavenly disposition will naturally exemplify itself in all who have tasted that the Lord is gracious. When it is well with themselves, they will think on others, especially on the indigent—When the joy of the Lord is their strength, they will eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared—When it was well with the Jewish church, in a refreshful interview with her Redeemer, she compassionately thought on the poor neglected Gentiles. *“We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister, in the day when she shall be spoken for?”* And now, the originally wild Gentiles, grafted in among the natural branches, and with them profusely partaking of the root and fatness of the olive tree, their hearts’ desire and prayer to God, for poor forlorn Israel is, that they may be saved. *The deliverer shall come out of Zion and turn iniquity from Jacob; then shall all Israel be saved; and men shall fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun.*

The Bible is a standard around which every denomination of christians profess their readiness to rally; and about the most extensive circulation of which, in every language, they have no dispute. To promote this most important object, christians are one in principle and operation. Of their cordial unanimity, in this best of undertakings, the British and Foreign Bible Society is at once the happy effect and an honourable monument.

Nothing more strongly marks the general approbation of the principle of this Society, and the beneficial influence of its



example, than the establishment of similar societies in different foreign parts of the globe, and of auxiliary associations, in its aid, at home. Among all these there is a zealous and successful co-operation to promote the same great end, the circulation of the holy scriptures. In the faithful prosecution of this glorious work these societies may certainly calculate on the blessing of God, and the fervent prayers of all good men. By their means God may be glorified in the salvation of thousands, in the use of his written word. *The blessing of those who were ready to perish will rest upon them.*

Bible Societies are regarded with reverence. They have undertaken a great work; and their exertions and sacrifices are worthy of the grand aim which they have in view. Calculated to impress the mind of every thinking person with a sense of their importance, above every other attempt that has yet been made, they contemplate the peaceable diffusion of christian light, by means the most mild and unexceptionable. They extend their operations over the remotest parts of the globe, and the islands of the sea. All that remains of the daughter of Zion in christendom rejoices in their light. Dispersed, like solitary cottages in a vineyard; concealed, as lonely lodges in a garden of cucumbers, they feel their weary eyelids pressed down by dark, sultry, and tempestuous clouds; yet a glimpse of cheering light penetrates their huts; they perceive, in the firmament of the church, some morning stars; and among these the British and Foreign Bible Society shines most conspicuous. This gladdens their hearts, and they wait with patient expectation for the approaching of the Sun of Righteousness. Even on the most distant nations, Mahometan as well as Heathen, who are sitting in darkness and in the shadow death, this light now begins to dawn. With unexampled exertion—to each in his own language—they send the word of life. May that God, whose word they honour, and who has put it into their hearts to send it forth into all lands, bless and prosper these societies; and *may the whole earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God.*

The transactions of the present time look forward with an aspect uncommonly expressive and ominous. The Lord



shakes terribly the earth, in the overthrow of civil and religious despotism. The people are left at greater liberty to think and determine for themselves than formerly. Bible Societies are established on the most laudable principles, and calculated for the most extensive operations. In the distress of nations and individuals, their well-deserved punishment for sin, God may graciously open the ear to discipline and instruction. If the gift of the Bible be a valuable thing to every person, it must be peculiarly so to the man deeply ingulfed in distress. Misery pressing hard upon him, he will naturally be excited to receive the instruction, to seek the comfort, and to follow the advice of religion, in proportion as he feels himself in want of its aid, and discovers in it his only resource and refuge. Under these circumstances, the circulation of the scriptures, in their genuine simplicity, among the nations, is perhaps to introduce a new, a more spiritual and moral, order of things, glorious beyond all conception. A spirit of inquiry, and a thirst for knowledge, increase in proportion as the means of instruction become more general. We hail these encouraging appearances as indicating the dawn of civilization—the bright harbinger of happier times than we have yet witnessed—as giving the early promise of a rich harvest of “*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.*”

“ The groans of nature in this nether world,  
 “ Which heav’n has heard for ages, have an end,  
 “ Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung,  
 “ Whose fire was kindled at the prophets’ lamp;  
 “ The time of rest, the promis’d sabbath, comes,  
 “ Six thousand years of sorrow have well nigh  
 “ Fulfill’d their tardy and disastrous course  
 “ Over a sinful world ; and what remains  
 “ Of this tempestuous state of human things  
 “ Is merely as the working of a sea  
 “ Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest :  
 “ For he, whose car the winds are, and the clouds  
 “ The dust that waits upon his sultry march,  
 “ When sin hath mov’d him, and his wrath is hot,

" Shall visit earth in mercy; shall descend,  
 " Propitious, in his chariot pav'd with love;  
 " And what his storms have blasted and defac'd,  
 " For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair.  
 " Rivers of gladness water all the earth,  
 " And clothe all climes with beauty; the reproach  
 " Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field  
 " Laughs with abundance; and the land, once lean,  
 " Or fertile only in its own disgrace,  
 " Exults to see its thistly curse repeal'd.  
 " The various seasons woven into one,  
 " And that one season an eternal spring.—  
 " One song employs all nations; and all cry,  
 " *Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!*  
 " The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks  
 " Shout to each other, and the mountain tops  
 " From distant mountains catch the flying joy;  
 " Till, nation after nation taught the strain,  
 " Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.  
 " Behold the measure of the promise fill'd;  
 " See Salem built the labour of a God!  
 " Bright as the sun the sacred city shines;  
 " All kingdoms and all princes of the earth  
 " Flock to that light; the glory of all lands  
 " Flows into her; unbounded is her joy,  
 " And endless her increase.—  
 " Praise is in all her gates; upon her walls,  
 " And in her streets, and in her spacious courts,  
 " Is heard salvation.

" Her report has travell'd forth  
 " Into all lands. From every clime they come  
 " To see thy beauty and to share thy joy,  
 " O Sion! an assembly such as earth  
 " Saw never, such as heav'n stoops down to see.—  
 " Haste, then, and wheel away a shatter'd world,  
 " Ye slow-revolving seasons! we would see  
 " (A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet)  
 " A world that does not dread and hate its laws,  
 " And suffer for its crimes; would learn how fair  
 " The creature is that God pronounces good,

"How pleasant in itself what pleases him.  
 "Here every drop of honey hides a sting;  
 "Worms wind themselves into our sweetest flow'rs;  
 "And ev'n the joy that happily some poor heart  
 "Derives from heav'n, pure as the fountain is,  
 "Is sullied in the stream, taking a taint  
 "From touch of human lips, at best impure.—  
 "Come, then, and, added to thy many crowns,  
 "Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,  
 "Thou who alone art worthy! It was thine  
 "By ancient covenant, ere nature's birth;  
 "And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,  
 "And overpaid its value with thy blood.  
 "Thy saints proclaim thee King; and in their hearts  
 "Thy title is engraven with a pen  
 "Dipt in the fountain of Eternal love."— COWPER.

What a universal blessing to mankind is the British and Foreign Bible Society likely to prove! And such a blessing may it prove to the utmost extent of the wishes of its members—of the wishes of an enlightened public who generously aid its endeavours, and of the prayers of its friends. Translating the scriptures of truth into the languages of all nations, and circulating them in all parts of the world, it serves as a substitute for the miraculous gift of tongues, which so greatly accelerated the progress of the gospel in the days of the apostles. What, in the line of means, so likely to hasten forward the glory of the latter days? The universal diffusion of the pure word of God is the heavenly leaven which will gradually regenerate the mass of human society. What so congenial to the nature of Messiah's kingdom, as founded on, and propagated by the truth?

Admirable is the simplicity, and inoffensive nature of the means employed by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Occupying an eminent station, and employing means so agreeable to the will of him, whose name is called the *Word of God*, this, of all the ~~religious~~ Associations of the present day, is likely to render him the most signal service, and to have its exertions crowned with the most splendid success.

May the God of truth and grace accompany his own word, wherever it goes, with the demonstration and power of his Spirit, so that it may effectually counteract and supplant the modern principles of a vain philosophy, making his way known on the earth, and causing all nations to experience his saving health.

*See Fifth Report, &c.*

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## ANECDOTES.

*Bible the best Book.*

**A** SOCIETY of gentlemen, most of whom had enjoyed a liberal education, and were persons of polished manners, but had unhappily imbibed infidel principles, used to assemble at each other's houses, for the purpose of ridiculing the scriptures, and hardening one another in their unbelief. At last, they unanimously formed a resolution solemnly to burn the Bible, and so to be troubled no more with a book which was so hostile to their principles, and disquieting to their consciences. The day fixed upon arrived; a large fire was prepared; a Bible was laid on the table, and a flowing bowl ready to drink its dirge. For the execution of their plan, they fixed upon a young gentleman of high birth, brilliant vivacity, and elegance of manners. He undertook the task, and, after a few enlivening glasses, amidst the applauses of his jovial compeers, he approached the table, took up the Bible, and was walking leisurely forward to put it into the fire; but, happening to give it a look, all at once he was seized with trembling: paleness overspread his countenance, and he seemed convulsed. He returned to the table, and laying down the Bible, said, with a strong asseveration, "We will not burn *that book* till we get a *better*."

Soon after this, the same gay and lively young gentleman died, and on his death-bed was led to true repentance, deriving unshaken hopes of forgiveness and of future blessedness from that book he was once going to burn. He found it, indeed, the best book, not only for a living but a dying hour.

*Bible Valued.*

WHAT an invaluable blessing is it to have the Bible in our own tongue! Our forefathers rejoiced when they were first favoured with the opportunity of reading it for themselves. We are told, that when Archbishop Cranmer's edition of the Bible was printed, in 1538, and fixed to a desk in all parochial churches, the ardor with which men flocked to read it was incredible. They who could, procured it; and they who could not, crowded to read it, or to hear it read in churches, where it was common to see little assemblies of mechanics meeting together for that purpose, after the labour of the day. Many even learned to read it in their old age, that they might have the pleasure of instructing themselves from the scriptures.—Mr Fox mentions two apprentices who joined each his little stock, and bought a Bible, which at every interval of leisure they read; but being afraid of their master, who was a zealous papist, they kept it under the straw of their bed.

By a law, however, in the 34th of Henry VIII, it was enacted, that no woman, except noblewomen and gentlewomen; might read to themselves alone, or to others, any texts of the Bible, &c. nor artificers, apprentices, journeymen, husbandmen, nor labourers, were to read the Bible or New Testament in English to themselves, or to any other person, privately or openly.

With what pleasure ought we to reflect on our deliverance from those times of darkness, and that *now* we live in a land of Bibles, and in a time when they are still on the increase?

Dr Harris, in all his wills, always renewed this legacy:—Item, I bequeath to all my children, and to my children's children, to each of them, a Bible, with this inscription, "None but Christ." A noble legacy, truly!

Let the writings of the prophets and apostles be the delightful classics of our souls. You sons and daughters of pleasure, retire and read your Bibles to be gay. There truths abound of sovereign aid to peace and cheerfulness.

*See Buck's Anec.*

## THE RIGHTS OF GOD.

*“Render—unto God, the things that are God’s.”* MAT. xxii. 21.

**I**N that state of debasement into which religion had sunk among the Jews at the coming of Christ, it was not to be expected that his heavenly doctrine and severe morality should escape censure from the venal and time serving priests of the day. Their character and doctrine could not endure a comparison with that humility of life and spiritual deportment which adorned the meek JESUS through the whole of his work and labour of love upon earth. They were full of jealousy at excellencies which threatened such fatal consequences to their proud pretensions, and therefore had recourse to the most deceitful expedients to support their declining credit; a work much more agreeable to their malignant hearts, than to imitate his modest and lowly example, from whom, had they been the true servants of God, they had nothing to fear.

The history of Christ’s life is full of narratives which contain sufficient evidence of the most rooted enmity entertained and vented by those graceless husbandmen, against the heir of the vineyard. It might have seemed strange, had men so set upon mischief, neglected the weapon of persecution, that on so many occasions had done singular execution, in times past, against those of whom the world was not worthy; but we find on examination, that the mystery of rendering the ministers of heaven obnoxious to the rulers of the earth, was perfectly understood by the Jewish priesthood eighteen hundred years ago: a womb this which hath brought forth much bitterness to the people of God in all their generations. The text before us draws aside the veil a little from that seed of evil doers with whom the Prince of peace had to conflict in the days of his flesh. It reports part of a conversation which took place between him and some of their hypocritical spies, who were sent to entangle him in his talk. The conversation was artfully turned to a topic on which these intriguers thought they could hardly fail to find matter upon which malice might be set at work.

At the coming of Christ, and for some time before it, Ju-



dea had become a tributary province of the Roman empire. It is no way unlikely that many of the Jews submitted to the yoke of their conquerors with great reluctance. Nor was it wonderful it should be so; their conquests were made in general, in a manner very contrary to the laws of humanity, and must have been extremely galling to persons any way acquainted with the sweets of rational liberty. It is reasonable therefore to suppose the question, "*Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not,*" was frequently discussed among this oppressed people, who, with anguish of spirit, saw themselves sold into the hands of strangers who cruelly outraged their most precious *rights*. Had the earth been silently bedewed with their tears because they had no comforters, whilst there was power on the side of their oppressors, their fate might have saddened the humane even at this distant period of time: but when we see them bringing forth this popular question, to the impressions of which, the sensibility of the nation was, at that time, tremblingly alive, as an engine of torture by which they might involve an innocent person in the fangs of cruel persecution, or popular indignation; the springs of our sympathy are dried up, and by an involuntary impulse we are forced to consign those cowardly assassins to their just condemnation. They proposed this question to our Lord with no design of obtaining clearer views of their duty, but on the contrary, that thereby they might get the object of their envy out of the road. It doubtless appeared to them a reasonable supposition, that, let Christ's answer be what it would, it would serve their purposes essentially, in either destroying his popularity with the multitude, or else drawing down upon his devoted head the vengeance of civil authority. The snare was well laid to answer this insidious purpose. If he answered in the affirmative, *that it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar*, he met indignation from an incensed people, who could hardly fail to execrate a teacher who would attempt to aid an arm which they heartily wished to be quickly broken. And though at another time, for their own ends, they could say, "*We have no king but Cæsar,*" yet they secretly hated him in their heart, and earnestly wished for some one who might restore the

kingdom to Israel. If, on the other hand, he should answer in the negative, "*It is not lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar,*" however they might inwardly approve the sentiment, they are ready to drag him to Cæsar's judgment seat, accuse him there, and swear perhaps ten times more than ever he uttered. Here was an occasion for displaying the wisdom of the serpent, and the innocence of the dove. But the Messiah's wisdom easily climbed the mountain top, and shone with its usual splendor. He referred the querists to that law, in which they made their boast, to determine the boundary line between the obedience and tribute due to God in heaven, and to those who claim to be his vicegerents here upon earth. This decision left them a prey to their own disappointed malice. It is much to be lamented by the genuine friends of divine revelation, that in the hands of time serving priests, it has rather become a source of lucrative employment, than real information about the boundaries of human obedience. What renders this matter the more worthy of notice, is, that no small share of that odium has been attached to revelation itself, which ought justly to have fallen on the heads of its corrupt and partial expositors. It is, however, one comfort that this trade seems to be wearing fast to an end. As it may reasonably be supposed, that the Cæsars of the earth have long ago, got all their rights and perhaps something more, served up to them in the most courtly sauce, we intend for the present to turn to a subject equally interesting, though much less minded, and that is, to inquire after "*the things of God.*" The propriety of this will be the more obvious when it is considered that this path not only leads to the highest point of rational obligation, but also serves to show Cæsar, where his claims commence. A due attention therefore to this discussion, may much shorten the labour of these narrow-souled triflers, who think Cæsar never can have enough while any right of either God or man remains undevoured.

In considering the subject, I would, I. Make a few explanatory remarks on the text at large. II. Inquire what are the *things of God* here meant. III. Conclude the subject.

It may not be amiss, at the entrance, to apprise the reader,

that, in this discourse, it is only intended to ascertain the nature and limits of the duty enjoined.

1. The inquisitive will find it worth their pains, to examine an assertion that has frequently been imposed upon the world at large, and more especially on the church with an air of much assurance, namely, that "Christianity has nothing to do with the policy of this world." The quarter from which this opinion has most commonly issued, has led the discerning part of mankind to receive it with suspicion. Those who bask about courts, and make their living by fawning on the great, have been generally the most industrious in procuring disciples to this Cæsar-exalting doctrine. But the conduct of Christ, in the instance before us, seems to call in question the discernment of these sage declaimers. Had there been truth in the opinion, Christ might have easily got rid of the Jews' importunity, by informing them that it did not fall within the limits of his commission to say any thing good or bad about civil authority. Had this been his decision, the church would have naturally been led to inquire into the reasons of his conduct. To have justified such a declaration, had it been made, we might have expected to have heard him assigning some such reasons as the following; "My disciples, I clearly foresee that none of you to the end of the world shall ever be civil rulers, and so need no advice about the duties of a situation to which you are never to be called. Besides, I also foresee that none of you will ever live under the jurisdiction of earthly potentates, and therefore have no need of advice how to deport yourselves in these situations which often become so abundantly ruffling to the men of the world." Moreover, we might have expected that Christ would have added, that neither his own nor his Father's glory were any way affected by the administration of justice and righteousness upon earth. We might also, on the same principles, have expected to hear him adding; that the bride, the Lamb's wife, never could have her chastity attempted by the kings of the earth, nor was she under any obligation to concern herself about them. And finally, we might have expected that Christ would have ordered his apostles, in com-

pleting the canon of divine revelation, not to drop a syllable on the subject. How contrary this imaginary state of things is to the real one, needs not be told to any man who has sense enough to discern his right hand from the left. There is also another consideration that can hardly have escaped the attentive part of our family. It is well known that those who urge us most vehemently to believe, that the citizens of Zion have nothing to do with the civil government under which they live, are the most violent to have all men damned, who will dare to call in question the right and authority, by which the Cæsars of the earth wave their banners and sway their sceptres. It is seemingly a little hard that men should be damned by the thousand for not submitting most humbly to a thing with which they have nothing to do. It would certainly not be too much to ask these thunderbolts of power, where they found these awful sentences by which they thus attempt to affright the trembling consciences of believers in the Bible. I have no doubt but it is the Bible itself to which these panders of power will make their appeal. But if so, it is to be hoped they will have the modest consistency to give up their favourite assertion, that "*religion has nothing to do with politics.*" Few men, taught in the school of christianity, will be hardy enough to assert, that the Bible is a great chain forged in heaven, and sent down to the earth, to bind hand and foot the lives and liberties of the weak, and deliver them into the hands of strong and ambitious usurpers. Deism itself does not cast the affront upon heaven that such an abominable insinuation most certainly would. It might be expected that the professional ambassadors of Christ would have had so much respect to their Master's honour, especially in this age of inquiry, as to bring forth his character clad in the garb of impartiality. But if it be the case that he has come to our miserable world, to cast the weight of his doctrine and authority into the scale of physical power and overgrown ambition, to outweigh the rights of the poor and needy, it will not be easy for us to persuade either ourselves or the world, that he possessed that benevolence of character, to which his followers have thought him so well entitled.

But the truth of the matter is, the proposition which we are now investigating is entirely void of foundation; nay, it contains as much untruth as it is perhaps possible to press into so few words, and is evidently obtruded upon mankind to serve the cause of despotism. The church being the lamp of the world, by her the clearest light is cast upon every article of human *right* and *obligation*. It therefore becomes an object with all who riot on the spoils of humanity, to put out, if possible, the eyes of such as would be most likely to detect their shameful robbery. In opposition, however, to such fulsome deception, it may safely be asserted that the scriptures are a complete rule to direct us what we are to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man. All, therefore, whose intentions are fair, will be willing by this unerring standard, to ascertain the boundaries of their duty to God, their neighbours and themselves; nor can we easily believe that the claims are valid, which will not bear the severest trial before this august tribunal. The conduct of our Lord, if we do not greatly misunderstand it, in the case before us, fully confirms the premises. And perhaps it will be found, upon examination, that in the present eventful posture of human affairs, there is more need of attending closely to the voice of scripture, in guiding them to a peaceful harbour, than at first sight may appear. Whoever has viewed with care the camp of infidelity, must have observed that it principally directs its artillery against christianity, on that side where it has been rendered vulnerable, by its treacherous friends. Was it stripped of the fantastic dress with which it has been arrayed, to attend upon the shabby train of earthly rulers, and presented in its own celestial attire, it would probably soften the heart of its most inveterate enemies, and persuade them that they had already, through mistake, treated their best friend with too much rudeness.

There is nothing of which natural men are better judges, than of the common rights with which humanity has been endowed by its bountiful Author. When, therefore, they hear the nominal representatives of Jesus, stand up in the face of the sun and tell the christian church that it has nothing to do



with the political movements of the earth, it is not wonderful that a religion, conceived to be so slavish, should become the object of derision, to men just escaped from the dreary dungeons of galling oppression. It is true, infidels are much to be blamed in not inquiring after christianity, where a true and infallible account of its genius may be obtained; yet so it is that few are at the pains to sit down and weigh dispassionately the oracles of heaven, and thence hear with their own ears with what solemn attestations they confirm the inviolable rights of the human race. But then, on the other hand, it should be considered what temptations have been cast in the road of the indolent, thoughtless and profane, by those who by office were bound to be the salt of the world. Alas! this salt has long since, in a great measure, lost its savour, and hence it is that the moral world presents at this day such a nauseous smell. It is a piece perhaps of the most shameless effrontery that has ever been practised, when the despots of the earth pretend to sob, and sigh, and blubber, over their hypocritical faces, at the growth of infidelity, when their own wretched and abominable principles, have been the true cause of at least nine-tenths of all the evil, that at present threatens the interests of Immanuel upon earth. Many are induced, and not without some apparent reason, to believe that this laying about so suddenly to the contrary tack, and attempting the vigorous defence of the christian faith, is from no heart-love to its genuine principles, but from a mercenary fear of these rocks, on which their time-serving spirit has already nearly dashed the leaky weather-beaten bark, with its cowardly crew. The roaring lion of infidelity, with all its yelping whelps, is not so offensive to the ears of a pious honest hearted christian, as the melancholy croakings of these devouring ravens. The true friends of the Bible need never be afraid of provoking its enemies, to the most severe examination of its doctrine, upon the head of human rights and wrongs. With this sacred treasure the church is intrusted; with it she is most essentially concerned; and it is a most sacrilegious robbery to deprive her of any portion of this precious wealth, or of the consequence it confers upon her. She is loudly



called upon to assert her rights on that quarter at the present time. Perhaps she cannot render a more essential service to the general interests of religion, than disclaim all connexion with the sons of slavery and their dreary train. This might do more towards procuring, from modern unbelievers, some patient attention to the word of God, than any thing else with which they could, in their present temper of mind, be rationally presented. In a crisis so violent as that which the world at present experiences, cool deliberation and dispassionate inquiry, resign no small part of their functions into the hands of violent sensibilities. Alive as the public mind is to an exquisite sense of the wrongs which have been accumulating for ages, it is not to be wondered if, in a paroxysm so violent, it should bury in one common grave all the advocates without distinction, of an order of things, under which the earth already groans being burdened, and longing earnestly for redemption. Why should it be expected in an æra so momentous, when God is evidently making a surprising overturning, that the livery of Christ should protect those who pretend to be his followers, while in reality they are the trusty drudges of the mammon of unrighteousness. No! the true church of Christ in justice to herself and her head, is bound to disown their disgraceful connexion. And the sooner this is done the better, as it probably will be a considerable step towards the spread of true religion in this lower world. Mankind neither can or ought, to receive a religion that shuts them out from watching over these precious rights, which they have received with their being, from God Almighty: and this must be done if it be true, that christianity and its subjects have nothing to do with the politics of this world. Did I find such a doctrine running through the Bible, I would doubt whether the book was not an imposture; but I find no such thing, however, but the contrary, and therefore I conclude they are not its true friends who would palm such falsehoods upon it.

*(To be Continued.)*

## A DESCRIPTION OF THE FAMINE IN 1700.

FROM A FAST-DAY SERMON PREACHED THAT YEAR.

“ *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.*” 1 PETER v. 6.

**T**HE very reading and hearing of these words plainly shews how apposite they are to the purpose of this day, wherein we profess to humble ourselves, with solemn fasting and prayer, before the Lord, in consideration of the judgments under which we groan, and of our grievous sins, which are the causes of them, with fervent application to God for mercy and deliverance. The good Lord grant, that our souls may be affected with a feeling sense, suitable to the weight of our guilt and miseries, and that our practice may answer our profession. In order to this, let us observe the force and nature of the Apostle's exhortation, *Humble yourselves therefore, &c.* First, here is our present case: We are *under the mighty hand of God.* Secondly, here is our duty and remedy in relation to this our condition, *To humble ourselves.* Thirdly, here is the absolute necessity and great advantage of this, as a powerful motive to the performance of it, *That we may be exalted in due time.*

First, the case to which the exhortation relateth, the being *under the mighty hand of God*; this is our present condition. In scripture, the *being under the hand of God*, signifies an afflicted state; the *mighty hand*, is the heavy pressure of afflictions; and the *hand of God*, points out to us from whence they come. So here, very suitably to the duties of this day, we are directed to entertain our thoughts with these three considerations: 1. The evils that do afflict us, in respect of number and kind; 2. The greatness of these evils, in respect of measure and degree; 3. How the hand of God is visible in all these.

1. The miseries that do afflict us are so many, that we have reason to cry out with the Psalmist, *Innumerable evils do compass us about.* None can be ignorant or insensible of them, but such as are of a selfish, narrow and base spirit, who prefer their private interest to the public weal; or such as are

brutishly profane and sensual, who care not how it fares with others, so long as they can make any shift to live at ease and enjoy their pleasures. As for these, it is but a vain labour to discourse of our miseries to them. They who are not moved with the finger of God so visibly appearing, nor with his voice so audibly thundering, in his judgments, how can the words or endeavours of men touch them? And as for others, in whose hearts there are any sparks of christian sympathy, or with whom there are even any bowels of humanity or sentiments of nature, we need not on this head save only to name our public calamities, *viz.* A famine and dearth, so grievous even in its beginning, so fearful in its progress, so long in its continuance, and so consuming in its effects, that the like was never felt nor known by us or our fathers:—a famine which has now lasted for the space of five or six years without any interruption; and, as one does well observe, every year of successive famine is like an arithmetical number, where every one figure put to the end, multiplies the whole in a decimal proportion, or makes it ten times more than it was before:—a famine which has occasioned the dispersion of many families, that before had a good and competent subsistence:—a famine which has struck and affected all our senses to the highest measure, presenting to our eyes pale faces, ghastly looks, naked skeletons and feeble knees, and to our ears piercing cries and hideous howlings of poor starvelings, wandering and gasping for lack of bread:—a famine which has shewed us great numbers fainting and dying at our doors, in our streets and highways, for mere want of food, while their miserable condition was not able to draw any support or relief from others. Sometimes indeed we see tender-hearted parents keeping the meat out of their own mouths, to bestow it on their children, chusing, by starving themselves, to give them the longer life; and sucklings are found hanging at the dry breasts of their dying or dead mothers. In others we behold the bowels of nature so far hardened, that they hide themselves from their own flesh: the nearest relations, as parents and children, husbands and wives, are fain to steal and conceal from one another the little morsels that remain with

them, or that they procure by begging, lest they should be obliged to make the others sharers. O! how sad and lamentable is this case, when many are forced either to be cruel to themselves or to their own bowels; when the depth of one misery calls upon another, and there is no sufficiency to supply both or support either; when many families are reduced to such wants, that their eyes fail with looking to one another, and they know not whither to turn themselves! At home they have no means of subsistence; abroad there is no man to hire them. What numbers have we known, and are still among us, who being both able and desirous to work, could not nor cannot find any to employ them, though willing to labour for a morsel of bread, without requiring wages or cloathing? In this case, there is no remedy, save a very melancholy and desperate one, to go a-begging: but this was formerly so odious and shameful a trade among all people of honest and ingenuous dispositions, and is now attended with such hardships and fruitlessness, when such great numbers do follow it, that severals were known to whom the idea of it was more dreadful than that of death itself; severals, I say, whose birth, breeding, former station and fortune, would not suffer them to submit to it, and who therefore chused rather to starve than to undergo it. And of those of the meaner sort who at the beginning of this famine did throw themselves upon this way of living, very few are alive at this day; though the number of our poor is not so much diminished, seeing as many are impoverished by every succeeding year of dearth, as the preceding years swept away; so that those who at first had plenty, do, according to the lesser degrees of their wealth, succeed upon the stage in the room of the indigent who are posted off: like a gangrene seizing the lower parts of the body, it ascends still higher and higher, leaving only death behind it.

But, to proceed in the description of this most grievous calamity, we have known some brought to the greatest extremities, when their victual was exhausted in the summer seasons: though they had a considerable crop sown, and a stock well secured in good hands; yet because credit failed, and

nothing could be got without present advance, therefore they were in little better condition than they who had nothing at all.

Others we have seen in the same case, who though they had some cattle which might furnish them food for some time, yet their fears of future want and dispersion of their families, would not suffer them to relieve a present necessity. Thus, by a strange kind of diffident forecast and dreadful anxiety, some have starved themselves in the mean time, to prevent the danger of it afterwards.—

Into what extremities have we seen many every spring-time of these by-gone years, when at once the ground called for seed to sow it, and the craving stomach cried for bread to feed it! How many have we seen emptying their barns, and the little remainders of their store, to furnish the ground, so that they had not a grain after their sowing, nor knew how to wrestle through the long and tedious summers, wherein all the ordinary means of relief failed! how many have been forced to encroach on their seed, to live upon one part thereof, whilst they were sowing the other; so that neither the one nor the other, was sufficiently supplied, much land lying waste and barren for lack of seed, and the labourers decaying for lack of food. And moreover, do not all observe a general and very sensible change of seasons; that the heavens, the air, the earth, and all the elements do frown upon us, and deny their wonted kindly influences? This has appeared through the whole summer, wherein we found nothing of the wonted warmth and heat, but a continued coldness, and the effects of it on the present crop. God knows how long the days, and how weary the nights have seemed to many, whose languishing eyes and panting wishes are failing in expectation of relief from the fruits of the ground. We behold with anxiety the slow paces and lingering delays of a harvest, so very late, that it seems to have forgot its wonted season. We behold the crop making but slender advances towards maturity. Many hearts cry out, as the mother of Sisera, while they look out at their windows, or view the fields, "*Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariot?*"



Time would fail me to narrate all the grievous circumstances and effects of this heavy calamity. Many straying in the fields, gathering and eating every herb and green thing, making little distinction between good and bad, wholesome and unwholesome; many and mortal diseases arose from and accompanied the same; as swelling dropsies, malignant fevers, infectious and deadly fluxes, which raged among us some two years ago, and swept away such vast numbers, that people were weary of burying them: some, wanting means and strength, could not; and others, by such frequent instances, were so hardened, that they would not perform that common and last office, even to their neighbours, which the bowels of nature, and humanity itself, calls for.—

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### MAGNANIMITY EXEMPLIFIED.

*Story of Gasten Marquis de Renty.*

**F**ORGIVENESS of injuries, and a merciful disposition towards those that have injured us, is an infallible mark of a great and noble mind, and is our indispensable duty, as reasonable creatures, but more so as christians.

There is not an instance in modern story more applicable to this point, than that in the life of Gasten Marquis de Renty. This illustrious nobleman was a soldier and a christian, and had a peculiar felicity in reconciling the seeming opposition betwixt the two different characters. He had a command in the French army, and had the misfortune to receive a challenge from a person of distinction in the same service. The Marquis returned answer by the person that brought the challenge, that he was ready to convince the gentleman that he was in the wrong, and if he could not satisfy him, he was ready to ask his pardon. The other, not satisfied with this answer, insisted upon his meeting him with his sword. To which he sent this answer, "That he was resolved not to do it, since God and the king had forbidden it; otherwise he would have him know, that all the endeavours he had used to pacify him, did not proceed from any fear of him, but of Al-



mighty God, and his displeasure: that he should go every day about his usual business, and if he did assault him, he would make him repent it." The angry man, not able to provoke him to a duel, and meeting him one day by chance, drew his sword and attacked him; who wounded and disarmed both him and his second, with the assistance of a servant that attended him. But then did this truly christian nobleman show the difference betwixt a brutish and christian courage; for he led them to his tent, refreshed them with wine and cordials, caused their wounds to be dressed, and their swords to be restored to them, and dismissed them with christian and friendly advice, and was never heard to mention the affair afterwards to his nearest friends. It was a usual saying of his, "That there was more true courage and generosity in bearing and forgiving an injury for the love of God, than in requiting it with another; in suffering rather than revenging, because the thing was much more difficult: that bulls and bears had courage enough, but it was a brutish courage; whereas ours should be such as becomes reasonable creatures and christians."

*See Scots Mag.*

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### THE POPE.

THE following speech of Bonaparte to a deputation of Romans, which waited upon him in the course of last month, throws some farther light on his intentions with respect to the Popedom, and, independently of this, is in itself a very curious and characteristic production.

"Messieurs, Deputies of the Departments of Rome! My mind is filled with remembrances of your ancestors. The first time that I pass the Alps, I will make some stay in your city. The French emperors, my predecessors, had separated you from the territory of the empire, and assigned your country as a fief to your bishops. But the welfare of my people no longer admits of any division whatever. France and Italy must be completely united under the same system. Besides, you had need of a powerful hand. I feel a particular satisfaction in being your benefactor. But it is not my intention that there shall be any the least change made in the religion of our fathers. I, the eldest son of the Church, will not depart from her bosom. Jesus Christ did not deem it necessary to invest St Peter with a secular supremacy. Your see, the first of Christendom, shall remain such. Your bishop is the spiritual head of the Church, in like manner as I am its Cæsar. I give to God that which is God's, and to Cæsar that which is Cæsar's."

*See Chris. Mag. for this Month.*

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ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

CHAP. II.

*State of the Church from the giving of the Law until the Death of Christ.*

(Continued from page 48.)

**L**IFE and growth distinguish the works of God. These are characters which the utmost efforts of created power cannot bestow upon its own works. The analogy of nature teaches us to expect a progression from infancy to maturity, in the mystical body of Christ. The history of the church exhibits the operation of this principle. The covenant society proceeds toward perfection.

The moral aspect of the world had greatly changed during the 400 years which preceded the divine legation of Moses. Patriarchal simplicity was almost forgotten, and toward the close of this period the most abominable idolatries almost universally prevailed. These idolatries became incorporated with political institutions, and were supported by the progress of the arts and sciences. The godly men were gradually received into heaven, and their degenerate families became the votaries of the prevailing superstitions. The covenant with Abraham anticipated this event, and preserved the church from destruction. Such an organization of the ecclesiastical

body as may serve the purposes of piety, typify the Redeemer, and preserve the church distinct from the nations, is now become more necessary than ever. Upon the pillar of truth such inscriptions must appear as are fit to produce these effects in the present state of human society. Such a constitution is provided for the church by the divine Head; and the descendants of Jacob are miraculously delivered from Egyptian bondage, under the conduct of Moses, and, assembled at Sinai, they have this constitution delivered to them in a covenant form. The Sinai covenant is an external dispensation of the covenant of grace, a fulfilment in part of the first promise to fallen man, and a farther developement of the Abrahamic covenant, divinely adapted to the state of the times. This ecclesiastical organization provided rites which prefigured the coming of Christ, and the consequent change of dispensation. It established laws which directly condemned the idolatrous services of the heathen, and which were abundantly calculated to preserve the temporal interest of the society, and advance the eternal salvation of God's own people. A constant series of miracles during the course of 40 years, confirmed the divine origin of this new dispensation, and settled according to promise the covenant society in the land of Canaan. This people are now the only visible church. The covenant between them and their God consists in his proposing to them the whole system of ecclesiastical policy now established, and requiring their submission to it, together with their express engagement to observe it in every particular. This dispensation is more specific than any which preceded it. It requires the observation of the sabbath, and the offering of sacrifices, as was the case from the first erection of the church on earth. It requires punctual attention to family religion, and pious conference, as it also was from the beginning. It establishes a regular ministry to be continued in uninterrupted succession, and institutes elders and judges to preserve order, and punish the rebellious. Divine revelation is committed to writing, and this book of the covenant is deposited in the hands of the Hebrews, as the rule of their faith and

manners. Circumcision, the sign of the Abrahamic covenant, is continued, to show that this is an enlarged edition of that covenant; and the passover, instituted as the token of their separate preservation in Egypt, is also continued as a commemoration of their deliverance, a badge of their separation from the heathen, and a type of the great sacrifice which the Redeemer is once to offer for their redemption.

These two sacraments, circumcision and the passover, seal the ecclesiastical covenant to every member of the visible church, seal eternal salvation to every believer, and serve as public declarations to the world of their distinguishing religious profession. The same people who were thus reduced into a church state, were formed also by the same divine authority into a civil commonwealth. God commands that every part of human conduct should subserve the interest of his church; and he by a divine act exhibited to the nations an ever memorable instance of the civil polity being so formed as effectually to answer this grand design. The policy of the heathen nations was to render religion a political engine for the support of daring ambition. Among the Hebrews, civil legislation was intended for the safety of the church.

The Hebrew church was nevertheless really distinct from the state. The proselytes of the covenant were admitted as full members of the church, and thus ingrafted on the stock of Abraham; but were not admitted to the same civil privileges as the native Israelites. The proselytes of the gate were admitted to some civil privileges, but not to any participation in the benefits of the ecclesiastical covenant. The courts were also different. The sanhedrim and the synagogue, to judge of religious concerns, were perfectly distinct from the civil sanhedrim, and the courts of the gates which judged in civil matters. The church had the power of settling controversies which respected the religious character, by the ceremonial law; and to the state belonged the decision of controversies respecting injuries and property, by the judicial law. The priests and Levites were the ministers of religion, acting with the assistance of the prophets occasionally sent by the Lord. The civil officers, judges, and kings, were magistrates, but

not as such authorized to officiate in the religious services. And although the civil constitution underwent many alterations during the existence of the Hebrew nation, the ecclesiastical form continued unaltered. The priesthood, the sacrifices, and the ceremonies, are regulated by one uniform law. Divine revelations, however, continue from time to time, and inspired men are commissioned to write for the canon of scripture. This had some influence upon the mode of social worship.

The state of religion among the Hebrews was much affected by their connexion with other nations, and the church suffered or prospered as the Lord withdrew or afforded his extraordinary superintendence. Eminent prophets and priests, and virtuous judges and kings, were reared up from time to time, as the instruments of reformation, and the sword of the heathen enemy was often providentially used to correct and punish the crimes of God's covenant Israel. The period of suffering was usually an admonition to the duty of repentance and fasting; and the dawn of reformation, called the nation and the church to a solemn renovation of their covenants with God. After the revolt of the ten tribes from the house of David, Jeroboam, their political leader, made Israel to sin against the Lord, by a violation of the covenant of Sinai. Many pious people tacitly countenanced the apostasy, and for several ages after the majority established idolatry, there was a minority in this declining church who really desired to serve the Lord.

Prophets were sent to warn this degenerate church, and to gather the elect of God into their glorious rest. The ten tribes, however, soon became mingled with the heathen; they forsook their covenant God, and the Lord left them to a gradual declension, until their ecclesiastical visibility became entirely extinct. The Jews, upon the contrary, still held their covenant charter, often renewed their obligations, and although they sinned much, and suffered much, the Lord preserved them as his church, a *visible covenant society*, until the long looked for event, the appearance of the Son of God in the flesh, had been accomplished. The state of the Jewish church, at the

period of Christ's nativity, although they had still the external dispensation of grace made at Mount Sinai, and established by ecclesiastical covenant, was different, in many important subordinate instances, from what it had been upon their first settlement in the promised land. The state of society in general was much altered from what it had been fifteen centuries before that time. The more general diffusion of literature, and of the accompanying arts of civilized life, had produced a correspondent change upon the internal situation of the church, as well as upon the face of the world. The solemn work of offering sacrifice, which, during the patriarchal dispensation, was competent to every pious man, or head of a family, was, by the Mosaic dispensation, committed exclusively into the hands of the authorized priesthood. And after the temple of the Lord had been erected in Jerusalem, in that place alone were these solemnities of religion to be performed.

The principal part of social and practical religion was still to be performed in domestic society. Convenient places of worship were, however, established in every part of Judea. The *Proseucha* was the place of common resort for prayer and conference; and one of these, surrounded by a wall and a grove, without any roof or covering, was to be found in the different parts of the land of Israel.

Instruction, before the people learned to read, was conducted entirely by the conversation of the prophets, the priests, the Levites, and the heads of families. The progress of the Jews in literature was very slow, eight hundred years after the writing of the law by Moses, it was rare to find a copy of the book in which it was contained. During the reign of the pious Josiah there was some difficulty in procuring a copy of it for the king's use. About 150 years thereafter, however, the zeal and faithfulness of Ezra was rendered the instrument in the hand of Providence, in turning the attention of the church to the word of God, now much enlarged by the inspired writings of the prophets.

The *Proseucha* is then exchanged for the *Synagogue*, and the public reading and exposition of the law, became a part



of the ordinary worship of every sabbath, in every part of Judea. The synagogues were the parish churches of the Jews. They were provided with a regular class of ecclesiastical officers, whose duty it was to explain the law, read the scriptures, direct the public devotion, censure the scandalous, and take care of the poor. Wheresoever the Jews emigrated after the time of Ezra, they carried with them their scriptures and their ministers; and they formed synagogues in the different cities of the nations in which they resided. They never, after this regular organization, fell into gross idolatry. Unacquaintance with the doctrines of divine revelation, is essential to the worship of idols. Such was the visible state of the church, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a city of David. There indeed prevailed a general expectation at the time of his birth, that he should come; but very few appeared at that time to understand the real character of the promised Messiah, or the end of his mission. In the fulness of time our Lord was manifest in the flesh, made of a woman, made under the law, in order to fulfil the condition of that eternal covenant, which had already, under various dispensations, brought salvation to his seed, and preserved his visible church as his covenant people upon earth, for the space of four thousand years. He came to fulfil all the types, to abolish in his death, whatsoever referred to his incarnation and sufferings, and to introduce a new dispensation of the covenant of grace, which should last unaltered, until the end of time. During his public ministry he pointed out the abuses which prevailed in the Jewish church, explained the law, and predicted both the dissolution of the visible dispensation which the church now enjoyed, and the establishment of another and a better covenant. He gave the suitable instruction, and introduced rites and ordinances which were after his resurrection to become special parts of the order of his church. The covenant with Abraham did not alter the patriarchal dispensation of grace, but by admitting to particular privilege a certain part of the existing church, that federal transaction prepared the way for the new order established in the covenant of Sinai. The ministry of Jesus did not immediately dissolve the eccle-

siastical covenant established by the mediation of Moses, and often renewed by the Jews; but by the erection of a certain part of the existing church into a special society, holding particular communion with himself, he prepared the way for the new dispensation of his grace, which, by destroying what was typical, would extend the benefits of the Abrahamic covenant to the Gentile world.

It had been long a custom in the church to use certain baptisms or washings, as a religious rite. It was practised by Jacob and by Moses; and in the latter period of the Jewish church, they were in the habit of washing all their proselytes immediately after their circumcision, and before they were admitted to further ecclesiastical privileges. It was also common, at the feast of the passover, not only to eat unleavened bread along with the flesh of the paschal lamb, but also to drink after supper a cup of wine. Divine Providence had rendered familiar to the visible church, those simple, but significant rites, which were afterwards, by a positive ordinance, to be rendered the visible seals of the covenant.

John Baptist was commissioned in the spirit and power of Elias, to prepare the way of the Lord, preach the gospel of repentance, and administer baptism as a positive ordinance of God. This was necessary even under the Mosaic dispensation, which was not as yet dissolved, in order to prepare the way for the other, and for effectually preserving the unity of the church, when the forms of religion would be altered. The Redeemer himself instructed his immediate disciples to expect the total abolition of the Aaronic priesthood, of the temple, and the whole temple services. He habituated them to the forms of the synagogue, and in these churches he himself repeatedly ministered. He thus showed the perpetuity of such services in his church; but he never undertook, as a priest of the temple, to offer sacrifices, except that one sacrifice of himself, whereby he perfected for ever them that are sanctified, and in which he at once fulfilled the design of the priesthood, the temple and the sacrifice. Immediately before his sufferings, after having participated of the last passover, which should ever be observed with divine acceptance,

he instituted the *substitute seal*, the sacrament of the Lord's supper, as a positive ordinance to be observed by his church, for ever. The Head of the church thus providing for its external order, did, at the awful and appointed hour, fulfil the condition of the covenant of grace, and purchase our eternal redemption by his suffering unto the death; bearing our sins upon his own body on the accursed tree. Thus was the Sinai-covenant dissolved, and a new covenant established.\*

(To be Continued.)

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### ABRAHAM'S SOLILOQUY

*On receiving the command to sacrifice his son Isaac.*

**T**HERE are no passages in Pagan history which affect nature stronger than those we meet with in holy writ. There is no part of sacred story which raises our wonder, and, on the first reading of it, excites all the passions higher than that of Abraham's receiving the command to sacrifice his only son Isaac. It is such a trial betwixt faith and nature, as in all probability none but the father of the believers could have gone through. When we think to what a height of paternal fondness the soul of Abraham must be raised, on having a child by his wife, when nothing but a divine providence could have given him one, it is amazing to conceive what in his soul he must feel, when he received the peremptory commandment of God to offer him up for a burnt-offering. The manner of giving the command is as affecting to him as a father, as it is sublime in the commander, and moves the heart to tenderness, at the same time it shows the highest authority: *Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there*

\* In order to avoid mistakes, the reader must keep in mind that the word *covenant* occurs in two distinct senses—the *covenant of grace*, and the *ecclesiastical covenant*, whereby the covenant of grace is externally dispensed. The scriptures direct us to call the visible dispensation of the means of grace a covenant. Gen. xvii. 10. Jer. xxxi. 31—34.

for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. The holy text adds no other circumstance than an immediate implicit obedience to the command he had received: however, according to the dictates of human nature, the powers of his mind must be shaken, and there must have been a strong combat between faith and nature. Sir Henry Wotton has written an admirable meditation on Abraham's circumstances at this crisis, and in a soliloquy has made him discourse with himself in all the struggling passions that any one could conceive him at that time to have felt. The work is but little known, and may be recommended as an excellent comment on this wonderful piece of sacred story. Sir Henry imagines him after the receiving so surprising a command, to have broke into some such reflections as the following.

What!—Could this possibly be the voice of God which I heard? or have not rather some strange impressions of the night deluded my fancy?—Yea, thy voice it was; my God, it was thy voice. How can thy servant deny it, with whom seven times before descending from the throne of glory thou hast vouchsafed even to commune in this vale of tears! When thou didst first call me out of the darkness of my father's house into thy saving light; when thou didst often cherish and encourage me in the steps of my pilgrimage; when thou didst furnish me with plenty, and crown me with victory in a strange land; when, lastly, thou didst even overlade my feeble age with joy in a rightful heir of my own body, was I forward at all these times to acknowledge thee the God of my support and comfort, and shall I now question thy voice when thou demandest but a part of thine own benefits?—No, my dear Isaac, although the heavens know how much I love thee, yet if thou wert, or couldst be millions of times more precious in the eyes of thy trembling father, I would summon together all the strength of my aged limbs to render thee unto that gracious God from whom I had thee.—Alas! poor boy, how sweetly thou slumberest, and in thy bed dost little think what change is towards thee! But I must disturb thy rest:—Isaac, arise, and call up my servants; bid them prepare for a journey which we are to make unto thee mount

*Moriah*, and let some wood be carried for the burning of a sacrifice: mean while I will walk out a little by myself, to contemplate the declining stars and the approach of the morning.

O ye ornaments of the sky, who, when all the world is silent, obey your Maker in the determinate order of your motions! can man behold his own duty in a fairer volume? why then stand I gazing here, and do not rather go myself to hasten my servants, that I may execute his will?—But stay—his will. Why? is his will contrary to the example of his own justice? Did he not heavily punish *Cain*, even at the beginning of the first world, for killing but a brother? and can I slay my child, and imbrue my hands in my own bowels without offence of his immortal Majesty?—Yes, why not? The act of *Cain* was the act of his own sinful malice; but I have received an immediate command from God himself.—A command! Why? is his command against his law? Shall the fountain of all truth be served with contradictions? Did not the same God, straight after the universal deluge, (as our fathers have told us) denounce this judgment, That *whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed*? How then can I herein obey my God, but I must withal disobey him?

O my weak soul! what poor arguments dost thou search, to cover thine own rebellious affections! Is there any warrant higher than his will? or any better interpreter of his will than *himself*? If the princes of the earth (who are but mortal types of his invisible glory) can alter their edicts at pleasure, shall not the Lord of the whole, whom angels and men adore, have leave to dispense with his own prohibitions? Yes surely.—But then, how shall the blessing that my good God hath determined upon my seed, and even upon this *very child*, be accomplished, if I destroy the root? O Lord, was not thy divine goodness pleased, in the depth of thy mercy, to accept my belief for righteousness? and shall I now frustrate thy promises with my obedience?—But what! am I fallen into a new reluctance? Have I before contested with thy *justice*, and shall I now dispute thy *power*? Didst thou not create the light before the sun, and the effect before the cause? and shall I bind thee to the passions of a natural agent? Didst thou

not make this *all of nothing* even by thy *word*, (which was thy *wisdom*,) and foment all that thou hast made by thy *spirit*, which is thy *love*? and shall I doubt thou canst raise innumerable nations out of the very ashes of my poor *Isaac*? Nay, did I not even at first receive him in a manner from a dead womb? and art thou not still the same almighty and everliving God; merciful Father, full of all tenderness and compassion, that seest from heaven whereof we are made!—Pardon my discourses, and forget my delays. I am now going to perform thy good pleasure. And yet there is remaining one humble suit, which refuse not, O my God! though it proceed from the weakness of thine unworthy creature: Take my child and all that is mine; I have resigned him with my whole heart, unto thy will; he is already thine, and mine no longer; and I glory that he shall die upon thy holy altar: but yet I fear withal, that these my shaking hands and fainting limbs will be seized with horror: be not therefore, dear Lord, displeased, if I use my servants in the execution.—How now, my soul! dost thou shrink in the last act of thy loyalty? Can I yet walk up and down about vile and ordinary functions, and, when my God is to be served, do my joints and members fail me? Have I humbled my desires to his will, and shall I deny him the choice of his own instrument? or, if his indulgent mercy would permit, shall I suffer another to anticipate the cheerfulness of my obedience?

O thou great God of life and death, who mightest have made me an insensible plant, a dead stone or poisonous serpent, and yet even in them likewise I should have conduced to the variety of thy glorious wisdom; but thou hast vouchsafed to endue us with the form of man, and to breathe into our first parent that spark of thy divine light, which we call *Reason*, to comprehend and acknowledge therewith thy high and indisputable sovereignty over all nature: thou then, eternal *maker* and *mover*, whose *will* is the first of causes, and whose glory is the last of ends, direct my feet to the place which thou hast appointed: strengthen these poor hands to accomplish thy pleasure, and let heaven and earth obey thee.

*See Scots Mag.*



## THE RIGHTS OF GOD.

“Render—unto God, the things that are God’s.” MAT. xxii. 21.

(Continued from page 74.)

2. **T**HIS text informs us that God has *rights*; some things which are eminently called *his*. This assertion is not intended to extend to the comprehension of the whole relation in which created being at large stands connected with, and dependent upon the perfections of God. It is true, the right of God to all his creatures and all their powers without exception, is natural, perfect, and unalienable. But it is conceived the text here is not so much to be understood to assert the property God has in his creatures at large, as to distinguish the peculiar claims which he has upon the human family from these, which by his will and appointment, one part of the family may justly have upon another. It is clear that this family to which we belong is linked together internally by innumerable ties, not merely bound on the conscience by the immediate impression of God, but also by the intermediate agency of parents, masters, husbands, ministers of religion, or administrators of civil authority. From these connexions must arise, in the social intercourses of mankind, many mutual communications of good offices and benevolent affections; nor are these workings of mutual dependance, when kept within proper boundaries, at all displeasing to God. On the contrary, in his great goodness, he has cut out the regular channels in which these enriching streams are to be conducted to the most general advantage of the whole habitable world. Enlightened reason must at once perceive that such complex machinery as that which composes the aggregate mass of human interests, movements, and ends, must have a common centre on which its stupendous revolutions may safely depend. This situation God has reserved for himself; from him all powers physical and moral emanate, by him they are fed, and to him they must return, as the rivers to the ocean. It seems therefore to be the honours inseparably annexed to this high station in the great system of

creation, at which our text particularly points. The will of God and the dependant nature of all derived existence, mark out Divinity as the common centre to which all creatures' motions should incline and by which their limits should be described. "Virtue is," perhaps not improperly defined to be, "that consent, propensity and union of heart to being in general, that is, immediately exercised in a general good will." According to this definition, the mind of man ought to survey being in all its states of respective perfection, carefully attaching suitable affections to each part according to its rank in the great and universal system. Every excellency whether physical or moral ought to be estimated at its proper price. From the most inactive particle of sand that lies on the sea-washed shores, up to the highest arch-angel that ministers before the throne of God, there is discoverable a certain gradation of perfection or goodness, which has been conferred on each distinct order, to qualify it for its station in the general assembly of created existence. With all the links of this extended chain man is connected either more immediately or remotely. But this connexion is absolutely limited by the will of God, which has marked out with great clearness all natural and necessary connexions, designed to subsist between the human family and the other ranks of creation; as also among the different branches of itself internally considered. No small part therefore of human virtue consists in guiding with care the exercise of our affections towards all created objects with which we are surrounded, according to these limitations which are imposed upon us by the Lord of all. The sphere of this duty is considerably enlarged, by the deranged circumstances into which human nature has been brought, by its fatal apostasy from God, the only completely satisfactory good of an intelligent creature. Hereby innumerable wants have been created to which his nature would have been otherwise, an utter stranger. These wants urge on to gratification, with constant teasings, which increase both in their number and importunity as man recedes farther and farther from his Maker's will. The miserable subject of these unreasonable demands, looks to the nearest quarter from which he may be gratified and a

temporary quiet procured. Hence arise the improper connexions which are often formed between man and his fellow creatures in this lower world. This is called in scripture language a forsaking God, the fountain of living waters, and hewing out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. Such is the nature of that delegated power which God has thought fit to lodge in the hands of one part of mankind over the rest, that it might reasonably be expected in the present disordered state of human affairs, to become subject to much abuse; nor has experience disappointed this expectation. The miseries, under which a great part of the world at this day groans, are a just effect of the misplaced affection, which has been foolishly transferred from God to the creature. The instruments appointed by him to maintain peace and good will among men, have been exalted far beyond their natural rank, to that which belongs to God alone. It is not therefore wonderful but every way congruous to the righteous government of Jehovah to write men's sins on their judgments, by suffering this earth, under such management, to become a miserable prison rather than that delightful habitation for his children, for which it was originally intended; nor will ever these disorders be rectified to purpose until man becomes just to his Maker. Then and only then, will the distressed inhabitants of the earth find a guardian, who will be both able and willing to defend their *rights*. This act of justice towards Heaven, is what Christ demands in our text; a demand which equally accords with our duty and interest. As the physical power always resides in all nations with the mass of the people, it is clear that so soon as they come to act at large under the influence of refined moral principles, the face of the earth must speedily alter for the better.

3. This text charges the Jews with forgetfulness of God: a very deformed feature of the human character indeed, by which its aspect is lamentably changed from what it must have been when God had finished it. Hereby God and man became estranged from each other in a most alarming degree. This moral disorder arises from a combination of causes. Man by his fall lost his spiritual discernment, and therewith

his spiritual taste and relish for intellectual pleasures; a void was made in the breast, to the filling of which, nothing but the creatures seemed to contribute: hence connexions became formed between the desires of man and the surrounding creation, utterly injurious to all pursuits after substantial happiness and true intellectual grandeur. God complains severely of the Jews on this head, even in an early period of their history. "*Of the rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.*" Nor do they seem to have been reformed as they grew old. The same complaint is preferred against them eight hundred years after. "*Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number.*" On which conduct God pronounces judgment by the mouth of his servant David. Now consider this ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver. It is easy to see that God and his rights must either rise or fall together in human estimation. If God be forgotten, his rights will be despised—and if they be shuffled out of sight, his nature, perfections and providence must soon follow. To a sense of this fatal disease, Christ and his sent servants, have often called the stupid families of the earth. "*Render to God the things that are God's,*" will remain a precept immovably inscribed in the everlasting records of reason and revelation.

4. It is a matter of importance to a slumbering world to be reminded, that though God and his rights are too generally forgotten by senseless and stupid man, yet they are not forgotten by God himself. No: he records every omission with the most perfect exactness. His book of remembrance contains many accounts, which though long blotted out of human recollection, shall one day fearfully alarm an awakened world. Memorable to this purpose, is Psalm l. 21. "*Thou thoughtest that I was altogether like thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set in order thy sins before thine eyes.*" To this head may justly be added the words of Psalm xciv. from the 7th verse and downwards. "*They say the Lord shall not see; neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.*" But let us hear how differently God states this case. "Understand, ye brutish

among the people; and ye fools when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall he not correct? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall he not know? The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law; that thou mayest give him rest from days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked." It is an easy business to stifle conscience, blaspheme the scriptures, rob God, mock his ministers, detain his *rights*, and even turn them against himself; but what will men do in the end? Let all descriptions of the human race consider that the Lord is on his way to reckon with the servants to whom he has delivered his talents.

5. Whether we consider the interests of secret piety towards God, or of social intercourse among men, it will be found that an accurate examination into the *boundaries* of those rights which God has reserved peculiarly and exclusively in his own hand, from these, which, in their exercise, he has delegated to his creatures, is a study highly interesting to this lower world. In vain shall the moderns boast of superior illumination, if they still continue equally dark, as the rudest ages, in those things which form the most weighty article of human concern. From some fatal defect in our nature, it comes to pass, that man makes the least progress in the knowledge of things which respect God and futurity, of any science to which his inquiries have hitherto been directed. From this slowness of heart to the most sublime of all studies, it comes to pass, that all the speculative powers of the human mind, slumber in a state of inglorious inactivity, the progress of its refinement is impeded, and the summit of its happiness rendered inaccessible. It is the want of this intellectual cement that renders almost every fabric of happiness among nations and individuals, loose and unstable, and liable to be overset by the first rude blast of disorderly passion. All the principles of natural and revealed religion, evince, that whatever lawful powers mankind possess must have been derived from God, that they must ever remain in their execution,

subject to his observation and control; and that consequently no exercise of these powers should be indulged but with a strict regard to his will from whom they have been derived— If we leap over this battlement, we have nowhere to light, but in the abyss of gloomy and hopeless atheism. And it would seem very unreasonable to suppose that God is bound by any attribute of his nature, or by any act of his revealed will, to unite his friendly intercourses with any acts or associations of men which wilfully contemn these rights of Divinity, by a veneration and respect to which, his ends in the kingdom of providence can alone be answered, and the happiness of his dependants secured. Hence, every person of common discernment, may be enabled to prognosticate, with certainty, the fate of every scheme of human safety and aggrandizement which excludes the counsels of God, and aspires at completion, in opposition to *that glory which he will not give to another*. The first step towards removing the evils by which this earth has already been sufficiently scourged, will be a careful study of *the rights of God*. These being once understood and recognised, will purify personal views and national councils. By their intense operation, the scum of selfish pride and ambition will be boiled off, while the pure particles of pious subjection to God and good-will towards men, will remain. Whatever darkness they may labour under, who are either altogether deprived of divine revelation, or who despise its friendly aids, yet nothing can excuse the church, if she remains ignorant on a subject so closely connected with her very existence on earth, and so eminently involving the consideration of all that can be looked forward unto as glorious beyond it. And it is from the scriptures alone, which contain the code of her corporation laws, that she can obtain complete information, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man. No rational conception can be formed how compliance with this command of Christ can be otherwise yielded. How shall a dividend be made between God and his creatures, without knowing the foundation, nature, and extent of their respective claims. And where shall we find these boundaries settled with sufficient



clearness, unless in the sacred volume? It, most satisfactorily determines all questions that can arise on this interesting subject; it, assigns to God's rights the supreme place. His claims take the precedency of all others, nor can any competition be admitted until his are all satisfied, and provision made for their full discharge. The laws of decency have perhaps never been more shamefully outraged than by a succession of usurpers, who, from one age to another, have infested the earth, and who, having agreed to kill the heir, and seize his inheritance, are always crying out sedition and treason against the church and her children, if they only dare to say, "*Render to God the things that are God's.*" Here the case of the bride, the Lamb's wife, is peculiarly hard. She has been left to keep the house in her Lord's absence; if she silently looks on while she sees him robbed by lawless plunderers, it is at her peril; if she raises the alarm, she is likely to be knocked on the head—"*Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.*" Nothing remains for her but to form her resolutions, and take her measures under a sense of the superior weight which God's rights ought to have over her personal safety. The issue of all, is, that God's *rights* form an essential branch of the church's education; in proportion to her progress in this heavenly science, the polish of her manners becomes more bright and dazzling; and although the world that lies in wickedness can hardly be brought to think that they have any concern in such disquisitions, they are mistaken; and however averse they may be at present to open their eyes, on objects seemingly so distant and difficult to be seen, yet we may reasonably hope the day is not very distant, when the knowledge of these things shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.

160 It will perhaps do something towards smoothing the path of inquiry which leads to this important discovery, if we can with firmness ascertain the foundation whereupon the rights of God depend, and by which they must ever be sustained. When we travel after him, whose ways are in the deep waters and the winds are his wings, peculiar degrees of modesty are required. Yet as the inquiry is of the utmost

importance to mankind, it is hoped that it may be approached in consistency with that humble respect which is due to him who is glorious in holiness.

The common sense of mankind seems to say, that all rights among rational beings are referable to "*moral excellency, moral rule, and moral powers.*" Physical power taken apart from morality never can found any right. An induction of a few particulars founded on the common sentiments and practice of mankind, may illustrate this assertion and help us to direct its application to our present purpose. Few will venture to say that God, though infinite in power, might consign an obedient angel or the spirit of a just man made perfect, unto an eternal state of suffering, merely because the divine power, if exerted, could produce such an effect. Much of the stability of subjective religion in the hearts, both of angels and men, rests on this supposition, that there is no unrighteousness with God. It is their happiness to have been brought into being, not by an omnipotent tyrant, who has no other pleasure but to sport with the afflictions of his creatures, or at most dispense his favours upon capricious and wavering principles. Under such considerations no good mind could for a moment bear up with tranquil satisfaction. Good mind, did I say! On such a supposition no good mind could ever have existed. Could we conceive the idea of an eternal principle of power existing separate from that delightful moderating principle, moral beauty, the thought would abound with insupportable horror. But in such a case no good mind could exist to cast its joyless eye over the dreary desert. No! the want of a universally, an infinitely good moral government could be felt by no creatures, emerging from a source covered with such eternal and impenetrable gloom. They could be supposed to possess no powers superior in excellency, to his, from whom they derived their being. But the whole intellectual creation bears witness that this is not the order of its existence, nor the principle on which it expands its energies. That part of it which navigates the most boisterous seas, and whose patience runs the greatest risk of shipwreck, has always this sheet anchor to

cast out, that the evils with which it is at present tossed, are only partial and temporary, and will certainly be over-topped, in due time, by the good skill of his hand who holds the helm. In the fullest persuasion of God's immaculate justice, thousands of unfinished decisions are brought daily from all inferior tribunals, to his, in whom, as all good men suppose, resides the right of final appeal, and an incorruptible disposition to open the obstructed channels of impartial justice to his subjects, without respect of persons.

The same idea pervades all intercourses which subsist in the moral creation. Why do we prefer the company of a good angel to that of a devil? It is not from any supposed difference in their physical power of strength, for of this we are no judges. No. It is because, we are persuaded that good angels are confirmed in their habits of holiness, so immovably, that no deviation therefrom is ever to be feared in the course of their ministrations among, and towards them who shall be heirs of salvation; whereas we are taught to believe that devils, driven on by the malignity of their disorderly passions, are under no control, from doing the most atrocious mischief, except what is constantly imposed upon them by the omnipotent power of Jehovah. Human governments proceed on the same principle. No nations have joined together on the professed principle of delivering the weak over into the hands of the strong, for no other reason but because the rulers possess a greater degree of physical force than their helpless dependants. The common sense of mankind recoils from the idea of such systematic misery. Hence it is that the most tyrannical and despotic governments, which, at this day, scourge this miserable earth, profess to repay their abject dependants for all their debasement, by benefits which are more than equivalent. Laws in well regulated governments interpose their authority between even husbands and wives, and between parents and children, lest these relations, however tender and endearing, should not be sufficiently strong to guard the weak and helpless from unbridled power. Though there may perhaps be found here and there a wretch, so dead to all the finer feelings of humanity, as to sport with

the life of his helpless slave, and shield himself by the superiority of his physical power, yet base as the moral sentiments of fallen human nature are found to be, such shameless cruelty would meet with almost universal contempt and indignation. On the contrary we see when men in any department of society, forego these advantages which force casts in their way, and appeal in their actions and demands, only to the righteousness of their cause, their conduct almost insensibly steals upon our hearts and produces a sentiment favourable to their interests. So common is this manner of thinking, and such is its influence on social order, that almost every villain is fond to gild over his base design with the plausible colourings of justice, benevolence, and candour; and the few who lay aside all disguise, appear such monsters that the human family rise with general consent, and hunt these beasts of prey from society. If in any case a man's physical powers might be supposed to be at liberty, with respect to moral rule, it would be in the exercise of that government which he has over himself, especially in these instances wherein his conduct may seem to have little or no influence on the happiness or misery of others. Yet few will assert the existence of any such right; and we may safely prognosticate, that while the present order of sensation continues to govern human nature, the earth will not be much depopulated by the weapon of self-destruction. To live a life of debauchery, and finish it with suicide, is considered as the most complete picture of human depravity and disgrace. The reason of this judgment, seems primarily founded in the dictates of our moral nature, which, however weak its voice may be at present, continues still to assert that dependant and accountable man is bound to have a due regard, not merely to what he *can do*, but to what *ought to be done*.

The diversity of sentiment about what is right and what is wrong, which in many cases prevails among mankind, is no just exception to the general principles now laid down. The difference is rather about the application, than the existence of a real distinction between the two ideas. We may often hear men defend as right, what we think is wrong; but we

shall rarely, if ever, find men defend or inculcate a thing because it is wrong in their own account. From these remarks it appears that we may justly conclude it to be agreeable to the moral feelings of mankind to found all real rights in *moral rectitude*. And I apprehend we shall be justified in asserting more particularly, “*That the moral excellency of God is the original source, and the supreme standard, of all rights that do or can exist in the extent of intellectual being, whether of God himself, or of his creatures.*” I am far from thinking that the other attributes of God are inconsiderable in assisting our conceptions of the august rights of Divinity; yet from the foregoing induction of particulars it would seem that the mind in all its inquiries after right, even in God himself, pursues an ascending course till it reaches this fountain head, and there fastens its humble, its pleasing submission, as on a nail, in a sure place. When we wish to enthrone God in our own hearts, or in the hearts of our fellow mortals, we do not say, Love God because he can kill you, but love him because he is good. When he proclaims his own rights he seldom or never founds them in the infinite extent of his power, without a regard to his spotless holiness and love. We have a memorable instance of this in Ezek. ix. The prophet had there a very melancholy vision of Jerusalem’s destruction; and in the bitterness of his spirit, verse 8, tells us the intercommuning that passed between God and him on the awful occasion. “*And it came to pass while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah, Lord God, wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel, in the pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?*” The answer of God to the prophet is wonderful: he does not appeal to his power, nor assert the might of his arm. No! “*Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness; for they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not.*” There Jehovah appeals to his judicial character. With what sensibility does the venerable Abraham express his faith in this doctrine, “*And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with*



*the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy, and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: SHALL NOT THE JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH DO RIGHT?*

(To be Continued.)

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### CAUTION AGAINST LEVITY.

*Extract of a Letter, from an experienced Christian, to a young Gentleman, his intimate acquaintance.*

DEAR AND LOVINGLY RESPECTED YOUNG FRIEND,

**S**INCE I saw you last I formed a design of writing some few things to you, for your help in a way of caution and advice, hoping you will hear what I have to say. You signified to me that you had been too much in company of late, some how not very agreeably; and having heard some more about it since, I would, therefore, take it upon me to say a few things to you, on the great danger you are in, by unnecessary company-keeping, in this age of profligacy and youthful vanity.

I would then tell you, that your profession is high and singular. You have set out with a fair bloom, giving God the fresh beginning of your days, in an early search after the way of truth and duty, as you told me. O see to it, that you give proof of the truth of your singularly good profession, by a singular abstractedness from the vain, trifling, frothy and sinful customs of the age; and so escape the pollutions and corruptions that are in the world through lust. This will not be an easy matter to do, if you do not avoid needless company-keeping. Our high profession ought to have a binding influence on our conduct; for it is an awful thing, as the Apostle speaks, if, after having escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of Christ, we be again entangled and overcome thereby; the latter end is worse than the beginning.

I would put you in mind of your danger. It is very great,



by reason of youth, strength of spirits, and, no doubt, a measure of the habits of sin and corruption, which rove at large in many of your acquaintances, with whom you are necessarily conversant in the course of your business. But you ought to keep a strict watch both upon yourself, in the risings of vanity, pride, self-conceit, and all other flashes of youth; and also upon those of your equals, with whom you are daily associating; for they, I can assure you, are against you, and laying snares for you; that you may be brought to serve and please them, in the same excess of riot with themselves. Let them think ever so strange, and speak ever so much evil of you, be sure to keep at a sober distance from their dangerous excesses of rioting folly. O sir! let me entreat you to consider that you are but a beginner in religion; and that it is a difficult work to be a practical christian. Grown christians are in great difficulty to walk even, and keep the road, therefore striplings ought to be exceedingly cautious. The enemies of young christians make bold attacks upon them, thinking to overthrow them at the first. Let it, therefore, be your diligent care, not to be overcome by sinful, wanton conformity to the customs, fashions and airs of youth. If you but once give vent to these they will gain ground on you. The way of sin is down hill; and a generation of youth are anxiously waiting for your halting, and will take all advantages they can against you. You ought, with the Psalmist, to put a bridle in your mouth, when before them, and not endeavour to compete with them in their folly. Mind you have put your hand to the plough, of a religious profession, and it is an awful thing to draw back. If you but give the smallest liberty to caballing and needless company-keeping, it is enough to provoke God to give you up to further apostasy; the thought of which ought to make you and me tremble; because our apostasy and backsliding will be in the face of solemn and sacramental vows of both baptism and the Lord's supper, and the solemn obligations arising from our holy profession of religion, under the banner of a testimony for truth, in the midst of a crooked and perverse backsliding generation. O how great our danger! We

cannot be cautious and careful enough. It had been much better for us, as the Apostle says, that we had never known the way of righteousness, than after we have known it, to turn from the holy commandment; and that it happen unto us according to the true proverb, turning with the dog to his vomit; and, with the sow, that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire. O sir! I intreat you to let the consideration of your danger have weight with you to put a double guard upon your conduct.

But again, I would also hint to you the great advantages of a strict attachment, in our lives, to the holy profession we have made of religion. In this way, dear friend, we have every advantage, whereas in the reverse we have none. If you speak of pleasure, I can tell you, that all the pleasure you can enjoy, in giving up yourself to follow the vain youth of the age and their ways, will not yield what they imagine. There is much more real pleasure in one hour's fighting with our heart plagues, and opposing the stream of sin and wickedness, that runs down like a current in the world, than in all their supposed enjoyments; because the one hath the testimony of a good conscience, and the other is attended with the piercing stings of remorse either in it or after it. What pleasure must there be in that victory which every believer shall obtain in a strict attachment to the way of the Lord! If we speak of profit, there is no gain by sin, but every loss, take it what way you will. All that is made by it is just a heaping up wrath against the day of wrath, and in the end the wages of it is death, eternal death: but godliness is great gain, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. O very dear friend, we but lose ourselves when we think on the gain of godliness; for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God hath laid up for them that love and fear him. If we speak of honour in sin, all the vain and vaunting honour of our generation, in their company-keeping, drinking and roving, is really nothing but a vain, dirty, low thing, much below the dignity of the christian spirit. O beware of meddling with such matters. Take it not ill to be called singular;

this is what you must submit to, if you mean to act for Christ. The honour of a christian goes not in being a good fellow with the world, but the great honour of his race is to be dignified with the high exercises of communion with God. O endeavour to be more and more like him. This is very different from the world; but I must end.

That the Lord who dwells in the midst of the burning bush of his church, and in the hearts of his people; who garnishes the heavens by his Spirit, may dwell in you and garnish his habitation in you, keeping you from all evil to the day of the Lord, is the prayer and desire of your friend and well-wisher.

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### ON GOD'S SPIRITUALITY.

*“ God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”* JOHN.

**S**PIRIT is a name given to such substances as are not gross, as to wind, or to the most subtle and volatile parts of a body, whereby its functions, if alive, are performed. Animal bodies have a twofold spirit, a vital in the blood, and an animal in the nerves. Such spirits have beasts, which go down to the earth with them at death.

In divinity, *spirit* or *ghost* ordinarily signifies an invisible, immaterial, immortal, thinking substance; hence God, angels and souls of men are called spirits. Angels and souls of men are finite and created spirits; but God is an infinite and uncreated Spirit. As he exceeds all in the nature of being, so he exceeds all in the nature of spirit. We must apprehend him infinitely above any spirit. He is called a Spirit, and he calls himself so, because there is not among men any other term of excellency by which to express him. Spirit is the highest excellency in man; therefore it is transferred to God in honour.

Spiritual substances are more excellent than bodily; therefore God, being the most excellent substance, must necessarily

ly be entirely remote from the condition of a body. The admirable effects of his power, wisdom and goodness, plainly show him to be a Being of greater perfection and eminence, than can possibly come under a bodily shape. It is true, under the Old Testament, God sometimes manifested himself in a bodily shape; or the Son of God sometimes appeared in a human assumed body, as a prelude of his incarnation. In such instances, however, the substance of God was no more seen, than that of angels was in their apparitions to men. Although bodily members are often attributed to God in scripture, yet that is done in condescension to our weakness, that we may the more easily conceive of him by such similitudes. These representations are intended to signify the acts of God, as they bear some resemblance to the acts which we perform by such members as he is pleased, for our sake, to ascribe unto himself. We must not, however, conceive of God according to the letter of such expressions, but according to their real spirit and design.

That "*God is a Spirit,*" we are assured by the great Prophet of the church, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, and by whom he whom no man hath seen at any time, hath been declared. To his infallible dictates we must give up ourselves with all that confidence due to the Teacher come from God. Let us try then if we can find out what properties of the divine nature are bosomed in this short description.

Here, indeed, we must confess ourselves unequal to the task of giving any positive description of that mysterious rank of beings denominated spirits. "*There is a spirit in man;*" so call we our better part, which triumphs over death and the grave. Of this we know but little. The angels are spirits, both those who stood and those who fell. Of these we know still less. But least of all are we able to define the spirituality of His essence who is the Father of spirits, and by whose visitation they are preserved. "*All flesh is not the same flesh,*" says an inspired apostle; and may we not also say, All spirit is not the same spirit? However, as there are certain qualities common to all the various kinds of flesh, so

there are certain qualities common to all the various kinds of spirit. For every spirit is a real or permanent substance; endued with life, thought, and power of acting; that is not compounded of different parts; that cannot be seen with the bodily eye, cannot be touched or affected by bodily force, cannot be described by the statuary's art, or by the painter's device; a substance that never dies, being incorruptible.

Is a spirit a real substance, which has an existence of its own, being neither a creature of the mind, nor a quality of a thing which must have a subject to support its very being? And who can doubt but He is the most real of substances, whose existence is necessary, and independent of any? for so much is imported in that most admirable epithet, **I AM THAT I AM.** To suppose God to be an idea of the mind, and not a real being, is to be atheist at once; is to say with the fool, "*There is no God.*"

Is a spirit endued with life? Life ennobles the being in which it is. Life makes a despicable fly more glorious than the sun; and "*a living dog is better than a dead lion.*" And must not He live, who gives life to all, from the triumphing angel down to the crawling insect? Yes. He is the living God; and the fountain of life is with him alone. In this he stands pre-eminent: nor must ye compare yourselves with him, ye idols of the nations, ye blind people that have eyes, and ye deaf that have ears; though silver plates from Tarshish and gold from Uphaz be your costly materials; though blue and purple be your clothing; and you be all the work of cunning men. For the Lord is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King.

What is a spirit? A substance thinking and intelligent. Brutish indeed must they be who can persuade themselves that the exquisitely nice regulations of the universe are owing to an unthinking cause; or that he himself doth not know who teacheth man knowledge, and lights in human hearts the heavenly lamp of reason, that candle of the Lord.

Is a spirit an immaterial substance, that hath neither flesh nor bones, nor is manacled with joints and limbs, nor is compounded of different parts? Indeed, that thought can spring



from matter, however modified, seems repugnant to all our ideas of its properties, and contradicts all our experience of its power. Combine matter in your most ingenious manner, ye artificers, ye cunning workmen; subject it to all the changes which can be effected by heat or mixture, ye who make the material world the object of your curious research; has it ever sprung up to life among your hands, or discovered any power of thought? You surprise us by phenomena unexpected and strange; you produce machines complicated and useful; but have you ever found, in any of your contrivances, that matter acquired the power of self-government, capacity for speculation, or any consciousness of right and wrong? But why appeal to you? One who cannot err, hath assured us that spirits have not flesh and bones, and different parts, as material substances are known to have. Of what materials, then, is Jehovah composed, who is the most excellent and perfect of spirits? Must not his essence be simple and uncompounded, who is continually present with all his works, who filleth heaven and earth, who is not only every where, but all in every place? Bodily parts cannot belong to the incorruptible God. Even divine perfections are not parts of God; they are only God, whom we cannot comprehend at one glance, viewed by our narrow minds in different relations to his creatures, or acting in various ways. The divine wisdom is the only wise God; the divine power the Lord God Omnipotent.

Can a spirit, which is immaterial, be seen by the eye or touched by the hand? How then can God be seen or felt? Symbols of the divine presence may be the objects of our senses; we may see a form or hear a sound; but the blessed and only Potentate himself is one to whom no man can approach, whom no man hath seen nor can see. Ye ancient people of God, bear witness to this truth. What nation ever had God so nigh unto them as you? Ye saw a visible representation of his glory on the burning mount; ye witnessed the smoke of Sinai, and ye heard a voice; but his essence ye did not, could not see. Your lawgiver Moses assures you, that "*ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that*



*the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire:*" a greater than Moses told you, "*ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.*" Have symbolical representations of God been given to the ancient church; and has God represented himself as having bodily organs in the written word, and spoken to us in our own idiom of those things which could not have been uttered or made intelligible in any other way? Let us not despise this condescending goodness, nor fancy that the Godhead is really like these visible representations or figurative descriptions. What is his face? It is the manifestation of his favour. His mouth? The revelation of his will. His nostrils? The acceptation of our prayers and praises. Omniscience is his eye, power his arm, mercy his bowels. His feet is the ubiquity of his presence, and his heart the sincerity of his love.

Where then are they who changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the image made like to corruptible man, or into the likeness of an ox that eateth grass? Be astonished, O heavens! even four-footed beasts and creeping things have been mistaken for the eternal Godhead. But for this cause, God gave them up to vile affections. Remember this, and show yourselves men; bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.

And lastly, If God is a spirit, he must have immortality. A spirit waxes not old, nor dies. All flesh is grass. The heavens and the earth shall perish; they all shall wax old, as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

So then, they that are in the flesh, cannot please God; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth. Let us therefore have grace to maintain a spiritual frame before him, to expect spiritual blessings from him, to offer spiritual services to him, and to seek satisfaction to our spirits in him alone.

*See Brown's Dict; Wisheart's Theo.; Chris. Mag.*

## HIBERNIAN BIBLE SOCIETY.

*Extract of a Letter from Mr T. G. one of the Preachers sent over by this Society, dated 4th Oct. 1809.*

**T**HE box of Bibles, Testaments, and Tracts, as mentioned in your letter of May 6th, I received:—a very acceptable supply indeed. All the common Testaments, except two or three, are disposed of, and some Bibles. The desire for them I think continues to increase, and the means of supply increase with the desire, which is a peculiar blessing. The Cork Bible Society does great things, and the secretaries are very zealous; they sent a supply to this town yesterday. Thus the bread of life is offered to the starving Irish, and the living streams flow into their houses. O that they may eat, drink, and live for ever!

One man, a Roman Catholic, to whom I gave a Testament, upon his earnest request, carries it about in his bosom. With another I have had much conversation; and I hope the minds of both are opening to the truth. These are generally at our place of worship; several others occasionally attend, and many more we should have, were it not for fear of wearing the white sheet. The congregation on the Sabbath evening, I think, increases: we have generally between 200 and 300 people.

I have been discouraged by the conduct of some, of whom I had entertained fond hopes. However, I think this a very promising field of usefulness; and if the preacher had all that zeal, energy, faithfulness and holiness, the nature of his work demands, much might be expected; though, without the Holy Spirit's influence, all would be in vain.

That no good has been done, I dare not say. I have the pleasure of knowing that several persons are seeking Jesus; and, through the rich grace of the Saviour, the Society already begins to reap the fruit of their labours. It has been with unspeakable delight that I have lately pointed to the Lamb of God, some who came to complain of their "*wicked hard hearts.*"

I mentioned, I think, in a former letter, that once a-week

I had preached in the barracks in the town: this I continue to do, with the pleasing prospect of good being done. The Sunday school, and the weekly schools, are tolerably well attended. The monthly sermon to the young people, is always anxiously looked for. This is one of the most pleasing exercises in which I engage. One of the first of these services was made useful to a young person, whose conversation and conduct are becoming the gospel.

The above account must be very acceptable to the Society, demands their grateful praises, and I hope will stimulate them to greater exertions. I lament that this is such an out-of-the-way place, that ministers coming from England to supply the chapel at Dublin, can never visit us. If such a thing could be done, the benefit might be great; or, if any more could come for the express purpose, at certain times, to make a tour, to visit the brethren, and see how they do, it would be exceedingly refreshing and useful.

P. S. I should have acknowledged the receipt of the spelling-books from the Sunday School Society; and for which we are very thankful.

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No sooner was the Hibernian Society instituted, than the leaders among the Irish Catholics began to adopt measures for counteracting their exertions. A pamphlet was published, which condemns all the means by which the object of the Society is to be attained. A brief extract will suffice to shew that Popery is the same now that she was in the darkest ages.

“Your plan is (it is said in the pamphlet) *to provide every poor family with a copy of the Holy Scriptures.* This mode of propagating religion, or of enlightening the mind with religious truth, appears so preposterous to the eye of reason and philosophy, and has been found so inadequate, by a long experience, that nothing but that spirit of opposition to Popery, which gives a sanction to every thing, could still induce any people to persevere in its adoption. To see this book of wonders, this book of mysteries, this book of prophecies, containing the earliest history of mankind, laid before an ig-

notant peasant for his edification and instruction! Can we seriously applaud the measure?"

After this, we need not wonder that orders have been issued, not to accept a religious tract, nor to pick one up from the ground, unless to burn it, or to carry it to the priest!

We rejoice to hear that the British and Foreign Bible Society is about to reprint the New Testament (Bishop Bedell's edition) in the Irish language. Such is the partiality of the Irish to their own tongue, that we hope the most desirable effects will be produced by this measure.

*See Chris. Mag.*

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## POPISH COURT OF INQUISITION.

—“*Overturn, overturn, overturn it.*”— EZEKIEL.

**I**N the church of Rome the Inquisition is a tribunal, in several Roman countries, erected by the Popes for the examination and punishment of heretics \* This court was founded in the twelfth century, under the patronage of Pope Innocent, who issued out orders to excite the Catholic princes and people to extirpate heretics, to search into their number and quality, and to transmit a faithful account thereof to Rome. Hence they were called Inquisitors, and gave birth to this formidable tribunal called the Inquisition.

To render this spiritual court every way formidable and tremendous, the Roman pontiffs persuaded the European princes, and more especially the emperor Frederick II, and Lewis IX, king of France, not only to enact the most barbarous laws against heretics, and to commit to the flames, by the ministry of public justice, those who were pronounced such by the Inquisitors, but also to maintain the Inquisitors in their office, and grant them their protection in the most open and solemn manner. The edicts to this purpose, issued out by

\* The doctrine of the church and Pope of Rome, is the infallible rule of faith; and from the Pope the holy scripture receives its force, and he that doth not believe this is a heretic. *Sylvest.*

Frederick II, are well known; edicts ſufficient to have excited the greateſt horror, and which rendered the moſt illuſtrious piety and virtue incapable of ſaving from the crueleſt death, ſuch as had the miſfortune to be diſagreeable to the Inquiſitors. Theſe abominable laws were not, however, ſufficient to reſtrain the juſt indignation of the people againſt thoſe inhuman judges, whoſe barbarity was accompanied with ſuperſtition and arrogance, with a ſpirit of ſuſpicion and perfidy; nay, even with temerity and imprudence. Accordingly, they were inſulted by the multitude in many places, were driven in an ignominious manner out of ſome cities, and were put to death in others; and Conrad, of Marpurg, the firſt German Inquiſitor, who derived his commiſſion from Gregory IX, was one of the many victims that were ſacrificed on this occaſion to the vengeance of the public, which his incredible barbarities had raiſed to a dreadful degree of vehemence and fury.

This diabolical tribunal takes cognizance of heresy, judaism, mahometanism, &c. and the people ſtand in ſo much fear of it, that parents deliver up their children, huſbands their wives, and maſters their ſervants, to its officers, without daring in the leaſt to murmur. The priſoners are kept for a long time, till they themſelves turn their own accuſers, and declare the cauſe of their imprifonment, for which they are neither told their crime, nor confronted with witneſſes. As ſoon as they are imprifoned, their friends go into mourning, and ſpeak of them as dead, not daring to ſolicit their pardon, leſt they ſhould be brought in as accomplices. When there is no ſhadow of proof againſt the pretended criminal, he is diſcharged, after ſuffering the moſt cruel tortures, a tedious and dreadful imprifonment, and the loſs of the greateſt part of his effects. The ſentence againſt priſoners is pronounced publicly, and with extraordinary ſolemnity. In Portugal they erect a theatre capable of holding 3000 perſons, in which they place a rich altar, and raiſe ſeats on each ſide, in the form of an amphitheatre. There the priſoners are placed, and over againſt them is a high chair, whither they are called one by one, to hear their doom from one of their Inquiſitors. Theſe unhappy perſons know what they are to ſuffer by the

clothes they wear that day: those whose appear in their own clothes are discharged on paying a fine; those who have a *santo benito*, or strait yellow coat without sleeves, charged with St Andrew's cross, have their lives but forfeit all their effects; those who have the resemblance of flames made of red serge sewed upon their *santo benito*, without any cross, are pardoned, but threatened to be burnt if ever they relapse; but those who, besides these flames, have on their *santo benito* their own picture surrounded with devils, are condemned to expire in the flames. The Inquisitors, who are ecclesiastics, do not pronounce the sentence of death, but form and read an act, in which they say, that the criminal, being convicted of such a crime, by his own confession, is, with much reluctance, delivered to the secular power, to be punished according to his demerits; and this writing they give to the seven judges, who attend at the right side of the altar, and immediately pass sentence.

The horrid scene is concluded on *Auto da Fe*, a solemn day held by the Inquisition for the punishment of heretics, and the absolution of the innocent accused. They usually contrive the *Auto* to fall on some great festival, that the execution may pass with the more awe; and it is always on a Sunday. The *Auto da Fe* may be called the last act of the Inquisitorial tragedy: it is a kind of goal-delivery, appointed as often as a competent number of prisoners in the Inquisition are convicted of heresy, either by their own voluntary or extorted confession, or on the evidence of certain witnesses. The process is thus:—

In the morning they are brought into a great hall, where they have certain habits put on, which they are to wear in the procession, and by which they know their doom. The procession is led up by Dominican friars; after which come the penitents, being all in black coats without sleeves, and bare-footed, with a wax candle in their hands. These are followed by the penitents who have narrowly escaped being burnt, who over their black coats have flames painted, with their points turned downwards. Next come the negative and relapsed, who are to be burnt, having flames on their habits.



pointing upwards. After these come such as profess doctrines contrary to the faith of the church of Rome, who, besides flames pointing upwards, have their picture painted on their breasts, with dogs, serpents, and devils, all open mouthed, about it. Each prisoner is attended with a familiar of the Inquisition; and those to be burnt have also a Jesuit on each hand, who are continually preaching them to abjure. After the prisoners, comes a troop of familiars on horse-back; and after them the Inquisitors, and other officers of the court, on mules: last of all, the Inquisitor-general on a white horse, led by two men with black hats and green hatbands. A scaffold is erected big enough for 2 or 3000 people; at one end of which are the prisoners, at the other the Inquisitors. After a sermon made up of encomiums on the Inquisition, and invectives against heretics, a priest ascends a desk near the scaffold, and having taken the abjuration of the penitents, recites the final sentence of those who are to be put to death, and delivers them to the secular arm, earnestly beseeching, at the same time, the secular power *not to touch their blood, or put their lives in danger!!!* The prisoners, being thus in the hands of the civil magistrate, are presently loaded with chains, and carried first to the secular goal, and from thence, in an hour or two, brought before the civil judge; who, after asking in what religion they intend to die, pronounces sentence on such as declare they die in the communion of the church of Rome, that they shall be first strangled, and then burnt to ashes; on such as die in any other faith, that they be burnt alive. Both are immediately carried to the Ribera, the place of execution, where there are as many stakes set up as there are prisoners to be burnt, with a quantity of dry furze about them. The stakes of the professed, that is, such as persist in the heresy, are about four yards high, having a small board towards the top for the prisoner to be seated on. The negative and relapsed being first strangled and burnt, the professed mount their stakes by a ladder, and the Jesuits, after several repeated exhortations to be reconciled to the church, part with them; telling them that they leave them to the devil, who is standing at their elbow, to receive their souls, and

carry them with him to the flames of hell. On this a great shout is raised; and the cry is, "*Let the dogs' beards be made!*" which is done by thrusting flaming furzes fastened to long poles against their faces, till their faces are burnt to a coal, which is accompanied with the loudest acclamations of joy! At last, fire is set to the furze at the bottom of the stake, over which the professed are chained so high, that the top of the flame seldom reaches higher than the seat they sit on; so that they rather seem roasted than burnt. There cannot be a more lamentable spectacle: the sufferers continually cry out, while they are able, "Pity, for the love of God!" Yet it is beheld, by all sexes and ages, with transports of joy and satisfaction!

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O merciful God! is this the benign, humane religion thou hast given to men? Surely not. If such were the genius of christianity, then it would be no honour to be a christian. Christianity, however, is of a very opposite spirit and complexion. The bloody Inquisition Court is an Antichristian institution, and, with all the articles of that system of iniquity, must perish for ever. The fall of such a long established despotism, which has plundered mankind of their property, of every right, natural or acquired, and has caused the massacre of countless millions of the human race, while it has enabled the perpetrators to riot in every species of wickedness, is an event which affords matter of holy satisfaction and triumph to every friend to the moral interests, and the civil and religious rights of men: and to the christian, he who is not merely nominally, but really such, no event that has taken place for many centuries past, is more calculated to confirm his faith in Divine revelation; and in the consoling doctrine of a superintending Providence.

By the generality of all Protestant divines, the characters and predictions abounding in the New Testament, respecting Antichrist, have been applied to the church of Rome. She has justly been considered as the grand apostate from the christian faith. The fall of that church has been, for ages, the uniform subject of the most ardent prayers of pious Pro-

testants of all denominations. They rejoiced to see, although at a distance, the day on which the church of Rome, should be protracted in the dust. They contemplated such an event as one of the most important, splendid, and glorious accomplishments of inspired prophecy. Astonishing, however! as the period for the accomplishment of the predictions relative to the church of Rome has more nearly approached, many Protestants, instead of praising God and congratulating the christian world, have manifested much dissatisfaction and uneasiness! We fear an impartial inquiry into the reason of their conduct on the grateful occasion, would suggest some mortifying reflections. Does their conduct bewray a consciousness, that some of the marks by which the grand apostasy has been distinguished, are but too applicable to themselves; about the safety of which they are somewhat doubtful, at *the brightness of his coming*, whose prerogatives have been so long invaded?

Napoleon, proceeding in his reforms in the papal states, annihilates the temporal dominion of the worst of despots, of that grand corrupter of the faith and morals of Christendom, the Pope of Rome, under whose tyranny the world and the church, through long and successive ages, groaned and bled—abolishes the Inquisition, and also several special tribunals; divests the clergy, both secular and regular, of all temporal jurisdiction, and annuls all clerical privileges; abolishes also *the right of asylum for criminals*; a right by which thousands of assassins, as well as other criminals, and their accomplices, were sheltered every year.\* But whilst these grand reforms are effecting, the generality of christians scarcely allow themselves to consider the *end* which thus appears to be accomplished; but are almost wholly intent on the *instrument* employed.

With respect to the motives and views of Napoleon, and the measures he is pursuing for the advancement of his ulti-

\* The crime of assassination was thought so lightly of at Rome, that a gentleman who visited that city a few years ago, informed his friends that he saw beggars on the steps of the cathedral church of St Peter, asking charity in the following words:—"Pray remember the poor *assasin!*"

mate designs, little can be said in their favour: his own vast ambition is doubtless the main spring of his actions. The Almighty Governor of the world appears to have designed, in the course of his providence, that those disorders which have attended the rise, progress, and establishment of despotic governments, shall likewise, in different degrees, mark their fall; and in all ages of the world, from the days of Pharaoh to those of Napoleon, he has raised up those men to bring about events the most important, whose characters, plans, and ultimate designs place them, in the eyes of every friend to virtue and goodness, in no favourable point of view: but this consideration, however humbling it may be to the pride of man, ought by no means to hinder the enjoyment of that satisfaction which naturally arises in the minds of good men in the accomplishment of these ends. The design of the Almighty in all his dispensations, appears to be, to reserve the honour due to himself, that *no flesh should glory in his presence*. On such an event, therefore, as the fall of the church of Rome, it is impossible for us to refrain from congratulating the christian world. The accomplishment of the Divine predictions, declared by the heralds of the christian dispensation, eighteen centuries ago, causes *light to arise out of darkness*; and amidst the corruptions and disorders of society, this light excites us to rejoice that we live in an age so distinguished. We call on every true christian to join us in the exulting language of the evangelist, when he beheld in vision the grand scenes now passing before our eyes:—“ *Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her.—We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.—Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.*

See *Buck's Theo. Dict.* &c.

## ANTICHRIST FARTHER REDUCED.

*A Decree of Joseph Bonaparte, 10th Dec. contains the following Regulations.*

CONSIDERING that it is repugnant to the spirit of the gospel, and the purity of the discipline of the best ages of the church, that the ecclesiastical order should be diverted from its legitimate avocations by legal concerns; and, at the same time, that the public interest requires the unity of jurisdiction:—From the date of the present decree, the ecclesiastical power shall cease to exercise any judicial jurisdiction, as well civil as criminal, which is found to devolve to the secular magistrates.—All causes for trial, whether civil, criminal, or of any other description, pending between various suiters in the ecclesiastical courts, shall be transferred, according to the character and nature of their transaction, to their respective secular tribunals.—The judges deciding in such causes shall apply to them the same regulations of canon law in vigour in Spain, as would have guided the ecclesiastical judges, to whom such causes would otherwise have been submitted. The mode and form of such proceedings, as well as the reiteration of each cause, must be exclusively determined by the law which regulates the secular tribunals.

THE *false prophet* also, now visibly trembles on the awful verge of his divinely predicted destiny. A report has lately been made by Mahomed Ibrahim, a pilgrim who visited the tomb of Mahomet, &c. for devotion. He gives full confirmation to what has been formerly asserted, concerning the destruction of that tomb, by a set of people called *Wahabees*, who are rising into very great importance in Arabia, and likely to prove very detrimental to the interest of the Grand Signior in those parts.

Mahomed Ibrahim says, ‘ That when the Wahabees reached the holy city of Medina, it was surrendered to them by capitulation; and that their first act was to destroy the tomb of the founder of the Mahometan religion. Afterwards, when a vast number of pilgrims, from Syria, Egypt, and Turkey, to the number of 15,000, arrived, desiring permission to enter the holy city, they were not only refused, but obliged to surrender their money, to resign their arms, and to return home.’

Ibrahim also says, ‘ That their intentions are fully directed against India; and adds, ‘ May the Almighty disappoint them, and render their designs abortive.’ In short, he says, ‘ The sway and despotism exercised by the Wahabees in Arabia exceeds all bounds; being such that I cannot convey any adequate idea thereof.’

*See Chris. Mag. for Feb. and March. 1810.*

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ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

CHAP. III.

*State of the Church from the Death of Christ until the rise of Antichrist.*

(Continued from page 88.)

**I**N the death of Christ, all the types and ceremonies of the Old Testament have had their full accomplishment. The peculiar policy of the Jews is now no more. The vail of the temple is rent in twain, and the holy of holies has lost its prerogative. The wall of partition which separated the seed of Jacob from the Gentiles is taken down, and into *one church* the inhabitants of other nations are admitted with the children of Abraham, without distinction of privileges. After Christ's resurrection from the dead, he instructed his disciples more particularly in the doctrine and order of the New Testament church; and, giving unto his eleven apostles a commission as ecclesiastical officers, he ascended to heaven as an exalted Mediator, to administer the government of the whole empire of created existence, in subserviency to the interest of his peculiar kingdom the church. On the day of Pentecost he poured out his Holy Spirit in miraculous profusion upon his disciples, in order to qualify them for the extraordinary services to which he called them. The apostles commence their



ministerial work, and the first fruits which these labourers reaped, afforded a glorious hope of the plenitude of the approaching harvest. The promise to Abraham, which was divinely restricted to his offspring according to the flesh, until the seed Christ came, was now delivered from that temporary restriction by the same divine authority, and offered with all its increased advantages to men, without distinction of nations or of ranks. All the families of the earth are now invited to covenant with God. The covenant society, ONE in every age, is now exhibited under a form of government adapted by divine wisdom to this last and most perfect dispensation of grace, which the Redeemer makes on earth. Every member is directed to submit to it, and to support its whole order for ever. The apostles, having equal power, are the only ministers and rulers of the church; and they are authorized to establish in Jerusalem the model upon which all churches are to be formed in future, throughout the nations of the earth. In their own behaviour towards one another, they set the example of ministerial parity; and, as extraordinary messengers endowed with supernatural gifts, they exercised authority over all the churches. This measure was necessary to place the kingdom of Messiah in an orderly state, that the constitution divinely provided for it might be put in full operation, and its future administration committed into the hands of the ordinary and permanent officers.

The apostles preached the gospel, explaining the whole economy of grace, and reduced into a church state all who embraced the faith, together with their children. Their visible membership in God's covenant society was immediately sealed by baptism. As the rainbow, already in the heavens, became by divine appointment the seal of the covenant to Noah, and circumcision practised, among all the nations descended from Abraham, became the seal of the covenant of Sinai made with the seed of Jacob, so did baptism now for the first time become the seal of the new covenant, although for a long time before it had been a common rite of the Jews, and since the time of John the Baptist a positive institution of Heaven. Baptism is a symbolical washing. It represents

and seals the union of believers with Christ Jesus in the one body of the invisible church. It also signifies the solemn engagements of christians to the faith and obedience of Christ their Lord, as members in covenant with him, and with one another; to maintain in the strength of his grace the unity of the Spirit, in the bonds of peace. It is administered by an authorized officer of the organized ecclesiastical society. The element is water; and as the washing is not designed to cleanse literally the body, such a quantity of water is to be applied as may be sufficient to answer the purposes of a symbol. This is all that is necessary. The application of water to the face of a recognized church-member by an ordained minister of the word, in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, is the true mode of administering this initiating sacrament. No less than three thousand persons were, on the first day in which the apostles publicly preached in Jerusalem, formed into an organized church, and baptized by the apostles.

Jerusalem was a large and populous city. It contained upwards of a million of inhabitants. The synagogues, the parish churches of the Jews, in which, under the Mosaic dispensation, they met for their ordinary worship, amounted in this city to nearly five hundred. The apostles embraced every opportunity which offered of preaching in the Jewish synagogues, and they appeared daily at the temple, the most public place of resort, especially to the devout Jews. But although these places afforded an opportunity of making converts to christianity, they did not offer an equal opportunity for the peculiar acts of christian worship. The disciples could not sanctify the first day of the week in a regular manner, in these promiscuous assemblies, which met in Solomon's porch, or in the Jewish synagogues. They therefore met in private houses, in such numbers as could conveniently associate for the sanctification of the Lord's day; and in these select assemblies or churches was the sacrament of the Lord's supper administered. This solemn institution, which is the New Testament passover, commemorates the death of Christ, is a mean of grace, a symbol of our union with the church, a

seal of our visible membership, a badge of our separation from the world; and a public social renovation of the baptismal oath to serve the Lord, and abide by his church, according to all the ordinances of that ecclesiastical covenant into which God admits us under the New Testament.

Steadfastness in the apostles' doctrine, with a consistent course of obedience to the whole dispensation of the covenant of grace, in opposition to every contrary system, was then the only requisite for admission to christian communion.

A profession of believing the Bible never did constitute the condition of christian fellowship. In the first erection of the church at Jerusalem, no part of the New Testament was committed to writing; and although the Jews believed the Old Testament, they were not universally admitted into the church.

The rule of admission into the church is invariable. He who knowingly professes a belief and approbation of the covenant of grace, who engages to submit to the dispensation of that covenant in every part, and whose conduct is consistent with these declarations, is entitled to admission among the disciples of our Lord. Such were the members of the apostolic churches. Whenssoever the contrary appeared whether by heresies, schisms, or immoralities, they became liable to censure. The first object of the apostolic ministry was to teach and persuade men to embrace Jesus Christ, and repent of all their sins. The next point to be gained was the organization of the converts into a regular church state, and to settle the ministry and ordinances among them. The commission of the apostles instructed them to disciple the nations. When a church was formed in Jerusalem, the apostles placed in every congregation presbyters of their own choice. Of these presbyters, or elders, one was a teacher authorized to administer the word and sacraments, and the others were his counsel and aid in government and discipline. To the consistory or session of elders the whole ecclesiastical power of the church was committed. But these churches were all connected in one body by representation; and although Jerusalem contained, in less than twenty years after the first church was organized in

it, no less than twenty congregations, they are all *one church*. By the representative system the unity of the empire is supported, however numerous its provinces. By presbytery, several distinct congregations are united in one church.

Christianity was not long confined to Jerusalem. The efforts of persecutors were the means of extending the church. Many of the ministers were obliged to fly from Jerusalem, and they went to different places, preaching the gospel and forming churches, with great success. Wherever there were disciples, they associated according to the ancient practice of the pious Jews, for religious conference and prayer. Several societies of Christians, meeting for private social worship in convenient private houses, existed throughout Judea and the surrounding nations. As soon as convenient, however, these societies were organized into congregations, with a stated ministry and public ordinances. And as the congregations were formed, they were regularly presbyterated.

The rapidity with which the gospel spread during the apostolic age, and the prospect of spreading it still farther, exposed all the apostles to great and unceasing danger and toil. They had the care of all the churches; but they could not be present every where. The first converts were, in general, simple and pious; and the first ministers were faithful and zealous. The means of information were, however, few. The canon of scripture was not yet complete. Copies of the scriptures were scarce. Pious books were not to be obtained. Few persons were able to read. The Jewish rites and the Heathen superstition were not easily banished from the esteem even of those who embraced christianity. The church required the regular and constant administration of ordinances, and the stated ministry stood in need of the superintendence of those who were supernaturally endowed with the gifts of miracles. The apostles found it expedient to employ **EVANGELISTS**, in visiting the different places in which the gospel had been planted in the organization of new congregations, and in directing the ministry, where it was regularly established. These extraordinary ambassadors are, nevertheless, careful to exhibit to the christian world the true model upon

which all churches are to be constituted. This is apparent from their uniform practice. None are recognized as disciples, who do not profess the true religion, and submit to all its ordinances, without exception. There is not upon the records of the church during the first century, an instance of any one being admitted to church fellowship, who denied any doctrinal truth, or rejected any practical institution. If it happened that any disciple did, after his admission, embrace heresy, refuse submission to order, or practice any immorality, he was brought under suitable discipline. According to the nature and circumstances of his scandal, he was admonished, rebuked, or excommunicated. Among the disciples there was no distinction of rights or spiritual privileges, until organized into an ecclesiastical body. The several members had then their places appointed by divine authority. In every organized congregation there was a distinct class of rulers, and all others are ruled and bound to submission in the Lord. To the rulers was committed exclusively the power of *the keys of the kingdom of heaven*—the right publicly to teach and to discipline. Church officers alone can exercise any part of discipline. They alone can admit into church fellowship, can govern those who are admitted, and can exclude from the privileges of the church, those who are unruly. In no case during the first century, did a congregation examine and admit a member, judicially try and censure the disorderly, or excommunicate the rebellious.

In every congregation there were admitted several elders. In no instance is an organized congregation under the care of one officer. These presbyters were ordained to office by other presbyters. There is not one case in the apostolic age, of a presbyter being ordained to office by any single individual, whether an ordinary or extraordinary minister. As the ordinations were uniformly conducted by a plurality of ordained officers, and never by one; so the imposition of hands is the significant rite by which the ministerial authority was communicated. No one offered to preach or administer the sacraments without regular ordination, except the first extraordinary prophets and ambassadors, who were endowed with



miraculous gifts to attest their divine mission. Those christians who met in private fellowship for mutual edification, never employed a preacher, or attempted to ordain an officer for themselves. They waited until the rulers of the church visited them to administer ordinances, and ordain officers.

A self-organized society, would be a building of man; but in no sense *the house of God*—"the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

The primitive saints had a common cause, and they felt a common interest in the maintenance of the gospel. Their worldly income was cheerfully devoted to that end. Like the members of one family, they all, according to their several abilities, contributed of their property to pious purposes. Not one design ever failed of its accomplishment from want of pecuniary resources in that age, while any christian was in possession of property adequate to the purpose. The income of their estates, and the earnings of their labours were deemed a common right, and employed for the common good. The rulers of the congregations disposed of its collections; and when paupers were so numerous as to require particular attention, distinct officers were appointed to inspect their state, and to distribute, with the advice of the presbyters, the adequate relief from the general fund. The officers who served the tables of the poor were called deacons, a word which signifies servants. They had no authority in ecclesiastical proceedings, any further than as they respected temporalities.

When the extraordinary officers had under divine direction settled the church, the ordinary ministry conducted its concerns agreeably to its *presbyterian constitution*. Each christian congregation had a pastor of their own choice, regularly ordained as their bishop by a judicatory of presbyters, by the laying on of hands. With this pastor or angel of the church, were associated, for the purposes of government, lay-elders, chosen by their brethren, and ordained to office by a session or presbytery. The minister and elders, the authorized representation of the congregation, constituted the session. The sessions of several congregations formed one presbytery,



and all the presbyteries were under the government of one common judicatory, formed upon the principle of representation, in its most pure and regular form.

This system, admirably calculated to preserve the purity of the church, was fully exemplified before the death of the apostles, and universally prevailed in the first century. The kingdom of Christ, thus regularly governed, and subsisting in the midst of hostile nations as an independent empire, under the protection of the Prince of the kings of the earth, exhibited to the world the power of God, and the wisdom of God in the salvation of man. It did not, however, enjoy peace for a great length of time. No system, however perfect, can be perfectly administered by frail man. God was, nevertheless, glorified in his Son; the church had her doctrine and constitution completed; the elect were savingly united to their Lord; and the world was left without excuse. These ends having been obtained, the church soon began to decline. Heresies and schisms soon distracted her congregations, and called forth the faithfulness and talents of her sons, to defend her order and her doctrine. The Jewish converts endeavoured to make the church more similar to the temple; and the Pagan endeavoured to bring it to bear some resemblance to the house of his idols. The philosopher endeavoured to corrupt its doctrine, and the politician to model its form according to that of the Roman empire. As the godly were carried home to glory, and the number of the elect on earth diminishing, while the number of professors increased, the church becomes more corrupt. The most conspicuous characters and places usually set the example of conformity to the world, while obscure corners shine with the light of gospel truth in its original purity. Before the latter end of the second century, the appearance of the christian church, especially in the principal cities, had altered for the worse.

It is generally the case, that the history of the church is considered subordinate to that of worldly empires. A historian of American affairs, even in the present day, would be very apt to overlook the most pious and orderly followers of Jesus; and if he wrote of the church at all, he would bestow

attention not in proportion to the purity and faithfulness of ecclesiastical bodies, but in proportion to their wealth, their numbers, and their worldly influence. The few books which have escaped the destruction of literature in the dark ages, cannot, therefore, be considered as exhibiting to view the most pure branches of the church. They direct our attention to those most conspicuous in the world, though probably the least worthy of our notice. The view, notwithstanding, which they afford us, is that of a declining empire. Christianity, indeed, was extensively diffusing itself in name; but the purity of the church had lost its lustre. Heresy and strife divided the professed followers of Jesus into factions. Human inventions encumbered divine worship; carnal views influenced discipline; and ambition changed the form of government in those churches which occupied the most distinguished situations in the Roman empire. A faithful voice was raised against these deviations from apostolic purity. This voice is feeble, as it reaches our ears; but it must have been at first bold and energetic, seeing it has reached us at all, through so vast a wilderness, and over the innumerable interposing obstacles introduced by the Roman Antichrist. Before the end of the second century, some ambitious ministers began to abuse their influence, their leisure, their wealth, and their literature, as the means of usurping power over their brethren. The pious disciples who formed the churches at the death of the apostles, were now admitted into the church triumphant. They transmitted the name christian to their successors; but man is naturally corrupt, and grace is not hereditary. Iniquity abounded, the love of many waxed cold, the means of information were scanty, books were accessible to very few, and thus the state of the church offered an easy prey to the rapacity of the ambitious. To support themselves in their usurpation these time-serving pastors left no art untried. Like the scribes and pharisees, they pretended superior zeal and sanctity, and they endeavoured to make void the law by their traditions. They represented the Jewish as the model of the christian ministry, and taught their disciples that Aaron typified not the Redeemer, the high priest of our profession,

but a prelate of the church. The deacon, who at first ministered by order of session to the wants of the poor, began to employ servants under him, and in process of time, the office was entirely changed and rendered a spiritual ministry. The presbyter, however, long retained his rank, and contended for his rights. But after christianity became the religion of the Roman empire, it was mingled with paganism; and the external form of the church was also modified according to the civil government. The bishop claimed a superior power over the presbyter, and, armed with the authority of the Roman emperor, he obtained his object. Patriarchs and metropolitans are higher branches of the hierarchy; and these dignitaries of the church, forcing themselves upon our attention, hide from our view the more pious, faithful, and orderly congregations, which still retained the apostolic doctrine, and worship, and discipline. The word *Bishop*, began in the second century to be applied, in some places, to moderators of the presbyterial courts, and afterwards to those who pretended higher ministerial authority than ordinary ministers; but this application was by no means universal. The zeal of the apostles and their cotemporary ministers of the gospel, carried them through the different nations, and the subsequent persecutions drove many able ministers into every part of the known world.

Churches were settled in the different nations, and at a distance from the seat of the Roman empire, these churches enjoyed their primitive order and truth.

According to prophecy, however, the spirit of the world gradually prevailed over the exertions of piety, in the most conspicuous nations. The ecclesiastical courts were unable to check the growing apostasy. The church increased, and regular representative assemblies were not permitted to meet by the persecutors. And even when the magistracy of the empire of Rome professed christianity, the ecclesiastical councils were influenced in a high degree by the civil power, and the corruption had already become too general to be now effectually prevented. Synods, composed partly of apostates, and the sword hanging over their heads, are not competent to

produce reformation. These causes, together with the civil wars, and final dismemberment of the empire of Rome, nourished prelatic ambition, and at last placed in the chair of Papal supremacy, Boniface the third. This event took place in opposition to the will of the struggling churches, in the year 606. It was effected by the agency of Phocas, that infamous tyrant, who waded to the imperial throne through blood. The Roman supremacy was not yet, however, generally recognized. Princes and emperors, churches, and even whole nations, testified against that deed, as a disgrace to the annals of history. The most pure and faithful parts of the christian church, beheld with anguish the grand apostasy, but they still, though in a great measure unnoticed and unknown, retained the apostolic order. Their bishops were parish ministers. Their elders were representatives of the congregations, and their deacons were the trustees of the poor. The prelacy had, indeed, gradually paved the way for the Pope's usurpation. The nations of Europe in general, and some of the Asian and African governments, were now called christian. God's visible covenant society became extremely corrupt, and like the house of Israel, had broken their covenant. Still, however, the Lord preserved his saints; and the saints struggled against the prevailing iniquity. In every nation there were numbers who did not acquiesce in the apostasy. It was a very small proportion of the church which fully submitted to the supremacy of Antichrist.

*(To be Continued.)*

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## THE RIGHTS OF GOD.

*"Render—unto God, the things that are God's."* MAT. xxii. 21.

(Continued from page 103.)

II. **W**E now proceed to specify some few of the rights which are peculiar to Divinity, and in the exercise of which, among his creatures, no small part of his glory, as God, consists.

1. The first of these rights which I shall mention, and that which I consider, at least in point of order, of primary magnitude, is the LIBERTY, which, as the all-perfect Jehovah, God from *all eternity* possessed, of arranging his councils and forming, if I may so speak, the example and patron of all the works that he was, by his power, to execute until the mystery of his ways shall be completed. As there is a derived similitude of this divine right, apparent in all these transactions among men, for which they are held to be accountable, it might have been expected, before this time of day, that their ideas would have been more clear, on the subject, than we find has been the case. And yet plain as the principle may appear, we will find it combined with difficulties of no easy solution. These difficulties ought to be met in their strongest form, and to receive the most dispassionate consideration, as no small part of the Arminian and Calvinistic controversies are connected therewith. The matter will at least appear in this light to those who consider this controversy as closely combined with the very vitals of man's salvation. Had evil never found a place among the works of God, it is not likely that any controversy on this subject, would ever have disturbed the repose of created intelligence. But evils of the most awful description, having discoloured some of the fairest works of God, and being likely to do so without end, naturally recall the mind to look back to eternal counsels: reason, however, should here move with heedful steps and consider that the path is narrow, and, should a foot be missed, the precipice over which it must tumble, is tremendous. As our ideas of God and his councils, are in no small degree influenced by the experience of what passes within ourselves, it may be necessary in considering this subject, to examine the term LIBERTY, as it has been used to express things found to exist in human nature. And without entangling ourselves in Arminian controversies about a freedom of indifference, which has no existence in nature, I understand freedom in a metaphysical sense, to express that spontaneity, which we experience to accompany our voluntary actions, when we are under no external restraint, but at perfect freedom to follow the inclina-

tions of our own hearts. This is all that is essential to that freedom, which constitutes man an accountable being.

That the Deity possesseth such a freedom or liberty in all his volitions, is such a reasonable supposition, that its contrary involves almost every absurdity imaginable. There can be no period conceived in the Divine duration, if we may so speak, when his designs of creating the world did not exist. As far back as thought can waft us into eternity we find an uncaused cause, with a mind full of all these counsels, and that in their most complete state of maturity, which have moved the wheels of creation and providence since the world began. Can we, for a moment, contemplate a being capable of giving existence to all things, and adjusting the almost infinitely variegated relations of one thing to another, without at the same time believing that he had viewed, with the most penetrating inspection, all the possible effects that could result from that impression of his power, wisdom, and goodness, with which he meant to stamp his works? Philosophers have supposed, and perhaps with justice, that had there been one particle more or less of matter in our earth, than what it contains, it might, before this time, under that system of laws by which physical nature is governed, have produced very great disorders, if not total confusion in the whole visible system. How much more variety in the moral system might have prevailed, had there existed one man more or less in the world, or had any one man lived a day longer or shorter, or in one place rather than another, is impossible to say. Are we therefore at liberty to suppose, that the Creator launched forth these mighty orbs which our eyes behold, with their infinitely variegated furniture, and imperceptible dependencies, which have eluded the most curious researches, without a complete adjustment of all their relations, and a foresight when the wheels shall run down and their motions stand still. He that can believe this, need never afterwards be squeamish at the proposal of absurd doctrine. The reason that can swallow this mountainous absurdity will find, when compared to it, any difficulties that may accompany the doctrine we assert, dwindle into mole hills.



But, when we speak of this liberty as a matter of right, one should expect from its congeniality to human claims, that men could hardly deny to their Creator, what they claim to themselves as their natural, perfect and unalienable right. It would be thought a great act of injustice to force a man to act without giving him time to deliberate, and a great act of folly so to act, of his own accord, if he had time.

How then could we account for the Divine conduct, had he so acted. That evils exist in great abundance cannot be denied; but the question is, Whether does it give a pious mind, anxious for the glory of its Maker and its own safety, the greatest peace, to suppose that these evils stole into existence without God's knowledge, design or expectation, in which case he could have no provision made for them until they appeared; or to suppose that, however mysterious the business may appear to us, that all the evils which now do, or ever will exist, are no more than a result of divine order and contrivance? In one of these ways they must have come forth. If in the latter, then that wisdom which superintended their admission can most probably master their malignity, and dispose of them to his honour and glory, and the happiness of all his good subjects; but if in the former way, who knows but, as they came into the creation without God's knowledge or design, they may stay there against his will and eternally brave the utmost exertions of his power. I apprehend, it would not be easy to prove that this is an overstrained supposition. Should we have recourse to the stoical doctrine of a fatal necessity, under which some suppose Divinity to have counselled and acted, it would do nothing towards easing the present difficulty. For if the Deity was not free in giving that order of existence to the creation, by which evil has come to be intimately mixed with its most essential parts, then the same fate must be supposed to bind up his hands from mastering it, now that it does exist. The only supposition that seems to agree most cordially with reason, revelation, and the pious experience and hopes of good men, is, that a wise God foresaw every effect that would arise from that organization, which he intended to bestow on the work

of his hands; and that he made complete and timely provision, for subordinating to his own glory all the evil, whether physical or moral, that should ever find its way into his extensive dominions.

An eternity of duration and an unbegun train of ideas, is a region of existence so far beyond any that we have ever explored, that it is by no means wonderful we should be liable to lose our road, when we attempt an ascent to these heights, which are accessible only to Divinity. Our imbecility of thought eminently discovers itself in reducing the Divine determinations to a fluctuation much like our own. This is particularly apparent in the view that Arminians give of indifferency as essential to the constitution of virtue. Was this position true, the consequences of it would be horrid, especially when applied to the Divine nature. Though innumerable difficulties attend the present order of things on every side, yet their number never can be lessened, nor their magnitude diminished, by reducing the Divine nature and determinations to a level with those of sinful men. In opposition thereunto we assert that God, by a free spontaneous volition from an unbegun eternity, willed that order of things which now exists; not because there was any point in duration when his mind was in a state of indifferency, but because on the whole, the motives which influenced the Divine determination were such, as to keep the will of the Creator eternally fixed upon the consummation of his designs, through that intervening chain of causes and effects, which he thought proper to employ, in carrying this stupendous building to its topmost stone. Should we admit that there was a time when the scale was evenly poised and determination wavered, even in the Divine mind, that main spring of all that is good or lovely in creation, how awful would the thought be! Shall we for a moment admit that there was a time when the good and benevolent mind of Jehovah halted between two opinions? a time when it was even beam whether he would give the best order or the worst order to his works? whether he would fill every channel of created capacity with streams of happiness, or make the whole one stagnating sink of lamentation, mourning and woe? Upon this

supposition, we cannot tell but it may happen, in the progress of created duration, that a period may arrive, when some concealed tendency of the laws of creation, which has hitherto slept under ground, and eluded the most vigilant search of philosophers, might discover itself, and bring to light the most unrelenting and regardless apathy in the Creator to all the interests of his depending subjects. Such an apprehension would dry up all the sources of created comfort, and render existence a curse. In opposition to such visionary systems, we lay it down as a truth, respecting the divine Being, that he possessed an eternal spontaneity which has kept pace with his being itself, and has been an inseparable companion of all his thoughts and designs. He has ever spontaneously willed what he intended, not because he could have willed otherwise, but because he never saw meet, every thing considered, to will otherwise than he has done. Every rising of thought, in the creatures, against the enjoyment and exercise of this eternal right of Divinity, is an act of the grossest rebellion.

But still it may be said, How shall we reconcile the eternal and unalterable decrees of God with the present appearances which exist in time? I grant this is a perplexing question; but the difficulties which seem to attach to the side we have chosen to adopt, are by no means equal to these which would follow any contrary supposition. The thing that interests our feelings and puzzles our reason most is, that when we cast our eye over the map of creation, we see a sovereignty exercised in the place, which each rank of creatures occupies, which utterly surpasses the most extensive stretch of our finite understandings. And among many things sufficiently full of mystery, we behold *misery, eternal misery*, look through the grate of her adamantine dungeon, and proclaim with a voice louder than ten thousand thunders, Here I and my hopeless subjects are destined to dwell for ever! We go no more out! Tremendous thought! How the soul of sensibility shudders when it hears the massy bars seal up the doors for ever on these hopeless sons of midnight darkness. But however awakening this awful sight ought to be to our tenderest emo-

tions, we ought not to suffer reason to resign her empire in our minds to such weak effeminacy, as would disqualify us for forming a fair and impartial judgment on the ways of God with his creatures. The most likely way to attain to the truth in this interesting matter, is, to examine his works, piece-meal, so far as they fall under our cognizance, and try if we cannot collect such evidence from the whole, as ought to silence the pride of the turbulent and rebellious, and at the same time conciliate the friends of God and his Son, unto the most sweet and complacent repose, under the shadow of his wings for time and eternity. A brief survey of all the parts of creation with which we are acquainted, may help us in collecting that kind of evidence which ought to satisfy us, of the Divine justice and goodness, until the day shall more fully disclose to our enlarged understandings, things of which it is not perhaps proper that we should at present be more minutely informed.

We find the creatures of God placed in very different ranks. That the Divine agency must have been supremely concerned in this arrangement, is not to be doubted by any who believe that ever the world had a maker. The right he had to combine the exercise of his sovereignty with their temporal or eternal fate, seems at first sight to admit of little dispute; nor perhaps would there ever have been any on the subject, had evil never entered the fair palace of created nature. But this abominable thing, sin, has produced such sad overturnings of the pillars on which the happiness of the creatures was to rest, that every tongue is busy asking who let *it* out of the fatal box. The contemplator of this subject, whoever he is, ought to know that he is deciding on his own fate, and that he stands not on neutral ground. He ought therefore, neither to speak wickedly for God, nor unfeelingly about his own fate or that of his fellow creatures. Let us listen to what all the inhabitants of peopled space have to say, for or against God, or the exercise of his justice in their particular cases.

We begin with the lowest rank, that is, inanimate matter. And here we meet no difficulty of considerable magnitude.

Being creatures void of sensation, they can be neither the better nor the worse of existence, and are to themselves as if they had never been. Could they, however, be for a moment endowed with consciousness, and have their choice to be or not to be, they would desire existence continued. Was a holy soul called out to receive information, that heaven had now served itself of his reasonable powers, and that he might have his choice of annihilation, or a continued existence in a state of insensibility; in such a case, I have no doubt, but an innate desire of existence, a fear of absolute annihilation, and a love of God the highest good, would determine it to choose any function, though the lowest in creation, in which it could glorify any divine perfection. So that the large class of creatures who have passed into a state of insentient being, have no right to complain, unless we suppose that the whole regions of infinite space, have a right to find fault that they have not been peopled to their utmost boundaries.

The next class of creatures that meet us, are those who enjoy sensation without reason. Of these we have cause to believe that they all enjoy a degree of happiness, superior at least to the state of inactive matter. They all seem to give evidence of self-enjoyment, when in their own element, and in the free exercise of their natural powers. On the contrary, when any thing seems to threaten their destruction, we evidently discover their most vigorous efforts directed to ward off the blow, and preserve the measure of pleasing sensation, which their Creator has assigned them. That their happiness is not so great, as that of higher orders of fellow creatures, has nothing to do with our present inquiry. Besides, observing that the chain of created existence, behoved to have such a link to render it complete, we may farther add, that these creatures have no idea of any felicity superior to their own, and consequently never can be supposed to look with a jealous eye at pleasures beyond their sphere. And moreover, it is clear, that the quantity of their agreeable sensations, is still above any inconveniency, which we have any reason to believe they experience. And this is all clear gain to them, above either a state of non-existence, or lumpish inac-



tivity. Nor have we any cause to apprehend that the pain which an animal experiences, in passing out of the regions of animal life, into a state of dissolution is very severe, or bears any great proportion to the quantity of pleasure it enjoyed during its life time.

These circumstances, which render death so disagreeable to a rational animal, seem principally to arise from the relation, which, in that case, subsists between the animal and immortal parts, together with the consequences which are apprehended to await the emigrating spirit, passing to the untried regions of unalterable destination. Strip a person of that moral energy which deeply tinctures all his feelings about futurity, and the quantity of his pain in death, would be comparatively small. This is clear in the case of madmen, who approach every danger, death itself not excepted, without any seeming concern. The acrimony of pain to them, is removed. Therefore, upon the whole, this class of creatures have no right to complain. It was optional with God, whether they existed or not. And if the quantity of felicity which they have enjoyed, has done them little good, it has done them as little harm. Whilst they were in being, God payed them with a quantity of pleasure equal to their services, and when they retire to rest in the evening of their day, their case is not worse than it was before they existed, nor of other nonentities, which have eternally slept in the bed of undisturbed repose. Nay, as we have no reason to believe the annihilation of any creature that has once existed, it is hard to say to what splendor or state innocent animals may be advanced, through that endless duration for which they are probably preserved.\*

These observations may perhaps appear rather purile or minute to some persons of a narrow, unphilosophical

\* The idea here suggested, however reprobated by some, is countenanced by eminent writers. The late Rev. John Brown, whose praise is deservedly in all the churches, teaching that God's "infinite justice and equity appears—in afflicting innocent animals, only in so far as they are connected with guilty sinners," adds, "And who knows, how their present suffering, may be balanced in their future restoration into the glorious liberty of the children of God?" *Syst. of Div. Edit. 1782, p. 128, 129.* F.



cast. But such ought to consider, that if it was not unworthy of God to make these things, and constitute them subjects of his care and government; it cannot be unworthy of our dignity to contemplate their existence, and trace with pleasure, their friendly relation to the common parent of all. And besides, it is by a minute investigation of particulars, that we are capable of bringing out a clear universal conclusion about that exercise of God's rights, which his works, so far as we know them, exhibit.

That class of beings, who either now are, or shall hereafter be eternally happy, need not detain us long in this inquiry, not because they form an inconsiderable spot on the general map, but because their case affords not the colour of complaint. They will for ever afford the materials for filling up the most interesting page in the history of creatures; but as their felicity is secure, let us hail them with a cheer, as we pass on the great ocean of being, and though ourselves still rolling in the boiling deep, let us behold with benevolent joy their anchor safely cast within the veil. The eye of intellectual vision, can hardly descend from this pleasing eminence, without looking beyond the limits of the human family. What immense regions of space may either now, or hereafter, be peopled with tribes to us hitherto unknown, who shall eternally bloom in a blessed immortality, is beyond us to say! Perhaps, on the great map of being, the regions of misery will scarcely form a perceptible point, when compared with those on which an unfading spring of everlasting glory shall pour forth its balmy sweets, with unbounded profusion.\* Should this conjecture prove true, it will in the end of the day, when all the children of divine bounty are gathered into one, afford a fresh argument that God is good.

We are now arrived at a precipice awful beyond expression, from which we behold the misery, the eternal misery of rationals! "a dismal situation, waste and wild; a dungeon horrible, which flames on all sides, as one great furnace, from

\* "Reason admits that there may be many and large regions of creation, perfectly free from all evil moral or penal, and that this world in its present situation is good enough for sinful men." *Brown's Syst. of Div.* p. 12. E.

whose flames no light proceeds, but rather darkness visible, which serves only to discover sights of woe, regions of sorrow, and doleful shades, where neither peace, nor rest, nor hope, can ever dwell; but torture without end still urges, and a fiery deluge ever fed with burning sulphur." Such is the prison which eternal justice has purposed for the rebellious! Who can think of it without horror?\*

With the impious scoffs of atheists, whose only hope is to die like asses, or the idle dreams of universal redemptionists, we have little to do in the present argument. We have a most sure word to which we shall do well to take heed, which declares to wicked men, and rebel angels, that the smoke of their torment ascends *for ever and ever*, and that their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched. Were we set to make worlds, or settle the fate of rationals, they might address our passions and lay hold on our feelings, by all that is entending in humanity. But this is not the case; worlds are made, and plans are eternally fixed beyond our control or power of alteration. These visionary dreamers, had therefore much better employ themselves, in finding out the truth of the Divine counsels, and avoiding that place of endless torment, than thus spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not. They can never assure themselves, by any solid or rational arguments, that their awakening in eternity, will not be like that of sons of wine, who in the morning awake from their midnight debauch, with a state of feelings bitter beyond expression. And believers in the oracles of Heaven, know to a certainty that it will be the case. In place, therefore, of building towers of sand, by which to mount to heaven, or sordidly consoling ourselves with the miserable hope that our immortal part shall steal into insensibility, with the infamy of a felon, and experience the burial of an ass, let us fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, we come short through *unbelief*.

But still alas! we may say, Who shall stand when God doeth this? That we may approach this inquiry, with the

\* Milton.

best prospect of finding the truth, let us keep our eye closely upon the scripture account of these hard-fated prisoners. They consist of fallen angels and hopeless men. As to the first, it is sufficient to observe, that their state, whatever it is, is one into which they have voluntarily brought themselves. And when an act of the will is freely interposed between a creature and its fate, the blame must entirely rest upon that act, whereunto their miseries do immediately attach themselves. It is clear that to complete the volume of creation there behoved to be beings some where, possessed of a freedom of will, such as we conceive angels to have enjoyed. Indeed it is justly questioned whether a moral agent could have existed without a freedom of spontaneity. Remove such a freedom from a rational being, and you remove that quality, which renders him accountable: and then, both praise and blame cease longer to unite themselves to any part of his conduct. So far as we are acquainted with the history of angelic nature, or can rationally conjecture any thing concerning the circumstances in which it was at first placed, it enjoyed every advantage for the exertion of its freedom and the security of its happiness, that could have been reasonably desired. Animal nature is a machine much more complex, and consequently more liable to go out of order, than that of pure spirit; and from any inconveniency on this quarter we may suppose the angelic nature entirely exempted. Besides, it was not merely free of clogs from without, but enjoyed every advantage we can think of, for drawing into habitual exercise the latent propensities of the heart.

I confess that placed as angels were, in a sphere of the most exalted enjoyment, with no temptation to annoy from without, nor any thing within upon which it could fasten, it is a matter not a little mysterious how to account for the first sinful volition, and mark with precision, the circumstances of that fatal moment, when pure unspotted innocence took wing and fled away. That such a point, however, in the eventful history of rationals existed, is plain; and it answers all ends with which we are concerned in the present disquisition, to know that their minds, in passing on to this awful cata-

trophe, were most perfectly free. In every period of their miserable existence, these exiled sons of the morning will be obliged to confess, as often as they revolve their fate, that what they now are as devils, they are by their *own choice and consent*. None bid them, none forced them, to lay aside the heavenly livery of their innocence and become clad in the sooty garments of black despair. The common sense of mankind, expressed in the civil constitutions and legal proceedings of all civilized nations, declares such a case to be without excuse. No laws require any thing more to open their road for taking hold of criminal conduct, according to its demerit, but sufficient evidence that the agent acted voluntarily, without force, and without control. In all such cases, it has ever been supposed, that, the freedom of the act obliged the agent to abide the consequences. It is hard to say what these degraded spirits, were they admitted to a legal hearing, could advance in their own behalf. The height of Lucifer certainly cut off all just occasion of murmuring. His felicity was clogged with no galling conditions. Nay, his height is a plea against him. He should have been exemplary to the inferior children of the family. He was also a privy counsellor, and having a high trust in the administration of the kingdom, a rebellion in him seemed to require an exemplary degree of severity. Besides, there is some reason that first transgressions should be marked with superior evidences of legal severity, to deter after times from such liberties. Perhaps it might be for this reason, and to produce a suitable awe on the public mind, that the apostles of our Lord, were at the first promulgation of the gospel, armed with such powers as that by which they made examples of Ananias and Sapphira. The world has thereby received ever since, this useful information, that, though the gospel dispensation is externally mild and gentle, in comparison of that from Sinai, yet nevertheless, the Divine eye is a vindictive witness of all base dissimulation, now, as well as then. These remarks set this transaction in a light, at least consonant to the dictates of impartial justice, as administered even

among men; to attempt therefore still to find fault, is certainly gross presumption in the creature.

What, oh Lucifer! canst thou say to these things! Reflect that it was thy rash and impious hand, that lifted the lid off that fatal box, in which was contained all the train of misery and woe, which being let loose, has wafted lamentation, mourning, and woe from the highest heavens to the utmost boundaries of creation. Thou mayest say thy lot is hard indeed, but never canst thou show it to be unjust. Thou hast darkened heaven—attempted to pluck thy Maker from his throne—seduced innumerable multitudes of thy murdered fellow servants, and brought them into thine own condemnation. Thy evil, thy malicious eye, marked out thy innocent unsuspecting brother and sister, in the peaceful retreats of Paradise. Thou hast hurried them into the vortex of thine own ruin, and with them all their miserable posterity. Thy bloody wars have soaked the earth with blood, for nearly six thousand years. And to complete the catalogue of thy crimes, as if all the mischief already done had been too little, thou hast plunged thy treacherous, thy cowardly dagger, into the heart of God's own Son, and laid him a lifeless corpse on the field of slaughter—and, in midst of these ravages of thy unrelenting cruelty, continuest to march through thy usurped principedom, in this lower world, with all the haughty mein, and unsubdued pride of a devouring lion, ravening for thy prey, and filling the whole wilderness of this world with thy howlings, because there is a God, who, for all these things will bring thee unto judgment.

The other class of miserables is a branch of our own family. Here the inquiry comes close to the door of self-concern, and lays hold upon every feeling of the human heart. But still we should move on with a firm, yet humble step: our selfish sympathies ought not to blind our eyes from beholding the dazzling splendour of unspotted justice.

Concerning the existence of such an order of beings as man, scarce any thing needs be added to that, which we have said of the existence of angels. Such a page was required to complete the volume of creation. Freedom of will



was as necessary to his moral agency, as it was to that of the seraphic orders. And if he wanted some of their advantages, to keep the moral machinery of his frame in order, he had perhaps motives which they had not. His natural relation as a common parent, and his federal relation as a common representative, must have been powerful monitors to constant vigilance. Paternal affection, even in midst the wrecks of our fallen nature, is found a most efficient spring of action to those, who scarcely discover any other virtue. Yes! It will often subdue habits, which scorn to yield to any other control. How often has the man of wine been led to restrain his appetites, when he saw his miserable offspring sinking together with himself, in the gulph of his intemperance? And if this argument is so powerful on the mind of a sickly slave to sin and sensuality, what must have been its force upon the sinless, the strong, the unclouded faculties of our common father? He saw myriads without number, descend from his loins, and spread over the healthful plains which presented their verdure to his wondering eyes. He saw their life and happiness, for time and beyond time, wrapped up in his own. Can we suppose the first man still innocent, and not think, that this argument must have been powerfully felt to the centre of his soul?

The angels who fell, wanted this adamant chain to bind them to obedience. They acted a solitary part and either stood or fell for themselves. So that, upon a fair estimation, it will perhaps be found, that Adam had as safe ground whereupon to entrench his innocence, as Lucifer himself. Nay, it is likely, had an inhabitant of distant worlds been informed of the fair prospects of these young heirs, at their beginning the world, he would probably have predicted that Adam's cheeks would have worn the pledges of unfading immortality, as long as any son of the morning. Imagination fails us, when we seek after any thing more that could have been done for this young favourite, short of stripping him entirely of his freedom of action. And what an alteration this would have made in the whole order of his existence and operations, has been already seen. This same beneficiary of Hea-



ven joined with a rebel! He mingled stocks with a traitor! He interposed an act of his own perverted will, between his Maker's goodness and himself, together with his whole posterity; and therefore, according to the principles already laid down in the case of angels, he stands justly condemned, and that under circumstances of additional aggravation. The secret designs of God about these matters, ought not to be blended with this inquiry. For it ought to be considered, that these were not then revealed; no command was laid on the rational creature, to forward their accomplishment. Nor will any of the fallen tribes, be ever able to show, that there was any criminal or compulsive measures used with their freedom of choice, to direct it into any other part but that for which it was cleared out, when first launched forth on the wide ocean of immortal existence.

The descendants of this fallen ancestor, may be considered either as Pagans, who have never heard the voice of reconciliation, or as Christians who have, or Infants who are supposed incapable of making any exertions in their own behalf. Let us look at each of their cases, in the light in which they appear to the eye of justice and impartiality, according to the principles already stated.

(To be Continued.)

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## THE SYRIAN CHURCHES.

*"How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!"*

JEREMIAH.

**T**HE Rev. Dr Buchanan, who left Bengal some years ago, with the view of proceeding to Travancore, to inquire into the state of the Syrian christians, arrived in that country about the beginning of November 1806, having travelled from Calcutta to Cape Comorin by land. His Highness the Rajah of Travancore was pleased to afford to Dr Buchanan the most liberal assistance in the prosecution of his inquiries. About the middle of November, Dr Buchanan

proceeded from the sea coast into the interior of the country, north-east from Quilon, to visit the ancient Syriac churches, situated among the low hills at the bottom of the high Ghauts, which divide the Carnatic from Malayala.

The first view of the christian churches in this sequestered region of Hindostan, connected with the idea of their tranquil duration for so many ages, cannot fail to excite pleasing emotions in the mind of the beholder. The form of the oldest buildings is not unlike that of some of the old parish churches in England; the style of building in both being of the Saracenic origin. They have slopping roofs, pointed arch windows, and buttresses supporting the walls. The beams of the roof, being exposed to view, are ornamented; and the ceiling of the choir and altar is circular and fretted. In the cathedral churches, the shrines of the deceased bishops are placed on each side of the altar. Most of the churches are built of a reddish stone, squared and polished at the quarry; and are of durable construction, the front wall of the largest edifices being six feet thick. The bells of the churches are cast in the founderies of Travancore. Some of them are of large dimensions, and have inscriptions in Syriac and Malayalim. In approaching a town in the evening, the sound of the bells may be heard at a distance among the hills: a circumstance which causes the British traveller to forget for a moment that he is in Hindostan, and reminds him of another country. When Dr Buchanan arrived at the remote churches, he was informed by the inhabitants, that no European had, to their knowledge, visited the place before. The Romish priests do not travel thither, there being no church of their communion in that quarter.

The number of Syrian churches is greater than has been supposed. There are, at this time, fifty-five churches in Malayala,\* acknowledging the patriarch of Antioch. The church was erected by the present bishop in 1793.

\* Malayala comprehends the mountains, and the whole region within them, from Cape Comorin to Cape Illi; whereas the province of Malabar, commonly so called, contains only the Northern Districts, not including the country of Travancore.

The Syrian christians are not Nestorians. Formerly, indeed, they had bishops of that communion; but the liturgy of the present church is derived from that of the early Church of Antioch, called *Liturgia Jacobi Apostoli*. They are usually-denominated *Jacobitæ*; but they differ in ceremonial from the church of that name in Syria, and indeed from any existing church in the world. Their proper designation, and that which is sanctioned by their own use, is, *Syrian Christians*, or, *The Syrian Church of Malayala*.

The doctrines of the Syrian church are contained in a very few articles, and are not at variance, in essentials, with the doctrines of the Church of England. Their bishops and metropolitan, after conferring with his clergy on the subject, delivered the following opinion,—“That an union with the English church, or at least such a connection as should appear to both churches practicable and expedient, would be a happy event, and favourable to the advancement of religion.” It is in contemplation to send to England some of the Syrian youth, for education and ordination.

The present bishop, Mar Dionysius, is a native of Malayala, but of Syrian extraction. He is a man of respectable character in his nation, and exercises himself in the pious discharge of the duties of his high office. He is now 78 years of age, and possesses a venerable aspect, his white beard descending low to his girdle. On public occasions he wears the Episcopal mitre; and is robed in a white vestment, which covers long garments of red silk; and in his hand he holds the pastoral staff. The first native bishop was ordained by the Romish church in 1663; but he was of the Romish communion. Since that period, the old Syrians have continued, till lately, to receive their bishops from Antioch; but that ancient patriarchate being now nearly extinct, and incompetent to the appointment of learned men, the Christian church in Malayala looks henceforth to Britain for the continuance of that light which has shone so long in this dark region of the world.

From information given by the Syrian christians, it would appear that the churches of Mesopotamia and Syria, (215 in

number), with which they are connected, are struggling with great difficulties, and merely owe their existence to some deference for their antiquity; and that they might be expected soon to flourish again, if favoured with a little support. It would be worthy of the Church of England to aid the Church of Antioch in her low estate. The Church of England *is now* what the Church of Antioch *once was*. The mode in which aid can be best afforded to christians under a foreign power in the East, is not chiefly by contributions of money, but by representing to those governments with which they may have friendly intercourse, that these christians are of the same religion with ourselves, and that we are desirous they should be respected. The argument from the sameness of religion, is well understood by all Asiatic princes, and can never fail when seriously proposed; for they think it both natural and obligatory, that every government should be interested in those who are of its own religion. There are two circumstances which invite us to turn our eyes to the country of "the first generations of men." The tolerant spirit of the Wahabian Mahomedans is a fair prognostic, and promises to aid our endeavours to restore to an ancient community of christians the blessings of knowledge and religious liberty. Another favourable circumstance is, that some of the churches in Mesopotamia, in one of which the patriarch of Antioch now resides, are said still to remain in their pristine state, and to have preserved their archives and ancient manuscript libraries. A domestic priest of the patriarch, now in Cochin, vouches for the truth of this fact. We know from authentic history, that the churches between the rivers escaped the general desolation of the Mahomedan conquest, in the seventh century, by joining arms with the Mahomedans against the Greek christians, who had been their oppressors. The revival of religion and letters in that once highly favoured land, in the heart of the ancient world, would be, in the present circumstances of mankind, an auspicious event.

The Syrian christians in Malayala still use the Syriac language in their churches; but the Malayalim, or Proper Malabar, (a dialect distinct from the Tamul), is the vernacular

language. They have made some attempts to translate the Syriac scriptures into Malayalim; but have not hitherto had the suitable means of effecting it. When a proposal was made of sending a Malayalim translation to each of their fifty-five churches, as a standard book, on condition that they would transcribe it, and circulate the copies among the people,—the elders replied, That so great was the desire of the people in general to have the Bible in the vulgar tongue, that it might be expected that every man *who could write* would make a copy on *ollas* (palm-leaves) for his own family.

It ought to be mentioned, to the praise of the present bishop of the Romish church on the coast of Malabar, that he has consented to the circulation of the scriptures throughout his diocese. The Malayalim translation acquires from this circumstance an increased importance, since there will be now upwards of 200,000 christians in Malayala who are ready to receive it. The translation of the New Testament (which it is proposed to print first) has already commenced, under the superintendence of the Syrian bishop. The true cause of the low state of religion amongst the Romish churches on the sea coast and in Ceylon is, *their want of the Bible*. It is doubtful whether some of the priests know that such a book exists! It is injurious to christianity in India, to call men *Christians* who know not the scriptures of their religion; they might as well be called by any other name. Oral instruction they have none, even from their European priests. The best effects may therefore be expected from the simple means of putting the Bible into their hands. All who are well acquainted with the natives, know that instruction *by books* is best suited to them. They are, in general, a contemplative people, and patient in their inquiries; curious also to know what it can be that is of importance enough to be *written*,—at the same time that they regard written precept with respect. If they possess a book in a language which they understand, it will not be left long unread. In Tanjore, and other places where the Bible is freely given, the protestant religion flourishes, and produces the happiest effects on the character of the people. In Tanjore, the christian vir-



tues will be found in exercise by the feeble-minded Hindoo, in a vigour and purity which will surprise those who have never known the native character, but under the greatest disadvantages. On the Sunday, the people, habited in their best apparel, repair to the parish church, where the solemnity of their devotion, in accompanying the public prayers, is truly impressive. They sing the old psalm tunes well; and the voice of the full congregation may be heard at a distance. Prayers being ended, they listen to the sermon evidently with marks of attention; nor have they any difficulty in understanding it, for they almost all, both men and women, can read their Bible. Many of them take down the discourse on *ollas*, that they may read it afterwards to their families at home.\* As soon as the minister has pronounced his text, the sound of the *iron style* on the palm leaf is heard throughout the congregation. Even the boys of the schools have their *ollas* in their hands; and may be seen after divine service reading them to their mothers as they pass over the fields homewards. This aptitude of the people to receive and to record the words of the preacher, renders it peculiarly necessary that “*the priest’s lips should keep knowledge.*” Upon the whole, the moral conduct, upright dealing, decorous manners, and decent dress of the native protestants of Tanjore, demonstrate the powerful influence and peculiar excellence of the Christian religion. It ought, however, to be observed that the Bible, when the reading of it becomes general, has nearly the same effect on the poor of every place.

When the Syrian christians understood that the proposed Malayalan translation was to accord with the English Bible, they desired to know on what *authorities* our translation had been made; alledging, that they themselves possessed a version of undoubted antiquity, namely, that used by the first christians at Antioch; and that they could not depart from the reading of *that* version. This observation led to the investigation of the ancient Syrio-Chaldaic manuscripts in Ma-

\* It is well known that the natives of Tanjore and Travancore can write down what is spoken deliberately, without losing one word. They seldom look at their *ollas* while writing, and can write in the dark with fluency.



layalan, and the inquiry has been successful beyond any expectation that could have been formed.

It had been commonly supposed, that all the Syriac manuscripts had been burned by the Romish church, at the Synod of Udiemper, near Cochin, in 1599; but it now appears that the most valuable manuscripts were not destroyed: the Inquisitors condemned many books to the flames; but they saved the Bible. They were content with ordering that the Syriac scriptures should be amended agreeably to the reading of the Vulgate of Rome; and these emendations now appear in black ink, and of modern appearance, though made in 1599; but many Bibles, and many other books, were not produced at all; and the churches in the mountains remained but a short time subject to Romish dominion, (if indeed they can be said to have been at any time subject to it); for the native governments have ever formed a barrier between the Inquisition at Goa, and the christians in the mountains.

In the Acts of the Council of Nice, it is recorded, that Joannes, Bishop of India, signed his name at that council, A. D. 325. This date corresponds with the Syrian year 636; for the primitive Syrian church does not compute time from the Christian æra, but from Alexander the Great. The Syriac version of the scriptures was brought to India, according to the belief of the Syrians, before the year 636; and they alledge that their copies have ever been exact transcripts of that version, without known error, through every age, down to this day. There is no tradition among them of the churches in the southern mountains having ever been destroyed, or even molested. Some of their present copies are certainly of ancient date. Though written on a strong thick paper, (like that of some MSS. in the British Museum, commonly called *Eastern Paper*), the ink has, in several places, eaten through the material in the exact form of the letter. In other copies, where the ink had less of a corroding quality, it has fallen off, and left a dark vestige of the letter, faint indeed, but not in general illegible. There is one volume found in a remote church of the mountains, which merits particular description:—It contains the Old and New Testa-

ments, engrossed on strong vellum, in large folio, having three columns in the page; and is written with beautiful accuracy. The character is Estrangelo Syriac, and the words of every book are numbered. This volume is illuminated; but not after the European manner, the initial letters having no ornament.—

When the White Jews at Cochin were questioned respecting the ancient copies of their scriptures, they answered, That it had been usual to *bury* the old copy read in the synagogue, when decayed by time and use. This, however, does not appear to have been the practice of the Black Jews, who were the first settlers; for in the record-chests of their synagogues, old copies of the law have been discovered; some of which are complete, and for the most part legible. Neither could the Jews of Cochin produce any historical manuscripts of consequence, their vicinity to the sea-coast having exposed their community to frequent revolution; but many old writings have been found at the remote synagogues of their ancient enemies the Black Jews, situated at Tritooa, Paroor, Chenotta, and Maleh; the last of which places is near the mountains. Amongst these writings are some of great length, in Rabbinical Hebrew; but in so ancient and uncommon a character, that it will require much time and labour to ascertain their contents. There is one manuscript written in a character resembling the Palmyrene Hebrew, on the brass-plates; but is in a decayed state, and the leaves adhere so closely to each other, that it is doubtful whether it will be possible to unfold them, and preserve the reading.—It is sufficiently established by the concurring evidence of written record and Jewish tradition, that the Black Jews had colonized on the coasts of India long before the Christian æra. There was another colony at Rajapoor, in the Mahratta territory, which is not yet extinct; and there are at this time Jewish soldiers and Jewish native officers in the British service. That these are remnants of the Jews of the first dispersion at the Babylonish captivity, seems highly probable. There are many other tribes settled in Persia, Arabia, Northern India, Tartary, and China, whose respective places of residence

may be easily discovered. The places which have been already ascertained are 65 in number. These tribes have in general, (particularly those who have passed the Indus), assimilated much to the customs of the countries in which they live; and may sometimes be seen by a traveller, without being recognized as Jews. The very imperfect resemblance of their countenance to the Jews of Europe, indicates that they have been detached from the parent-stock in Judea, many ages before the race of Jews in the west. A fact corroborative of this is, that certain of these tribes do not call themselves *Jews*, but *Bene-Israel* or *Israelites*; for the name *Jew* is derived from Judah; whereas the ancestors of these tribes were not subject to the kings of Judah, but to the kings of Israel. They have in most places the book of the Law, the book of Job, and the Psalms; but know little of the prophets. Some of them have even lost the book of the Law; and only know that they are Israelites from tradition, and from their observance of peculiar rites.

A copy of the scriptures, belonging to the Jews of the east, who might be supposed to have no communication with the Jews in the west, has been long a *desideratum* with Hebrew scholars. In the coffer of a synagogue of the Black Jews, in the interior of Malaya, there has been found an old copy of the Law, written on a *roll of leather*. The skins are sewed together, and the roll is about 50 feet in length. It is in some places worn out, and the holes have been patched with pieces of parchment. Some of the Jews suppose that this roll came originally from Senna, in Arabia; others have heard that it was brought from Cashmir. The Cabul Jews, who travel annually into the interior of China, say, that in some synagogues the law is still found written on a roll of leather, not on vellum, but on a soft flexible leather, made of goats' skins, and dyed red; which agrees with the description of the roll above mentioned.

Such of the Syriac and Jewish manuscripts as may, on examination, be found to be valuable, will be deposited in the public libraries of the British Universities.

*See Dr Buchanan's Researches.*

ORIENTAL MANUSCRIPTS OF THE SCRIPTURES.

—“ *Keep them in the midst of thine heart.*” SOLOMON.

A CONSIDERABLE time ago, the Rev. Dr Buchanan procured some ancient manuscripts of the Hebrew Scriptures, both from the Syrian churches and also from the Jews in India. These manuscripts, upon his arrival in England, were deposited in the library of the Cambridge University. Mr Yeates, an eminent Hebrew scholar, has been employed, for some months past, in arranging and collating them. The following notice is given by the collator, as introductory to further communications:—

These manuscripts are chiefly *Biblical*, and are written in the Hebrew, Syriac, and Ethiopic languages. They were all collected by Dr Buchanan in India. The Hebrew manuscripts were obtained from the Black Jews, who have had settlements in India from time immemorial, and are now found in numbers about Cochin. These Jews differ in many respects from those of other countries, and bear evident marks of descendants from those ancient dispersions we read of in the sacred history: they call themselves *Bene-Israel*. They have the Hebrew Pentateuch, but scarcely know of any other books of scripture. A copy of the Hebrew Pentateuch, written on goat-skins, and found in one of their synagogues, is in the Buchanan collection. The Syriac manuscripts were collected from the Syrian christians in Travancore and Malayala, where a race of christians has existed ever since the apostolic times: and the native Indian christians bear the name of Christians of St Thomas to this day. They have the whole Bible, and other books not in our canon, extant in the Syriac language, and this is perhaps the purest of all the versions of scripture now known. There is, in Dr Buchanan's collection, a copy of the Bible, containing the books of the Old and New Testament, with the Apocrypha, written on large folio vellum, and in the ancient or *Estrangelo* character, and which was a present to Dr Buchanan from Mar Dionysius, the Archbishop of the Indian church. But though all these MSS. were brought from India, they were not all written in India; some

were written at Antioch, Mesopotamia, and other parts of Syria, Asia, and Africa.

See *Chris. Mag.* March 1810.

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**REGULATIONS OF  
THE EDINBURGH BIBLE SOCIETY,**

*Instituted 4th Aug. 1809.*

**A**T a large and most respectable Meeting, held 4th August 1809, in the Royal Exchange Coffeehouse, agreeably to the adjournment of the 31st ult: the names of the gentlemen who were then present having been read, the following report of the Committee then appointed was read, and agreed to unanimously:—

I. That the present Meeting—do hereby form themselves into a Society, called **THE EDINBURGH BIBLE SOCIETY**, having the same object with the British and Foreign Bible Society, and to act in concert with it, or separately, as circumstances shall require.

II. That the Society shall consist of all those who are disposed to promote the object in view, without respect to difference of religious sentiment.

III. That each Subscriber of Half-a-guinea *annually*, shall be considered a Member of the Society, till such time as he shall intimate the contrary to the Secretary, or cease to pay his subscription; and a Subscriber of Ten Guineas shall be a Member for life. Donations and subscriptions, to any amount, will be thankfully accepted.

IV. Each Subscriber of One Guinea annually, shall have the privilege of purchasing Bibles and Testaments at the Society's prices, which shall be as low as possible.

V. That it be recommended to the Members of the Society, to adopt such measures as may most effectually promote the increase of the Society's funds.

VI. That a Committee of Management, consisting of twenty-four Directors, two Secretaries, a Treasurer, and



Clerk, be appointed to transact the business of the Society. *Six* of the Directors to go out annually, and *Five* to be a quorum.

VII. That an interim Committee be appointed, and that Sir William Forbes, Bart. be appointed interim Treasurer, Mr James Bonar, interim Secretary, and Mr John Robertson, interim Clerk, to manage the business of the Society till another General Meeting, to be called by public advertisement, when the Committee of Direction, till the first annual Meeting, shall be chosen.

VIII. That a General Meeting of the Society shall be held annually, by previous intimation in the Newspapers, to report the transactions of the preceding year, and to consider any measures which may be conducive to the prosperity of the Institution.

IX. It was also resolved unanimously, That a subscription be now opened, and the gentlemen present have an opportunity of putting down their names as Subscribers or Donors to the Society.

X. That the Secretary be requested to communicate to the British and Foreign Bible Society the formation of this Society, and that these various proceedings be published in the Edinburgh Newspapers, at suitable intervals.

XI. That the gentlemen of the Committee be requested to take such steps as may excite the public interest, and to give the utmost publicity to this institution.

(Subscribed) ——— JOHN BALFOUR, *Preses.*

## THE EDINBURGH BIBLE SOCIETY'S

*Address to the Public.*

**T**HE most valuable Institution may languish if it is not generally known; as its excellencies cannot be fully appreciated, nor the necessity of its existence universally acknowledged. It is presumed that this will be deemed a sufficient apology for now addressing the public in general.

The circulation of the sacred Scriptures is, at the present day,



considered by many so important, that it seems superfluous here to enlarge in their praise. Indeed, friends and admirers need not be requested to give their opinion. Enemies have borne most signal testimony to their value; and many who once ridiculed, have finally esteemed them. The Earl of Rochester, after a life spent in reproaching Christianity, was, towards the end of his days, of a very different mind. Laying his hand on the Bible, he would say, "*There is true philosophy—this is the wisdom that speaks to the heart—a bad life is the only grand objection to this book.*" In a world like this, then, it surely ought not to be hid in a corner, nor can it be considered the peculiar privilege of any people. A volume which refers both to time and eternity, and expressly demands universal attention, addressed to all the inhabitants of the earth, both low and high, rich and poor together, is evidently meant by its Author to be a mercy as common as the rain, or the dew, or the light of the sun.

To say nothing, however, of the grand design of Divine Revelation, as the general perusal of it will always raise the standard of morals in any country, even every person who feels anxious about the improvement or well-being of civil society, is here also deeply interested. The important article of bread or water is not half so necessary to a nation's happiness, as the knowledge of divine truth; and if a nation or family bereaved of the former demand our compassionate aid, how much more when deprived of the latter!

To promote, therefore, the reading of the Scriptures, and to put them into the possession of all mankind, is a duty of the most sacred obligation. The present progress in this work, is no doubt highly gratifying. But when we consider, that for more than three hundred years, the noble invention of printing has presented such a correct and expeditious method of circulating the living oracles, it is certainly to be regretted that they have not, before our day, been translated into all languages, and that the nations in general are not now reading in their own tongue the wonderful works of God.

This noble design, however, has at length been fully con-

ceived, and a commencement has been made by the **BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY**, which seems to promise, and to aim at nothing short of its accomplishment. That most respectable Institution appears to be animated by a spirit which will both preserve it from dissolution, and from relaxing its energies, "whilst any nations, to whom the blessings of the Holy Scriptures can be conveyed, remain in want of them." Their sole object is, to encourage a wider circulation of that sacred volume; the only copies in the language of the United Kingdom which are dispersed by the Society, being the authorized versions, without note or comment.—By the latest accounts, it appears they have contributed towards editions of the Bible, or parts of it, in no less than twenty-six different dialects or languages, seventeen of which are spoken on the Continent of Europe. But, after all, what are they among so many? and what is even the proportion printed of these, compared with the people for whom they are designed? What should be done, were the inhabitants of this populous city furnished with only one or two Bibles, instead of the many thousands that are in daily use? Yet we aver, the proportion hitherto provided, compared with the demand, is not so great as this! Undoubtedly this is sufficient to move the heart, and secure the assistance of every one who is desirous to promote the best interests of his fellow-men. The truth is, that even in many countries where the Scriptures have been translated, they are known to be very much wanted, and received with great eagerness; while many of the nations are not aware of their deplorable condition, in being destitute of the word of life. The generality of them may, in one sense, be compared to countries wholly depending upon importation, and, considering the mighty privileges of Great Britain, we are bound, if we can, to supply them all. It is a high honour to be thus engaged; and we are well able to do so, if all who ought to be interested will only unite and exert themselves.

A Society having a similar object in view, and to act in concert with the Parent Establishment referred to, has long been loudly called for in this part of the United Kingdom;

and such a Society has been established. THE EDINBURGH BIBLE SOCIETY are very desirous that the surrounding country may participate in their feelings and plan, and expect that assistance from all parts will speedily manifest the cordial approbation of many.

To inform every inhabitant of the city and suburbs is not only necessary, but seems also to be due to the public. A domestic or personal address is in this manner therefore made to all, and the Society earnestly hope that such an appeal will not be made in vain.

The resolutions, which have been frequently advertised in the Newspapers, show that this Institution closely resembles that of the British and Foreign Bible Society. This similarity, and the liberality of the plan, is such as ought certainly to engage the support and patronage of every friend to Christianity. While a reference is made to these resolutions for farther particulars, it may also be necessary, to add here, that the Society consists of all who are disposed to promote the object in view, without respect to difference of religious sentiment. Each subscriber of Half-a-guinea *annually* is a member of the Society, and a subscriber of Ten Guineas a member for life. Every subscriber to the extent of One Guinea, is entitled to certain privileges with regard to the purchase of Bibles and Testaments. Such are the terms on which any person may become a member of the Society. They request it may be particularly observed, however, that sums to any amount, either as donations or subscriptions, will be thankfully accepted.

If it be a duty to do good to all men as we have opportunity, here is both the duty and the opportunity. Here the abundance of the rich may spend itself without being thrown away, and the widow's mite will here be received with gratitude and esteem.

See *Chris. Mag.* Dec. 1809.

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THE  
CHRISTIAN SELECTOR.

No. V.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 30. 1810.

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ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

CHAP. IV.

*State of the Christian Church from the rise of Antichrist, until  
the present day.*

(Continued from page 131.)

**T**HE Redeemer instructed his inspired apostles to predict the rise of a peculiar adversary to his gospel. The universal prevalence of correct principle and regular ecclesiastic order, he taught them to behold at a distance. By the splendid triumphs of the truth in the first ages, the power of religion was exemplified, the divinity of the Messiah demonstrated, and the vast number of God's elect children who were at that period on the earth, prepared for their everlasting inheritance. As soon as these purposes were accomplished, the faithful disciples began to realize the truth of the prophecy, that an awful apostasy should affect the world, and the true witnesses become reduced to sackcloth and poverty. One hundred and fifty years after Boniface assumed the title of universal bishop, and claimed spiritual power over all the earth, his successor Pope Stephen, was created a temporal prince, by the efforts of Pepin, the usurper of the French throne. This accession of power was highly acceptable to the pretended successor of Peter, and vicegerent of Jesus

Christ. It enabled him to enforce his spiritual supremacy. It is not, however, the jurisdiction of the exarchate of Ravenna, or his possessing the government of some of the Italian states, that constitutes the Roman Antichrist. He who is the visible head of that system of superstition, which, under the christian name, is the greatest enemy of the christian religion which ever existed, is on that account alone the man of sin, and son of perdition. By virtue of his spiritual supremacy he ruled the nations of Europe; but they never submitted to his authority as a civil emperor. The kings of the earth swore allegiance to him, not because he ruled the petty states of Italy, but because he was the Pope. His own-civil power, like the magistracy of the nations under his spiritual domination, is one of those horns with which the monster of blasphemy shed the blood of the saints. The papacy does not cease to be Antichrist, even when stripped of civil authority. The rise of Antichrist is to be dated in the 6th year of the seventh century.

The visible church then beheld a usurper upon a spiritual throne, claiming the whole government of the kingdom of Christ upon earth. The church of Rome acquiesced in the claim; but the great body of christians opposed his pretensions. The christian ministry, among all the nations, were independent of the see of Rome, during the 7th century, except those of Italy; and a great number, even of them, refused submission to him. During the eighth century, when his power was greatly increased, the second council of Nice, favoured his superstition; but seven years thereafter, Charlemaine held a council at Frankfort, consisting of three hundred clergymen from various countries, which condemned the council of Nice, and reversed its idolatrous acts. When the governments of those nations which had formerly been subject to Rome acknowledged the Pope's supremacy, their national churches were constrained into the same measure. Even then, all the churches in the Popish nations did not recognize the Pontifical authority. It was not until the eleventh century, that the churches of Europe could be called ONE with the church of Rome. Those persons, of course,



who in the different parts of the world renounced the papal authority, were persecuted as heretics. The number and frequency of these persecutions, are sufficient to show that vast numbers of congregations and ministers were, during the darkest ages, opposed to the Antichristian system. The Roman persecutors, thirsting for blood, discovered, in the twelfth century, a christian people, entirely distinct from the Papal church, enjoying the ordinances of the gospel in their primitive simplicity. The Waldenses, dwelling in the south of France, and the vallies of Piedmont, were a people not numbered among the nations. Providence had separated them as a covenant society, from the declining churches of the nations, that they might exhibit to the world the primitive order, when Antichristian power should have arrived at its height. Reinerius, the Inquisitor general, describes these newly discovered heretics about the middle of the twelfth century.

The Waldenses were in no connexion with the church of Rome, or its clergy. They maintained a system of distinct ecclesiastical policy from the apostolic age. They had their friends scattered in many nations, diligently, but without attracting much notice, diffusing their peculiar sentiments. This grand enemy, the Inquisitor, in order to rouse the indignation of the papacy against these heretics, as he calls them, bestows upon them three characters, which now secure the admiration of christians to these genuine disciples of our Lord. Their enemies being judges, they are the purest church. 1. "This sect is the oldest. It endures, say some, from the time of the apostles. 2. It is the most general. There is scarce any country where it is not. 3. It hath a show of piety. They live justly before men, and believe all things rightly concerning God; only they blaspheme the church of Rome and the clergy." The following character of this church is drawn by the Centuricators of Magdeburgh, from an old manuscript. "The Vallenses defined the church of Christ; *That society which heareth the sincere word of Christ, and useth the sacraments instituted by him, in whatever place it exist.* They consider the scripture as the supreme



standard of doctrine. The reading of the holy scriptures they represent as necessary unto all men. The decrees of councils are to be approved as they agree with the word of God. They own two sacraments only, baptism and the Lord's supper. They declare the church of Rome to be the whore of Babylon, and will not own the pope or bishops. They call the dedication of churches, the observance of holy days, and all human inventions in religious worship, diabolical inventions." Archbishop Usher has extracted from the history of Æneas Sylvius the following additional characteristics: "They deny the hierarchy, maintaining, that there is no difference among the priests, on account of dignity of office; but only of usefulness and purity of life. Ministers should be content with the contributions of the people. Every person should have access to the free preaching of the gospel. No sin ought to be tolerated. There is no day holy but the Lord's day. The Lord's supper is to be consecrated in the church only, and by a minister; neither does its efficacy depend more on a good than a bad man, if he be a lawful minister. Both men and women, and little children, are to be baptized in the church by the priest."

These eminently pious churches, which so long maintained the primitive order, while the whole world was wondering after the beast, were intermingled with persons of a very opposite description. The purest churches have had tares growing up with the wheat; and wicked men have resided in the same place with the most virtuous. The popish writers attempted to confound all the inhabitants of the land with the church; and to charge upon the visible covenant society the errors, which heretics, apostates, and nominal professors, may have propagated in that period. The creed of the church of the Waldenses, however, was truly evangelical; and the order of the church, in their terms of communion, form of government, exercises of worship, and administration of discipline, was strictly presbyterian. To the preservation of their ecclesiastical order they were bound by oath; nor was any considered as belonging to this church who did not take the covenant. God in his providence, did in these churches,

not only preserve a seed to serve him, and prepare his children for glory; but he also provided a seminary for the instruction of ministers and saints, who should afterwards be instrumental in overturning the empire of the papacy. The persecutions of these witnesses were frequent and bloody. They were scattered among the nations, and carried with them their knowledge, their piety, and their forms of religious worship. In the 13th century they spread and prevailed so far, that the pope thought it necessary to exert his utmost efforts to suppress them. They were found in Germany, Bohemia, Poland, France, and Britain. It is computed, that in France alone one million of them suffered martyrdom. They were, however, remarkably preserved in some of these countries to which they had been banished; and, like the scattered Jews, before the coming of Christ in the flesh, were preparing the way of the Lord in the different parts of the world.

In the beginning of the 14th century, there were about eighty thousand of these covenanters in Austria and the neighbouring territories. They every where adhered to their covenant engagements, and pertinaciously opposed papacy, and defended their own principles even unto death. They were considered as poor; and being aliens in these different countries into which they were banished, they were despised; and the contempt was, by the providence of God, a shield of protection to them. Many eminent men, in the various nations, however, were enlightened by their doctrines and examples; and these again, by their writings, diffused their sentiments, in some degree, throughout the various colleges and seminaries of literature. The progress of knowledge, was slow but it was certain. The celebrated Walter Lollard, who suffered martyrdom in the year 1322, spread through Germany the doctrines of the Waldenses, and the famous John Wickliff, filled almost all Europe with the same principles. The scattered Waldenses, still despised, and still holding fast their integrity, preserved among themselves the true order of the christian church; and contributed to instruct those in the established churches of the nations, who had courage to think for themselves. In the fifteenth century, all Europe

became sensible of the need of a reformation of the church of Rome. A council assembled at Constance, which declared the necessity of a reformation, but manifested also that it was not to be expected from the interested antichristian priesthood.

John Huss, a man of distinguished talents and erudition, professor of divinity at the celebrated university of Prague, had, together with his intimate friend Jerome, embraced many of the doctrines of the Waldenses. Although in the communion of the Roman church, they recommended the works of Wickliff, and vainly supposed that their exertions might serve to reform the church, and recal her from Babylon. They were, however, successful in exciting an uncommon interest for a reformation, and directing the Germans to a more favourable opinion of those old dissenters, the Waldenses, who lived among them. After the death of Huss, a number who had been influenced by his doctrines, actually joined the church of the Waldenses, who were settled in Bohemia. They adopted one confession of faith. They also agreed upon one covenant, suited to the present state of the church, which, according to the established usage of the Waldenses, was subscribed by all the members of the society. Vocetius, who had a good opportunity of knowing, assures us, that both the Waldenses of Tholouse and the Hussites of Bohemia, ratified their federal transactions with solemn oath. Thus, while the papal power was at its height, and the horns of the beast, the kingdoms of Europe, who agreed to support popery, directed against the witnesses of Christ, Providence was preparing the nations for that remarkable event which took place in the beginning of the 16th century. The period of the protestant reformation will be for ever eminent in church history. The antichristian empire was shook to its centre, and never can recover its former ghastly dominion over the minds of men. The exertions of the Waldenses became successful. They had prepared, in a great measure, the public mind for a breach from the church of Rome. God poured out his blessed Spirit. Select and suitable instruments for the reformation were found and employ-

ed. The state of the political world was made subservient to the kingdom of Christ. Knowledge, zeal, and unfeigned piety, were promoted, and vast multitudes converted unto God. Zuinglius, Luther, and Calvin, and many other eminent men, were employed in opposing the superstition, and they had the happiness of seeing the pleasure of the Lord prospering in their hands. Imbibing the doctrines, and animated by the example of the Vallenses, these eminent men contended for the faith.

The reformers were ministers at first in the popish church, and sought its reformation. They considered the papacy as distinct from the catholic church. This is a judicious distinction. The catholic church long existed without a pope. By the ambitious dexterity of the Roman pontiffs, the papacy was by degrees incorporated with the church; but it was really as foreign to its genuine constitution, as a new citadel erected by a successful usurper, would be to an ancient city. The few virtuous ministers who had remained in the church, acted upon this distinction. They opposed the citadel, but still continued in the city. The city had been a long time unsafe, but it had not been absolutely deprived of its ancient liberties, until the council of Trent had completely established every part of Antichristianism by ecclesiastical law. From that period Romanists are to be considered as excommunicated from the privileges of God's visible covenant society. They are preserved in this excommunicated state as barren branches, which are to be visibly burned.

The reformation met with opposition. It progressed, nevertheless, under the smiles of an approving Providence, and in different nations they who sought the Lord publicly covenanted. In the year 1530 the Lutherans performed this important duty. They framed the famous league of Smalkalde, which was solemnly renewed four years thereafter. On the 20th day of July 1537, the capital articles of the christian religion and discipline were sworn publicly by the senate and people of Geneva. As soon as the reformation put on a regular appearance, and the reformers had erected a separate communion from the Roman church, the Waldenses strengthened

their hands, and joined in their churches. On the 11th of Nov. 1571, in a general assembly, they entered into a solemn bond of union. They all bind themselves under the sanction of an oath, to maintain inviolably the ancient union between all the faithful of the evangelical religion of the Waldenses down to their own time. They promise to submit to the good external regulations and ecclesiastic discipline already established, and to this period maintained among them. The churches in Switzerland, in France, and in Holland, of all the churches of the continent of Europe, attained to the highest purity; and the church of Scotland, between the years 1638 and 1649, appeared at the very zenith of the reformation. The Lutherans still retained the monstrous absurdity of Christ's bodily presence in the sacrament, and in framing the external order of their churches, adhered too closely to the popish model. The church of England, especially, preserved her resemblance to the church of Rome. The scanty reformation which took place in that kingdom, although overruled by divine Providence for good to the christian cause in general, was very far from being under the immediate direction of christian principle. It was not conducted by an inquiring people and enlightened ministry. The church really had little hand in it. It was a creature of state policy. The Eighth Henry, a truly irreligious, man, produced the reformation of England, in order to gratify his lust, his avarice, and his ambition. He was a king of haughty passions, and of principles the most despotic. To be revenged of the pope, Henry was willing that the church of England should be altogether disconnected with the Roman; and in order to effect this, he consented that some deviations might be made from the doctrine and order of the papacy. The alterations were, however, very few. None were tolerated by the king, except such as were necessary to establish independency of Rome. He claimed to himself the authority of which he stripped his Holiness. The nation and the priesthood acquiesce in the claim, and the impious Henry the Eighth is proclaimed the head of the church of England. The principal advantage which the nation obtained by the change,



was, that now they had their pope not at Rome, but in London. In Scotland the state of the nation was rendered, by divine Providence, favourable to the propagation of religion. The reformation commenced with the most learned and eminent ministers. It was gradually advanced, not as an engine of state power, but as an interest totally distinct from the policies of the present world. The crown was opposed to the Protestant interest, and could not, therefore, under the mask of friendship, introduce Antichristian corruption into the reformation church; and it was too weak to destroy the Protestant cause. The nobility overawed the monarchy, and shielded the commonality from danger, while the faithful services of John Knox, and other able ministers, propagated the reformation among the people, until the mass of the nation being under its influence, they agreed to alter the civil government, and give it a direction contrary to papacy. In Scotland the monarchy had not power to subdue religion into an engine of state policy; but christianity influenced the national society to render its civil constitution subordinate to the kingdom of Christ. The church is recognized as a *regular and independent empire*, of which Christ Jesus is alone the King and Head—as an empire possessing officers and courts, which have the exclusive right of regulating its concerns by the divine law. Civil government is considered as an ordinance of God, for the preservation of peace and order among men, and for regulating every worldly interest among christians, in subordination to godliness and honesty. The doctrines of religion are briefly stated. The corruptions of popery are summed up and condemned. The worship is reduced to its primitive simplicity. The ministry relinquishes all imitations of the Roman hierarchy; and ecclesiastical discipline is exercised by the authorized officers of Christ's peculiar kingdom. The Scottish reformers, after the example of the saints in other places, and in former times, repeatedly enter into covenant with God. They engage themselves in the strength of promised grace, and with the solemnity of an oath to maintain and promote, in their several places and stations, the interests of the true religion, according to the law of God. Christia-



nity thus regulating the individual and collective concerns of these excellent and godly men, appears as a system worthy of its divine Author, and wisely adapted to promote the temporal happiness of nations, and the everlasting felicity of men.

The time had not yet, however, arrived, which God had set for the destruction of Antichrist, and which he revealed by the prophets to the church, as the wished-for period when the kingdoms of this world should become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ. By the reformation several very important ends were accomplished. 1. The human mind was roused from its lethargy, and all its natural energies excited to that variety of action, which is calculated to strengthen and improve the understanding, and contribute to the production of that high degree of civilization which is to prevail when the church shall appear in her millennial splendour. 2. The elements of sacred truth were discovered, collected and explained. The holy scriptures were delivered from the bondage of the Antichristian church, translated into a variety of languages, and transmitted to every corner of the world, in order to utter a voice more distinct, loud, and lasting, than that of the Baptist, in the wilderness of Judea—“*Prepare ye the way of the Lord.*” 3. Judgment was poured out upon the seat of the beast which shook his throne, and smote the arm by which he extended his sceptre, with a debility from the effects of which, it can never completely recover. And lastly, The reformation proved the means of eternal life to a vast number of God’s elect children then upon the earth, and left an example which animates the hope of the witnesses of truth, and is a sure pledge of the perfect fulfilment of the prophecies which exhibit the future grandeur of the visible church.

The Protestant reformation, although an ever memorable and glorious event, was far from exhibiting to the nations in which it prevailed a complete view of the christian church in all her beauty. One great and essential principle of Christ’s kingdom, the UNITY of it, escaped the observation of a number of the reformers, and was almost universally violated. The christian system, by its unalterable simplicity, is divinely adapted for universal prevalence. The scripture model of the

church, if adopted, would render the church *one*, not only in the subjective principles of religion, but also in its visible form among all the nations of the earth. The immediate danger of the first reformers, the difficulty of mutual consultation upon subjects of common concern, the selfish views of the civil rulers who joined them, and screened them in some measure from papal persecution, and the influence of those who co-operated with them from bad motives in opposition to the papacy, prevented attention to this principle in the organization of the churches of the reformation. Very few at first thought of extending uniformity any further than their own particular district. While the ministry of the church was too inattentive to the unity of the church, and its absolute independency of the civil governments of the nations, the civil rulers were endeavouring, in each of the protestant countries, to render the church in its external form, a creature of the civil authority.

Another cause also, contributed powerfully to the violation of this principle. Great revolutions give an unusual impulse to the human mind, and tend to encourage enthusiasm. Extravagance and disorder follow, of course, and Satan favours the delusion, and encourages every impiety. No sooner was the Antichristian authority rejected in any nation, than sectaries of every description arose, ran to the most dreadful excesses, and thus distracted the attention of the faithful from the point of general and more remote investigations about church unity, constraining them to consult present expediency, and hasten the adoption of some order which might compose the spirits of men. It became absolutely necessary for the civil authority to exert its power in suppressing those disorderly combinations, which, under pretence of religion, violated all righteousness; and the transition was natural and easy although very unjust, from giving law to enthusiastic sectaries, who disturbed civil society, to legislating for the church itself. Thus did the circumstances of the times prove the occasion of establishing evil by civil and ecclesiastical law. The great and good protestant reformers thus sowed the seeds of lasting schisms and feuds in the reformation church, by framing ec-

clesiastical constitutions, differing as widely from one another, as did those constitutions of civil government under which they resided. These diversities, arising at first from principles of expediency, or from the necessities of the times, did not hinder a friendly intercourse between the pious people of that age. Soon, however, too soon, did party prejudice and pride, introduce bigotry into the protestant churches. Instead of prosecuting at their leisure a further reformation, and procuring a general uniformity, each adhered with zealous pertinacity to the forms already established, and thus were handed down to the present day, all these dissensions and schisms, with the example still more mischievous, of rending the body of Christ at pleasure. The visible church has consequently little unity in practice. Every city has its several congregations, not as the distinct members of one common family, but like the hostile tribes which watch the opportunity of injuring one another, and which of course excite uneasy and constant jealousies and rivalships.

One great man among the first reformers anticipated these evils, and endeavoured to prevent them.

John Calvin equalled his contemporaries in piety, accuracy, knowledge, and faithfulness. He surpassed them all in the grandeur of his conceptions. His capacious mind embraced the present and future interest of the church; and his discernment pointed out the means of establishing the peace of Jerusalem. He proposed a plan which should embrace into *one church*, all the friends of the reformation in every country; and which should direct the united strength of the protestant nations, for its protection against the man of sin and all the kings who were devoted to the idolatries of Rome.

The church of England frustrated this grand attempt. She could not act without her head, the *monarchy*—a head, on which is written the name of blasphemy.

England, practising upon her favourite maxim, no bishop, no king, and holding on the 16th century, as she has done until the 19th, the balance of power, refused to part with the *idol prelacy*, and thus rendered abortive the plan of comprehension.

The venerable reformer, although he lamented the disappointment, did not sink into despondency. With the assistance of his friends, and under the direction of his God, he had succeeded in establishing in Geneva, an ecclesiastical policy, which should be an example to the surrounding nations. The great doctrines of the gospel are reduced into the form of a confession of faith. The presbyterian order is delineated in a book of discipline. A church is formed, and its members enter into solemn covenant, in conformity to the primitive pattern, and in agreeableness to the holy scriptures, and their own subordinate standards. The civil authority is persuaded to act as nursing fathers and nursing mothers; and the senate of Geneva, on the 20th July, 1537, enter into covenant ratified by an oath, to support this newly organized church. Ecclesiastical covenanting rests upon an immoveable basis. *The church is a covenant society.* A national covenant is a very different thing. The covenanters of Geneva, understood the difference, and they practised accordingly. They had no intention to intermingle church and state. But they were fully persuaded that the civil polity should protect the church against Antichrist. *Nations are bound to honour Messiah;* and upon this principle they covenant with God. A seminary of literature was also established under the direction of the church, which proved of eminent service. The youth flocked to it from every nation, and returned to their respective homes ably qualified to serve in the gospel, their divine Lord and Master, in their native countries. By God's blessing, their ministry was successful; and in no place more so than in Scotland.

While the reformation was progressing towards its perfection in that kingdom, the English monarchy, although the greatest barrier to the reformation of England itself, proved a shield to protect, from papal persecution, those who promoted its interest in the northern part of the island.

The ways of Providence are wonderful. He can raise up a protection to his saints from among their enemies. If nominal members of the church, and the various sects of heretics are a grievance to the pious disciple, they serve also to

screen him from persecution. Unregenerate professors and the sects of heresy, are providentially interposed between the real church, and the openly wicked world. Were it not for this hedge, it would require a constant miracle to prevent the wicked from murdering the saints. But the Lord had also much people in England. While the church of Scotland was improving the Geneva model, by rendering the confession of faith more full and explicit, and the whole order of the church more correct and definite, the same principles were rapidly progressing in England. Under the name of Puritans, the friends of primitive christianity were known in that realm. Civil liberty accompanied religion in its progress, and it would have been a happiness to the world had she never forsaken or out-run her heavenly guide and companion. To the Puritans alone, the English owe the whole freedom of their constitution. They stemmed the torrent of despotic power, which threatened to overwhelm the nation. The Spirit of the nation was at length roused, and produced an invitation to reform the church. An ordinance of Parliament called upon the most pious and learned men of the nation, to meet at Westminster, on the 1st of July, 1643, to consult together, and advise the Parliament touching the concerns of religion. This assembly was composed of the most eminent divines and laymen of the age. It was not designed for a national synod, or a representative body of the clergy, but only as a council to the Parliament. The civil authority demanded their advice in advancing the cause of truth and righteousness, and consequently called them, not as an ecclesiastical court, having jurisdiction over the churches, but as a committee of arrangement to promote the interest of religion, and the further reformation of the church. This assembly, with the assistance of commissioners from the church of Scotland, drew up and exhibited to the world, in a confession of faith and catechisms, directory for worship, and a plan of church government, the most definite, scriptural and complete system which had ever been exhibited by any council or assembly. It was intended as a system of uniformity, which should unite in one church, the friends of religion in England, Ire-



land, and Scotland. Such a system became necessary, as these had entered into a solemn league and covenant for themselves and their posterity, that all things might be done in God's house according to his own revealed will.

This covenant was drawn up by a committee of the general assembly of the church of Scotland, and commissioners from England. It passed both the assembly and convention of estates at Edinburgh in one day, and being sent to England, it was ratified by the assembly and the parliament. Monday, the 25th of September, 1643, in the church of St Margaret's, Westminster, Mr Nye read this covenant from the pulpit, article by article, each person standing uncovered, with his right hand lifted up bare to heaven, worshipping the great name of God, and swearing to the performance of it. It was afterwards subscribed by the house of commons and by the assembly. It was sworn by the house of lords, on the 15th October—This covenant binds these nations to the preservation of the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the church of Scotland; it also binds to constant exertions to establish uniformity in religion over the three kingdoms, and to perpetual perseverance in the same cause against all opposition. Copies of these transactions were sent, by the assembly of divines, accompanied with appropriate letters to the churches of Holand, France and Switzerland.

All these churches returned respectful answers, and the Netherland divines expressed not only an approbation of the covenant, but desired to join therein.

The presbyterian system was never completely established in England, although it was for some time the most prevalent. And after several years of civil tumult and religious anarchy, the nation again crouched under the burdens of both the monarchy and the prelacy. The restoration of the British monarchy was accompanied with national perjury. The prelacy and the throne were established in blood. The reformation was overturned, the covenant was broken, and upwards of twenty thousand presbyterians died as martyrs to the covenanted reformation.



The protestant churches have, since the middle of the 17th century, been declining in purity.

A sceptical philosophy has corrupted the principles of a considerable proportion of the literary part of the community. Commerce has nurtured in its lap, sensuality and avarice. Mistaken ideas of civil and religious liberty, have rendered men impatient of the restraints of christian discipline. And the politicians of the present world have prevailed too far to render the protestant systems minister to their ambition. The visible church, divided into factions, and encumbered with a mass of irreligious professors, presents in every place an appearance which fills the serious mind with pain.

America, colonized and settled by Europeans, has offered an asylum for christians of every denomination, from the effect of the penal statutes standing against them in different countries of the old world. In the United States particularly, the simple form of civil government affording equal protection to all ranks of men, we often find the various forms of religion practised in one city.

God has in his providence, presented the human family in this country with a new experiment. The church, unheeded by the civil powers, is suffered to rise or fall by her own exertions. The truth is great, however, and by the blessing of God, and the faithfulness of the saints, it will yet triumph. Toward the beginning of the eighteenth century, the pious people in Europe direct an eye of unusual anxiety toward America. Twelve centuries have now elapsed since the rise of Antichrist. His fall is fast approaching. Dreadful judgments await all the parts of the Roman empire. The *heaven* and the *earth* of that system must be shaken and removed, and the witnesses be killed by the last efforts of the beast. Many exercise a hope that America will escape the dreadful carnage; and that the visible covenant society of God will here find a place of rest until Europe be drenched in the blood of the enemies of religion. Certainly christians are now very much scattered over the face of the earth. Books replete with solid information abound. Let the Antichristian empire be completely overturned; and when the Lord pours

down his Holy Spirit, the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ. Then shall the churches relinquish every carnal prejudice, and adopt the prophetic maxim—*Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant.* The church shall then be one in all nations.

*N. B.* The preceding chapters briefly exhibit the Church universal. In a subsequent No. of this publication, it is intended to insert a similar exhibition of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, from her Establishment until the Revolution Settlement.

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## OBEDIENCE TO THE LAWS OF GOD THE SURE DEFENCE OF NATIONS.

*“Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin, The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him he will forsake you.”* 2 CHRON. xv. 2.

**T**HAT this is a time of complicated difficulty and danger to the United Kingdom cannot be denied. Not an individual, who seriously contemplates our national situation can forbear to confess, that, on every hand, dangers threaten and difficulties beset us. To any one who should suggest a sure, practicable and easy plan, for maintaining our honour, and preserving our civil and religious rights, every ear should listen with attention, and every heart offer a tribute of thanks.

My brethren,—a prophet of Jehovah offers you this very plan in the inspired words before us. The sacred herald proclaims it to you this hour, as really as he did to the favourite people of heaven in ancient times.—As really as he then said, *“Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin,”* he now says, *“Hear ye me,”* rulers and people of Great Britain and Ireland! *“the Lord is with you while ye be with him; and if ye seek him he will be found of you.”*

This, I affirm, is a sure plan for national defence and prosperity; for *“if God be for us who can be against us?”* What wisdom can contend with omniscience?—what power can

resist omnipotence? “Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together and it shall come to nought; speak the word and it shall not stand: for God is with us.” Nay, more—the plan of the prophet is not only effectual, but it is *the only one* that can be effectual. The same veracity which gives the comfortable assurance, on one condition, connects with it an awful alternative on another. “If ye forsake God he will forsake you”—If, forgetful of your dependance on Jehovah, ye violate his laws and contemn his ordinances, his protection and favour will be taken from you, and *then cometh confusion and every evil work*. Left to yourselves, you will speedily become the prey of your enemies or work out your own destruction.—Vain will be all your devices, feeble all your prowess, and unavailing all your exertions: for “*there is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord.*” His hand will find you out, and, with just displeasure, will seal your final ruin.

That the statement you have heard is just, I shall endeavour to prove, in establishing the following proposition, in which it is comprised; namely, The nation that adheres to the laws of God shall be protected and prospered by him, but the nation that forsakes and disregards those laws he will destroy.

In discussing this subject, it will not be necessary to give a separate treatment to its contrasted parts. More advantage may be derived from considering, in connexion, the nature, both of that obedience and disobedience which is contemplated, and of that benefit or injury, which severally results from them. And, throughout the whole discussion, frankly allowing unbounded scope to the sovereignty of Jehovah in his disposal of nations and individuals, let it ever be carefully kept in view, that no merely creature-obedience is meritorious or procurative of the divine favour. God, however, in the depth of his incomprehensible councils, and in full consistency with all the adorable perfections of his nature, has devised

and established means, in the proper use of which, agreeably to the admirable plan of salvation, he is graciously pleased to confer every blessing on societies and persons which they are capable of enjoying.

First, then, let us consider what is that adherence or obedience to the divine laws, which will insure to a nation the protection and blessing of heaven; and from which we may also see, that deficiency or disobedience, on which the threatening is pronounced.

The obedience contemplated is described in the text by *being or remaining with God*, and by *seeking him*. In this, I think, all must allow there is implied, that a nation pay some general and sincere regard to those laws and obligations of duty, which the light it possesses, manifests to be of divine institution and sanctioned by the divine authority. Reason and scripture evince, in the clearest manner, the justice of this demand. If reason remonstrates against the iniquity of requiring men to obey laws, of which they have had no knowledge, and to walk by light which they have never seen, she equally enforces their obligation to obey every equitable law with which they are acquainted, and to act agreeably to the best information which they have received. In other words, it is one of the plainest dictates of reason, that men should be answerable for their improvement of the advantages they possess, and for nothing more. Accordingly we find that inspiration, which is reason purified from all error, expresses this principle, thus,—“That servant which knew his Lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.—Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin.” This rule must be as applicable to nations as to individuals, for of individuals, nations are composed. Let us apply it, then, to the case before us, and see what will be its result, as it relates to Heathens, Jews and Christians.

Of the Heathen nations the account given by unerring truth, is as follows—"The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." And again—"When the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written upon their hearts, their conscience, also, bearing witness, and their thoughts, the mean while, accusing or else excusing one another." From this it appears that the Heathen nations, though destitute of a revelation, had still so many advantages from the light of nature itself, as to render them inexcusable when they violated the great principles of duty either to God or man. To acknowledge the existence, the providence, and many of the perfections of the supreme Being; to be sensible of their dependance on him in all their concerns; to realize their indebtedness to him for all their enjoyments; to confess to him their guilt and unworthiness; to implore his favour, and to deprecate his displeasure, was a service which, even in their circumstances, might reasonably be demanded of them. The law, also, which was written on their hearts, or discoverable from natural reason, was sufficient to teach them the duties of justice, truth, humanity and benevolence, toward each other. How little of all this was actually found among those nations, is well known to those who are acquainted with the melancholy history of their moral and religious state. But the rule of their duty was such as has been stated, and as far as they manifested any colour or degree of conformity to it in their external conduct or national character, the divine mercy and condescension, as we shall see hereafter, treated them as coming within the condition on which protection and prosperity in this world, are promised and bestowed. But when all regard to the moral



and religious principles that have been recited, became extinct among them as a people, then they subjected themselves to the threatened penalty.

To the Hebrew nation, the knowledge of the true God was clearly revealed. The unity and spirituality of his essence; the infinity, eternity, purity and holiness of his nature and attributes; his creation, and his absolute and immediate government of the world; his moral laws; and his purposes of grace and mercy toward sinners; were manifested to this people, in the fullest, most unequivocal, and most impressive manner. Their national polity itself was a theocracy, or mode of government in which the Deity sustained to them, not only the common relation of supreme governor of the world, but also that of a civil chief. He dictated all their political institutions; he presided over the administration of them; and with a view to secure them against falling into that ignorance of himself, that idolatry, superstition and immortality, which, at this time, characterized and degraded all the other nations of the world, as well as to be a shadow of good things to come, he instituted a complicated ritual of ceremonial observances and temporary regulations. These advantages laid the Jews under higher and more numerous obligations to moral and religious purity than any other nation then existing. It was, also, manifestly incumbent on them to regard, with sacred exactness, even those ceremonial rites, which had been enjoined by divine authority with the most wise and benevolent intention. Here, then, we have their rule of duty. While they walked agreeably to these advantages and institutions they might be said to abide with God and to seek him. When they departed from these they were said to forsake him. The observance of these things is precisely the ground of the promise in the text,—the promise of the divine presence and protection, with all its happy consequences. On the contrary, their departure from the rule of duty which has been specified, subjected them to the threatened dereliction and displeasure of God, with all its ruinous effects.

Under the Christian dispensation we have still a new acces-



sion of light. In addition to the knowledge of the Deity, and of his laws and designs, which the ancient Hebrews possessed, we have a bright display of the very method in which his purposes of mercy toward our fallen race are fully carried into effect. "He who spake unto them by the prophets hath, in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world"—who is "Immanuel God with us." By him "we have received the atonement." We are distinctly informed, that "he was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." We are assured that by faith in him "we are justified without the deeds of the law." To us it has been declared by divine authority, that "all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father," and that "he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who hath sent him." We have received information, more distinct than was given under the Mosaic œconomy, of the mission and work of the blessed Spirit of God, emphatically stiled "the Comforter."—We are told that man, "dead by nature in trespasses and sins," can be saved only by "the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." The spirituality and extent of the divine law is more completely unfolded to us than to the Jews, and the doctrine more powerfully inculcated that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." The obligations to justice, benevolence, charity, meekness, kindness, forgiveness, and every good work, are most powerfully enforced. "Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel." A future judgment is plainly revealed, and the states of eternal happiness and misery, which await the righteous and the wicked, are clearly and strikingly set before us.

It must immediately be perceived that this system of information originates many peculiar obligations and duties, which could not be binding or incumbent on those who were destitute of it:—And therefore the nation which is blest with the knowledge of this system, will then, and then only, come up to the condition on which the promise of protection and prosperity is founded in the text, when it pays some suitable re-

gard to the leading principles which it contains. When those principles are generally and notoriously violated, the solemn declaration that God will forsake such a people, immediately becomes applicable.

Let me request, that the statement which has now been given of the rule of moral and religious duty to communities, in dissimilar circumstances or under different dispensations, may be carefully kept in mind through the remainder of the discourse, that repetition may be spared without producing mistake. Let it be understood and remembered, that in speaking of the virtues or vices of nations, as the cause of prosperity or adversity, I always consider the distributive justice of God as deciding the destiny of each by its *relative* advantages,—its relative knowledge of moral and religious truth, and that practice which is consonant or contrary to it.

This statement, however, has not been made, merely to furnish a basis of illustration to the following part of the subject; but also to show how totally void of force is a favourite remark of infidel writers on this topic. With much apparent triumph, they reproach the advocates of christianity for representing national prosperity as any way connected with a regard to the christian religion, and they adduce the prosperous condition of some Pagan countries, both in ancient and modern times, as proof positive of the justice of the reproach. But we may here see that the fact alledged (allowing it to be a fact) is, in truth, no proof at all. Those nations never were under obligation to conform to the same standard which we are bound to regard. It will presently be seen that when they actually and generally departed from what was *their rule of duty* they were uniformly destroyed. But to say that a Christian nation, may with impunity become Pagan, while a Pagan nation (it is allowed on all hands) could not even be expected to regard christianity, is an assertion which does no honour to the sagacity or candour of its authors. It is to say, that they who possess the most advantages may safely act like those who have enjoyed the least. The Heathen possess one degree of information, we another. They are dealt with by their own measure, we by ours. This is strictly the princi-

ple of justice; and the objection in question is annihilated by the obvious remark.

Here, however, it may be observed, without cavil, that no nation ever *fully conforms* to the rule which has been specified as marking the line of duty; and it may be asked, What is *that measure of conformity*, which will secure the benefits of the promise? To answer this inquiry with precision and as it relates to particular cases God alone is competent. "*He giveth not account of any of his matters.*" In some instances his mercy may forbear with nations after considerable defection, and in others his justice may take speedy vengeance. While the guilty are never punished till they deserve it, equity is not violated in waiting longer for the reformation of some than of others. This exercise of sovereignty, this limited variety in his dispensations, is seen in all the administrations of the Deity. The most wise and important purposes are answered by it. Presumption is restrained, on the one hand, and despondence or despair is prevented, on the other. The entire freedom of human action is, also, preserved by this order. The mind of man is left to that full exercise of judgment and choice, and that natural operation of desire and prosperity, which render him most completely accountable for his actions. From this cause it will come to pass that the method in which nations are treated will appear somewhat irregular. The virtuous, in some cases, will appear to suffer, and the vicious to be triumphant. A semblance of contradiction will hence arise to the doctrine I inculcate. Yet, as will be shown more fully in its place, it is only the semblance, and not the substance of opposition, that will thus be produced. A criterion of judging sufficiently exact, and most highly important, will still be left us. It will still remain a perspicuous and interesting truth, that when a nation is *characteristically pious* it will be ultimately protected, and that when it becomes *characteristically impious* it will be fast hastening to destruction; and that *in proportion* as it approaches the one or the other of these extremes it has reason to *hope* or to *fear*.

To explain my meaning, here, with reference to a christi-

an nation, I would say, When the rulers of a christian country recommend christianity by their practice and example: When they discover a reverence for it by faithfully enacting and executing laws for the suppression of vice and immorality: When, without infringing on the rights of conscience, they encourage true piety, by countenancing those who profess, practise and teach it: When, on suitable occasions, and in public acts, the being and providence of God, and our accountableness to him, are recognized, and the honour which is due to his Son is rendered: When the moral laws of God, relative to man, as well as to himself, are truly regarded, by those whose station gives influence and fashion to their conduct, and renders it, in a sort, the representation and expression of national sentiment on the subject of morals: And when, in addition to this, the great principles of piety and morality, already recited, are so generally and effectually taught and inculcated on the people at large, as really to influence the public mind, and in some good degree to form the popular opinions and habits:—This I would say was a performance of duty,—this, agreeably to the connexion between piety and prosperity, by the appointment of Heaven, would secure to a christian nation the benefits of the divine promise. But when, among those who preside over the people, the very being, attributes, and providence of God are denied; or when there is a studied omission of every idea that refers to his government, or to our dependance on him: When, through a hatred of christianity, it is disavowed, despised, laughed at, and in the most contemptuous manner trampled under foot; or when through pusillanimity or impious policy, a country conceals its attachment to the religion of Jesus; or when the profession of attachment is only a thin veil of hypocrisy: When the leading men of a nation flagrantly and shamelessly violate every moral law: And when the people at large *love to have it so*, and are rapidly assimilating to the same corrupt standard; then they subject themselves to the divine denunciation, and are treading on the brink of destruction.

(To be Continued.)

HARMONY OF MATTHEW AND LUKE'S ACCOUNT  
OF THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST. *a*

MATTHEW i. 2—16.

- 1st Fourteen Generations. *b*
- 1 ABRAHAM, *c*
  - 2 Isaac,
  - 3 Jacob,
  - 4 Judas,
  - 5 Phares,
  - 6 Esrom,
  - 7 Aram,
  - 8 Aminadab,
  - 9 Naasson,
  - 10 Salmon,
  - 11 Booz,
  - 12 Obed,
  - 13 Jesse,
  - 14 *David, d*
  - 2d Fourteen Generations. *c*
  - 15 SOLOMON, *f*
  - 16 Roboam,
  - 17 Abia,
  - 18 Asa,
  - 19 Josaphat,
  - 20 Joram,
  - Ahaziah }  
Joash, }  
Amaziah, }
  - 21 Ozias,
  - 22 Joatham,
  - 23 Achaz,
  - 24 Ezekias,
  - 25 Manasses,
  - 26 Amon,
  - 27 Josias,
  - 28 *Jechonias, h*
  - 3d Fourteen Generations. *i*
  - 29 JECHONIAS, *k*
  - 30 Salathiel, *l*
  - 31 Zorobabel, *m*
  - 32 Abiud, *n*
  - 33 Eliakim,
  - 34 Azor,
  - 35 Sadoc,
  - 36 Achim,
  - 37 Eliud,
  - 38 Eleazar,
  - 39 Matthan,
  - 40 Jacob,
  - 41 Joseph, *o*.
  - 42 *Jesus. p*

LUKE iii. 23—38.

GOD. *q*

- |                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 ADAM, <i>r</i>     | 38 Melea,              |
| 2 Seth,              | 39 Eliakim,            |
| 3 Enos,              | 40 Jonan,              |
| 4 Cainan,            | 41 Joseph,             |
| 5 Maleleel,          | 42 Juda,               |
| 6 Jared,             | 43 Simeon,             |
| 7 Enoch, <i>s</i>    | 44 Levi,               |
| 8 Mathusala,         | 45 Matthat,            |
| 9 Lamech,            | 46 Jorim,              |
| 10 Noe,              | 47 Eliezer,            |
| 11 Sem,              | 48 Jose,               |
| 12 Arphaxad,         | 49 Er,                 |
| 13 Cainan, <i>t</i>  | 50 Elmodam,            |
| 14 Sala,             | 51 Cosam,              |
| 15 Heber,            | 52 Addi,               |
| 16 Phalec,           | 53 Melchi,             |
| 17 Ragau,            | 54 Neri.               |
| 18 Saruch,           |                        |
| 19 Nachor,           |                        |
| 20 Thara.            | 55 Salathiel, <i>w</i> |
|                      | 56 Zorobabel,          |
|                      | 57 Rhesa, <i>x</i>     |
| 21 Abraham, <i>u</i> | 58 Joanna,             |
| 22 Isaac,            | 59 Juda,               |
| 23 Jacob,            | 60 Joseph,             |
| 24 Juda,             | 61 Semei,              |
| 25 Phares,           | 62 Mattathias,         |
| 26 Esrom,            | 63 Maath,              |
| 27 Aram,             | 64 Nagge,              |
| 28 Aminadab,         | 65 Esli,               |
| 29 Naasson,          | 66 Nabum,              |
| 30 Salmon,           | 67 Amos,               |
| 31 Booz,             | 68 Mattathias,         |
| 32 Obed,             | 69 Joseph,             |
| 33 Jesse,            | 70 Janna,              |
| 34 David.            | 71 Melchi,             |
|                      | 72 Levi,               |
|                      | 73 Matthat,            |
| 35 Nathan, <i>v</i>  | 74 Heli,               |
| 36 Mattatha,         | 75 Joseph, <i>y</i>    |
| 37 Menan,            |                        |

JESUS. *z*

*a* —“ Who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” Rom. i. 3, 4.

*b* The growing period of the Jewish commonwealth.

*c* Matthew derives our Saviour's genealogy only from Abraham. Probably intending his history primarily for the Jews, he judged it enough to prove Christ the son of Abraham, and the son of David.

*d* “ Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour Jesus.” Acts xiii. 23.

*e* The flourishing period of the Jewish commonwealth.

*f* The Son of David, from whom Matthew reckons the genealogy of Joseph, the supposed father of Jesus.

*g* These three are omitted by Matthew, so that we must only understand, that Ozias lineally descended from Joram; thus Christ is called the son of David, the son of Abraham. Mat. i. 1. Those who curiously inquire, why the Evangelist leaves out Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, who were all three lawful princes, and rightly descended from the family of David, &c. are referred to Commentators who have waded into these speculations.

*h* In this Jechonias, whoever he was, terminates the Evangelist's second period of fourteen generations. The most probable opinion is, that he was Jehoiakim. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 5.

*i* The declining period of the Jewish commonwealth.

*k* This Jechonias, the head of those generations which make up the last period, is generally thought to have been Jehoiakin, the son of Jehoiakim. 1 Chron. iii. 16. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 8. Jer. xxiv. 1. That he begat Salathiel, appears 1 Chron. iii. 17. It is here objected that God said concerning this Jechonias, called also Coniah, “ Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.” Jer. xxii. 30. The text is plainly to be understood, without a child that shall actually succeed to the crown; for it supposes that he should have seed, but none that should prosper sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah. This was actually verified: for Nebuchadnezzar carried Jechonias captive to Babylon, and set up Zedekiah, his uncle, in his stead, who was the last king in Judah. 2 Kings xxiv. 15, 17. and xxv.

*l* Agreeably to Ezra iii. 2. Haggai i. 1. Luke iii. 27. Salathiel



is here said to beget Zorobabel, whereas in 2 Chron. iii. 19. Zorobabel is called the son of Pedaiah. This difficulty admits of several consistent solutions, too copious for insertion here. See Poole, &c.

*m* Zorobabel was alive at the end of the captivity, and was ruler of the Jews, though not under the title of king. Ezra v. 2.

*n* There is no Abiud reckoned among the sons of Zorobabel, 1 Chron. iii. 19, 20; and as for Eliakim, Azor, Sadoc, Achim, Eliud, Eleazar, Matthan, and Jacob; though there be no certain account of them in any other part of scripture, yet, on Matthew's authority, we are obliged to believe they all lineally descended from David; but living in private station, and sacred history not extending beyond Zorobabel's time, it is not wonderful that we have no better means to know their lineal descent from the royal family.

*o* "A just man of the house and lineage of David." Mat. i. 19. Luke ii. 4.

*p* —"For he shall save his people from their sins." Mat. i. 21. "So all the generations from Abraham to David, are fourteen generations: and from David until the carrying away into Babylon, are fourteen generations: and from the carrying into Babylon unto Christ, are fourteen generations." chap. i. 17. The Evangelist, for reasons which we cannot fathom, reduces our Saviour's progenitors to three periods of fourteen generations each. In the first period there were no more. In the second, he leaves out three. In the third, he doubtless leaves out more. See reference *g* and *u*.

*q* —"We are the offspring of God."— Acts xvii. 29.

*r* Luke, probably designing the information of the world, derives our Saviour's genealogy from Adam, the common father of mankind; ascending twenty degrees higher than Matthew does.

*s* —"The seventh from Adam."— Jude 14.

*t* Moses does not mention Cainan at all. In Gen. xi. 12. we read that Sala was the son of Arphaxad, whereas he is here said to be the son of Cainan. Those curious to know what is said for the solution of the difficulty, may read it largely in the Commentaries of the learned. It is a matter of no great moment whether Sala was the immediate son or only the grandson of Arphaxad.

*u* Matthew and Luke harmoniously reckon up the same fourteen generations from Abraham to David inclusive. After David's time, the persons named, who before were the same in both accounts of our Saviour's pedigree, became diverse; some the progenitors of Joseph, from Solomon, reckoned by Matthew; and others the

progenitors of Mary, from Nathan, named by Luke. This also answers an objection relative to the differing number of the persons from Zorobabel to Joseph. Luke's number is double that of Matthew. Matthew, however, does not speak falsely, or contradictory to Luke; as there might be many more progenitors of Mary than of Joseph.

*v* The son of David, from whom Luke reckons the genealogy of Mary, of whom was born "a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." Luke ii. 11.

*w* Luke says Salathiel "was the son of Neri," whereas Matthew says, "Jechonias begat Salathiel." The difficulty may be solved, either by admitting, as was common among the Jews, that different names were applicable to the same person;—that different persons bore the same name;—or that the relative terms, *father, son, &c.* were not always expressive of these relations in a natural sense.

*x* Luke says Rhesa "was the son of Zorobabel," and Matthew says "Zorobabel begat Abiud." It seems Zorobabel had other sons than those mentioned 1 Chron. iii. 19, 20. But, besides making allowance for that variety of names often applicable to the same person, &c. as already noticed in reference *w*, it may also be here modestly suggested, that, either there were two Zorobabels, or, the two different lines of descent from David, by Solomon and Nathan, do here unite in Zorobabel; and again, by his sons, Abiud and Rhesa, divide as before, and, in two distinct lines, descend till they at last meet in Jesus Christ; the first line, exhibiting his predecessors by legal right of government; and the last, his kindred and fathers by nature.

*y* Where Luke calls Joseph the son of Heli, understand his son-in-law, by marriage of his daughter Mary. That Mary was the daughter of Heli is not indeed proved by scripture. She is very probably judged so, however.)

*z* Who is "the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." Rev. xxii. 16.

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." Luke i. 32.

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD will perform this." Is. ix. 7.

## THE RIGHTS OF GOD.

“Render—unto God, the things that are God’s.” MAT. xxii. 21.

(Continued from page 146.)

ALL men were represented in Adam, by a righteous constitution of God; and whatever the event has been, the prospect was, at the beginning, full, both of reason and hope. We find that the idea of representation has been judged, in all free countries, perfectly to accord with justice, and the rights of man: nay, it is judged the only guardian of men’s most precious rights. Modern demagogues are abundantly noisy on this topic. Let us try that representation which took place at the outset of the human family, and see whether we can discern any thing in *it*, contrary to our most important interests, or alarming to our most hopeful prospects.

In the first place, had all the children of the family, who shall descend from Adam’s loins to the end of time, been consulted, it is not unreasonable to suppose, that it would have been their unanimous wish to have had their own happiness, and that of their posterity, put as soon as possible beyond a doubt. We know at what pains, most men and whole nations have been, to hand down valuable possessions to their heirs and successors. Entails and wills, have been set as sentinels, when fathers could no longer remain on earth, to guard their posterity from the paths of profligacy and ruin. But how could this end have been attained by the human family at large, if every individual, to the end of time, must wait to the last day of his earthly career, to have his passport into the regions of immortality, signed by his own personal act of perfect obedience?—If the alternatives presented to such a convention as we have supposed, had been, personal responsibility, or federal representation, I have no doubt but the choice of federal representation would have been unanimous: especially if a representative could be found, and terms agreed upon, such as to give a probable prospect of unquestionable safety to the party represented. Now it is

a confessed fact, that in all representative governments, it is a point of primary magnitude, that the representatives should be under the strongest motives of self-interest, carefully to watch over the interests of their constituents. Many advocates for an aristocratical civil government, have conceived the above position, an inviolable argument in favour of their scheme, as hereby the representative's property, running the same risk with that of others in the commonwealth, must be supposed to attach him to the general welfare in proportion to the magnitude of his own private interests. And it must be acknowledged, the argument would have no small weight, was it not for the corrupt and unbridled state of human passion, which most commonly sacrifices future prospects at the shrine of present gratification. But no such thing as this could take place in Adam's case. He had as much of his own at stake, as any of his posterity had; besides, he had a motive to stability and watchfulness, peculiar to himself. He saw himself at the head of the whole family, as their common parent. I would ask any man upon earth, what he could have objected, upon reasonable grounds, if he had been present that day, when Adam was set up by God, as the common head of the human family?

In the next place, his representative capacity must have been supposed a matter strongly impressive of watchfulness. We might also consider, perhaps as a favourable circumstance, the surprize with which he must have beheld all things when first he cast his wondering eye on the heavens; the earth, and on himself, which could not be expected soon to wear off; a case not likely to take place in any of his posterity, who should slip up by slow degrees, from the weakness of infancy to the maturity of reason. All these things must have had their weight, in pointing out the first man as a fit representative of all his posterity.

I might finally add, that the terms of acceptance and approbation imposed on Adam, were abundantly easy, and such as no person could reasonably suppose likely to become a stumbling-block. From these considerations, it is not easy to see upon what part of God's conduct towards his creation,

the reasonable imputation of blame can be fixed. Besides, how awfully have heathens abused the light of nature, and spurned at its most rational dictates?

If we attend to the case of gospel hearers, who perish, we shall find little to offer in their defence. They go into misery, not only without excuse, but under every circumstance of aggravated guilt, which imagination can suggest. Heaven did not take these children of disobedience at their first word: they were dealt with more tenderly than the fallen angels. But they firmly abide by their first resolution. Still attached to a life of estrangement, and averse to the divine government, they determine on abiding the consequences of the lake which burns with fire, rather than, like returning prodigals, confess guilt, and flee believingly from the wrath to come. Out of the mouth, therefore, of two witnesses, they are condemned. The most just federal representation condemns them, and by its failure they are involved in the guilt of the covenant of works: the blood of sprinkling has been held out, but this they have trodden under foot, and accounted it an unholy thing. Both dispensations concur in their condemnation; and they perish without the shadow of excuse—and therefore in their case, divine justice cannot be blamed.

We have only to consider, lastly, the case of children who die in infancy. What has been said of federal representation in general, applies to them in particular. Besides, we know not how God may deal with the infants, of either Pagans, or Christians. We know not how many of them shall be saved; nor do we know of what mitigations their fate may admit, who shall not be saved. Therefore, no just argument can be drawn from them, in respect to God's right. It is with the ostensible administrations of Jehovah, that our concern lies; with the idle dreams, or vain surmises of these, who make not revelation their guide, we have nothing to do. Besides, he who writes, and those who shall read these remarks, are passed beyond the regions of infancy, and therefore are not practically concerned with this part of the divine administration, which no doubt, God will conduct with jus-

tice, but which, however, is not to be the hinge whereupon our everlasting state is to turn. Let us duly attend to the ground on which we stand ourselves, and leave all determinations, about the lot of others, to the Judge of all the earth, who can do no wrong.

A question might here be moved, which, before I dismiss this article, I shall barely mention. It is this: Could not God have organized a world, which would have answered all ends of displaying the Divine character, and conveying happiness to the creatures, without suffering moral and physical evil to become so lamentably intermingled with all its movements, as we now see is the case. This question, I grant, is high and mysterious, and perhaps may justly be considered as one of those deep things of God, of which our capacities are at present unable to judge with any great degree of precision. It is likely we commit many mistakes by asserting God could have done this or the other thing, otherwise than he has done it, by not considering the import of such expressions. There is no doubt, had a different plan of creation dwelt eternally in the Divine mind, recognized by his divine wisdom, and determined upon as a fit object of execution, that the almighty power of God could have carried it into effect with the utmost ease: but no such design ever, at any period, existed in the Divine mind; and if no such design ever existed, how could he employ his power in doing a thing, which upon the whole, he never thought meet to do? From eternity God intended to make this world, as it is, and having so intended, I humbly conceive, it could have existed no other way than it is, unless we either suppose, that there was a period when God was unresolved, what he would do, or else, that though he was from everlasting, well determined that the present order of things was upon the whole best; yet he could, notwithstanding this resolution, and it continuing in the Divine mind in its full force, have made a world on a very different construction, and left the present one unmade. Such a supposition, I apprehend, will not stand the test of sound reason.

I have been the more minute in discussing this particular,



as I apprehend many controversies in theology hinge upon it, which might be easily compromised, if once it was rightly understood.

2. The second right of God which I shall mention, is that of *giving laws* to his subjects. This will follow as a matter of course from what has been already established. If God had a right from eternity to resolve upon creating a world, he had a right to impose such laws upon it as his glory and its welfare required.

The laws of God, so far at least as they respect rational creatures, are nothing else but the expression of the Divine will, respecting the ends to be aimed at by his depending subjects, together with the most proper means for their attainment. That God should possess a natural, unalienable right, to give such orders to the work of his hands, is a proposition so evident, that no words perhaps can render it much clearer than it appears at first sight. And yet plain and simple as the theory of moral duty, and the source of rational obedience is, there is probably nothing to the sense of which mankind are more lost, in the transactions of human life. And yet, however confused their ideas on this subject may be, in point of application to the important interests of morality, it appears among their most common notions, that there both is, and ought to be such a thing as *law*.

We know of no nations, however savage, that subsist in society without some sort of laws or regulations, by which their mutual intercourses are limited and directed. The idea of law is most likely to be found in the original constitution of rational nature; it is most probable that it is here we ought to fix the first principle of that social intercourse which so generally draws the different tribes of the human race into these distinct national associations, which we see spread over the whole earth. How beings of such a texture, and possessing such versatility of character, as we find obtains in our own common family, could be brought so easily and universally to deliver themselves up to the restraints of civil authority, without some such principle implanted originally in their hearts, is hardly conceivable.

In midst the great abundance of information, which our nature enjoys, of its origin and end, it is matter of the utmost surprise that we do not more frequently consider, that all laws and regulations among men, require some rule by which they ought to be moulded. All the laws that ever were, or can be made, are mere ropes of sand, unless they possess a certain portion of his authority, who is our lawgiver and king; and until men resort to this way of making laws, their fabrics of human order will not long have the mouldering teeth of time. Had a little more attention been paid to this doctrine, the history of ancient and modern times would not have worn such a face of blood as it does at this day. We should not then have seen the miserable race of men outraged without end and without measure, mingling their tears with the dust under the iron hands of cruel task-masters, while there is few or none to comfort the oppressed.

It is highly probable God has given up, in just judgment, this earth to groan under the complicated miseries arising from tyranny and oppression, bloodshed and famine, on account of the contempt shown to his legislative character; nor have we any reason to believe that the disease will be removed until its causes cease. This right, once practically restored to God, will serve as an immoveable mound to keep off the encroachments which pride and avarice have almost generally made upon all the securities of civil liberty, which in the depth of their wisdom, nations have been able to contrive. An infallible guardian of the rights of man, is in vain sought for in the wise maxims of philosophers, and patriotic statesmen: In vain do nations attempt to purchase liberty with the best blood of their citizens, while they deliver it into the keeping of men unacquainted with, or regardless of the supreme legislative authority of God, under which his friends may sit securely and none to make them afraid.

Infidelity and impiety are often forced to relinquish their strong holds, and openly confess that the darkened prisons of human wretchedness never can expect to be visited with a general jubilee, unless God should condescend to avenge the quarrel of humanity, and let the prisoners shake off their

chains; a strong evidence that though the remembrance of God's legislative authority may for a time become feeble, it cannot entirely be abolished from the heart of man. Sceptical philosophers, who have been obliged to invent an atheistical language to serve the interests of their pride and vanity, have undesignedly been obliged to recognize God's legislative character. Thus we frequently hear the appearances in the visible kingdom of creation, accounted for by the name of *laws of nature*. And what are the laws of nature, but the will of God, taking continued effect upon the different parts of his dependant empire? Can any person, guided by reason, conceive of laws without a lawgiver? Is nature, if the word has any meaning, any thing more than that order of causes and effects which the only wise God at first established, and which he continually upholds? Now if philosophers even of the infidel cast, are obliged to introduce the notion of laws for the government of the physical world, much more shall we need their aid for the regulation of the moral system.

(*To be Continued.*)

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### BRISTOL AUXILIARY BIBLE SOCIETY.

—“*My word—shall not return unto me void.*”— ISAIAH.

**T**HE Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, having represented to the bishop of Bristol, Dr Mansell, their wish that an Auxiliary Society should be formed in that city, for promoting the great objects of their institution; the bishop was pleased to express his concurrence, and, Jan. 9th 1810, to address a circular letter, on the subject, to the clergy of his diocese; stating that he had been requested, to recommend the formation of an Auxiliary Society in the city of Bristol, simliar to those which have been established in several great towns throughout the kingdom;—that such a measure had his hearty approbation;—and that it would afford him the greatest pleasure to see it carried into execution.

In consequence of this recommendation, on the 22d of the same month, a letter was addressed to John Wilcox, Esq. the Mayor of Bristol, signed by more than 70 gentlemen, among whom were many of the clergy and dissenting ministers of Bristol and its vicinity, requesting that a public meeting might be convened for the above purpose. Accordingly, on Thursday, Feb. 1, a public meeting was held at Guildhall, for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of forming an Auxiliary Bible Society. At 12 o'clock the Mayor of the city took the chair. The business was opened by the Rev. Dr Small, who, in an appropriate speech, highly commended the object, constitution, and proceedings of the Society; and earnestly recommended the formation of an Auxiliary Society. The secretaries of the parent society, who attended by particular request, were then called upon to address the meeting; which they severally did in a manner that produced a very strong sensation on the whole assembly. The Rev. Mr Steinkopff, the foreign secretary, represented the destitute condition of several parts of the Continent with respect to the Holy Scriptures; and the very gratifying manner in which they had been supplied, through the medium of the Society; concluding with an affecting eulogium on the British liberality to foreign nations. The Rev. Mr Hughes took a cursory view of the Society in its origin, progress, and operation; and showed how admirably it was adapted to promote the glory of God, and the welfare of mankind. The Rev. Mr Owen entered at length into the Society's constitution, as associating, in the prosecution of one common object, all denominations of Christians; and concluded by an impressive appeal to the citizens of Bristol, on behalf of the parent institution, as calculated, by the support which they might give it, to place their religious reputation still higher than their commercial character stood,—to bring down blessings on themselves and on their children's children. A string of resolutions was then proposed, and unanimously adopted. Books were likewise opened for subscriptions; and more than £700 were immediately contributed. It was truly gratifying to witness the clergy, dissenting ministers, and laity of several denominations

of Christians, assembled on this interesting occasion, uniting in the common object with so much cordiality.

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## EDINBURGH BIBLE SOCIETY.

“—*My word—shall accomplish that which I please.*”— ISAIAH.

THE following list of prices at which the Edinburgh Bible Society sell their Bibles and Testaments to their subscribers, has lately been published. As it may serve to promote the object of the Society, we insert it for the benefit of such of our readers as may not have seen the advertisement.

List of Bibles and Testaments, at the Society's prices—sold, *to subscribers only*, at the Society's Depository, Messrs. Oliphant and Balfour, Hunter's Square.

ENGLISH—Brevier Testament, neatly bound in cloth, 12mo, 10d.—Ditto ditto, strongly bound in sheep, 12mo, 1s.—Ditto, ditto, in calf, 12mo, 1s. 6d.—Long Primer, Testament, in sheep, 8vo, 1s. 9d.—Ditto, ditto, in calf, 8vo, 2s. 3d.—Pica Testament, in sheep, 8vo, 2s. 6d.—Ditto, ditto, in calf, 8vo, 3s.—Nonpareil Bible, in calf, 12mo, 3s.—Minion Bible, in calf, 8vo, 4s. 4d.—Brevier Bible, in calf, 8vo, 5s. 3d.

All the above (together with the French books mentioned below) are printed by stereotype, under the direction of the University at Cambridge.

A Pocket Bible (Edinburgh Edition), fine paper, neatly bound in calf, to subscribers, so low as 3s. or with Psalms, 3s. 3d.

GÆLIC—Nonpareil Gælic Testament, strongly bound in sheep, crown 12mo, 10d.—Nonpareil Gælic Bible, strongly bound in calf, ditto, 3s. 3d.

DANISH—Long Primer Danish Testaments, 12mo, strongly bound in sheep, 1s. 6d.

DUTCH—Bourgeois Dutch Testament, 12mo, strong in sheep, 1s. 6d.

FRENCH—Brevier French Testament, 12mo, strong in sheep, 1s. 6d.

GERMAN—German New Testament, crown 8vo, bound, 1s. 6d.

*The Committee request, that all applications to the Depository, for Bibles and Testaments, be accompanied with payment, and that all orders from Subscribers who reside in the Country be post paid.*

The Society have already remitted £500 to the *British and Foreign Bible Society*, and £100 for the use of Ireland, to the *Hibernian Bible Society*. The Danish, French, and Dutch prisoners of war, confined at Greenlaw depot, have been supplied with the New Testament in their respective languages. Several of the Institutions in this city, viz. Bridewell, the Royal Infirmary, Lying-in Hospital, &c. have also been supplied, besides other cases which have been presented to the Society by petition. The state of our *Army and Navy*, with regard to the Scriptures, has also engaged the attention of the committee; and communications have been received from the parent institution. In consequence of the soldiers and sailors themselves having manifested a desire to procure Bibles, that Society have determined to furnish them with copies at the *reduced*, that is, *at Subscribers' prices*. And the Edinburgh Bible Society have resolved to extend this privilege to *Scotland*. Confidential persons at different sea-ports, will be appointed for the accommodation of ships of war, &c. where the sailors may apply; and a list of various military stations throughout the kingdom is now lying before the Committee, for the purpose of being attended to.

A Report is to be printed, to which will be annexed the names of the Subscribers, with their respective subscriptions, and a list of the collections, &c. received in the course of the year. Meanwhile, the Subscribers themselves, by using their privilege, in the purchase and distribution of English and Gaelic Scriptures, may materially promote the wishes of the Committee, and do essential service to the country at large.

*The Gaelic Scriptures are supplied to Ministers at the above prices for their respective Parishes or Congregations.*



## PHILADELPHIA BIBLE SOCIETY.

“—My word—shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it.”—

ISAIAH.

**B**Y the report of the Bible Society, in this place, May 1. 1809, it appears that they had purchased 1000 English Bibles, 300 English Testaments, and 500 German New Testaments; they had also ordered from Germany 300 German Bibles, and had directed that 100 French, 100 Welch, and 50 Gaelic Bibles should be imported from London.

A quantity of Bibles and Testaments were distributed among the Indians of two Christian congregations at Muskingam, in the destitute parts of Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey; and 100 were ordered to be sent to Canton, for the American sailors, and some to the slaves in Virginia.

The harmony with which Christians, of different denominations, united in prosecuting this object, afforded much satisfaction, as an approximation to that brotherly love among Christians which all good men so ardently desire. It is the opinion of the managers, that, in the present convulsed state of Europe, there is no place from which the light of divine truth may be sent forth more successfully to various parts of the benighted world, than from the city of Philadelphia.—The cash received by subscriptions, &c. to this infant institution, amounted to 2715 dollars.

The influence of the example of the Bible Society at Philadelphia, which was formed on the model of the British and Foreign Bible Society in London, has already produced a similar institution at Hartford, in Connecticut. Besides this, similar institutions have been formed for the state of Massachusetts, and the district of Maine; and it is expected that others also will soon be established in Georgia and South Carolina. May such societies “increase and multiply,” till the world is filled with Bibles! Amen and Amen!

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THE

# CHRISTIAN SELECTOR.

NO. VI.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27. 1810.

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## OBEDIENCE TO THE LAWS OF GOD THE SURE DEFENCE OF NATIONS.

*“ Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin, The Lord is with you; while ye be with him; and if ye seek him he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him he will forsake you.”* 2 CHRON. xv. 2.

(Continued from page 185.)

**H**AVING formerly endeavoured to consider what is that adherence or obedience to the laws of God, which, agreeably to divine institution, will insure to a nation the protection and blessing of heaven; let us now, in the

Second place, attend to the proof of this assertion; or to the proof, rather, of the general position—That righteous nations will be protected and prospered, and that impious nations will be destroyed.

The remark scarcely needs to be made; that I am not here to maintain that God will either protect a righteous, or destroy a wicked nation, by any miraculous exertion of his power, or in any other way than by the use of those means, and the operation of those causes, which, under the guidance of his providence, are naturally calculated, and best adapted to produce such an effect. No, my brethren—When nations, in the early stages of the world, could not be fully instructed

by experience in the principles of the divine government, because time for this experience had not yet been afforded; and that the most impressive proofs of the very truth which the text asserts might be furnished to all future times, God did, indeed, work *miracles* of salvation for the people who feared and served him, and *miracles* of destruction on those who departed from his laws. But as these examples are now furnished, and held up to our view, as sure indications of what we are to expect from the same source of justice from which they flowed, and as abundant experience has shown what is the settled order of the divine dispensation, miracle is not to be expected, because it is not necessary. There have been some instances, indeed, in every age, both of the deliverance and destruction of nations, in which the divine interference has appeared but little short of miraculous. Such events, however, are not to be reckoned on, though they may sometimes occur.

In general, if God intend to preserve a nation, he will either dispose others to be at peace with it, or he will stir up its inhabitants to a rational, vigorous and united exertion of their strength and means, to defend themselves; and these he will bless and crown with success. If he forsake a nation he will leave it to infatuated measures, to divided counsels, to supineness, to discord, treachery, and treason; or he will counteract its efforts, and thus effectually accomplish his designs of vengeance. Peace, health, and plenty, will be blessings flowing from his favour; sword, pestilence, and famine, will be the messengers of his wrath. Sometimes his hand will be invisible, and sometimes conspicuously displayed; but in either case its operations will be sure and irresistible, whether to defend or to destroy.

In establishing the point before us, the proof on which I propose principally to rely is of the historical kind. The principles of human nature and of society do indeed offer strong and conclusive evidence of the same truth, and these will be occasionally taken to our aid in answering objections to our doctrine. But these principles have been so often and so clearly explained and applied to this subject, that no-

thing seems capable of being added to what must already be familiar to you; and as the conclusions deduced from them have, notwithstanding, been lately denied by a daring spirit of innovation and infidelity, I think it most proper, in every view, to treat the subject historically, and to show that the theory we maintain is incontrovertibly supported by fact. In pursuing this design we assume it as a principle that the plan of Providence, or the divine government, is uniform in its execution, so that what hath happened in all time past, may be expected to happen in all time to come. Atheists and infidels may, indeed, deny that the course of human affairs is under the direction or providence of God; but they cannot, with even a shadow of truth or candour, deny the fact, that nations have actually stood or fallen by the test in question, nor can they easily resist the belief that the future will resemble the past.

To the faithful page of history then, let the impartial appeal be made. Let the Heathen, the Jewish, and the Christian nations pass in review before you, and you will find their prosperity or their adversity, meted to them by the measure we have examined. What was it that produced the most ancient and the most awful desolation and extinction of nations that the history of the world records? The sacred volume will inform you—"God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually—And the Lord said I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast—for the earth was filled with violence; And God looked upon the earth and behold it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth: And God said unto Noah—The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them, and behold I will destroy them with the earth." Let every believer in revelation mark the cause which inspiration here assigns, for bringing the waters of a flood on the world of the ungodly:—Let him mark and remember that it was for general corruption and impiety; and let this be in his mind, the attestation of unerring truth, that, at least, in one, and

that the most conspicuous of all instances, the Deity forsook and destroyed the nations—even all the nations of the earth—because they had forsaken him. Let it also be remembered, that this happened in the infancy of the world, for the express purpose that it might be a warning to every succeeding generation of men; and that no reason can be assigned, why the Deity should not be as much displeased with impiety now as then, nor why he should not punish the people who are guilty of it; though, for wise reasons, he may not use a miraculous but an ordinary method of chastisement.

But examples of the same import multiply upon us in perusing the sacred records. Why was it that “the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven, and overthrew those cities and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground?” It was “because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah was great, and because their sin was grievous”—Because nameless deeds of wickedness were perpetrated there, and ten righteous persons could not be found, as “the salt of the earth” to qualify its corruption, and to extinguish the fire of heaven. What was the cause of the destruction of the Canaanitish nations, whom the Lord drove out before the children of Israel? Was it the mere arbitrary pleasure of Jehovah to destroy them, that he might make room for the settlement of his chosen people? Such is the favourite but false representation of infidels. Hear the account of scripture, and observe, that it is held up as a warning to the Israelites themselves; “Defile not yourselves in any of these things; for in all these the nations are defiled that I cast out before you. And the land is defiled; therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall, therefore, keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth with you: For all these abominations have the men of the land done which were before you, and the land is defiled.” Why was it, that the awful “voice from heaven” said to the proud king of Babylon, “O king Nebuchadnezzar to thee it

is spoken—the kingdom is departed from thee; and they shall drive thee from men and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field!” It was that he might “know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will:—And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, and he doth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him—what dost thou?” Why was it that, to the son and successor of this haughty monarch, the appalling, unconnected, self moved hand, came forth, and wrote on the wall of his palace—“Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin—God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it; thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting: thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians?” It was because he had not “humbled his heart” in the contemplation of his father’s doom. “But had lifted up himself against the Lord of Heaven”—had profaned the vessels of his sanctuary—“and the God in whose hand his breath was and whose were all his ways he had not glorified”—Therefore “in that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain, and Darius the Median took his kingdom.”

These instances—so pointed and powerful that the aid of enforcement would but encumber them—demonstrating the truth on which I insist, are found in holy scripture; but observe that they all relate to Heathen nations, to nations that had no special revelation—had nothing but those great principles of religion and morality which the light of nature or the report of tradition taught, to guide them in the path of duty: And for the violation of these you have heard their destiny.

But if leaving the testimony of sacred, we resort to that of profane history itself, we shall find the same account. We shall find that when a nation of the heathen world regarded, in any tolerable degree, (for not one regarded in a high degree), the principles of religious and moral duty which I specified at the entrance, then they were most prosperous, and that when they wholly departed from these, then they were speedily destroyed. If the limits to which I am confined did



not forbid it, the task would not be difficult to evince, beyond all contradiction, from the most authentic accounts of these nations, that religion and morality, mistaken and imperfect as they were among pagans, were still their strength and security, and that a disregard to these always preceded their dissolution. The truth of this representation is recognized (it may be, some hundreds of times) by their own writers. The *fact* was so evident and notorious that it forced itself on observation, precluded denial, passed at length into one of those settled maxims of which there is neither doubt nor controversy, mingled itself with all their public instructions, and was regarded as essential in all their political institutions. The most learned and eloquent of the Roman philosophers and orators accounts for the superiority of the Roman state in language such as this, "We exceed not the Spaniards in number, nor the Gauls in strength, nor the Carthagenians in subtilty, nor the Greeks in arts, nor the Italians and Latins, who were the original inhabitants of this country, in natural strength of mind, but it is in piety and religion, in discerning that all things are directed and governed by the immortal gods, that we have excelled all the nations and people of the earth."\* Even a father of the Christian church† has this remark, "That God would not give heaven to the Romans, because they were heathen, but he gave them the empire of the world, because they were virtuous." A writer of a far different character‡ makes an extravagant assertion "That for several ages together never was the fear of God more eminently conspicuous than in the Roman republic." But he is strictly correct, when he says, "That religion produced good laws, good laws good fortune, and good fortune a good end in whatever they undertook." Nor are these observations less applicable to other nations of heathen antiquity. Consult the rise and fall of the Assyrian, the Persian, and the Macedonian empires, or of the free states of Greece, and you will find that their political prosperity waxed or waned very much by the measure of their religious and moral character. Their religion—I know and repeat it—was absurd, and their morals

\* Cic. de auzusp.

† St. Austin.

‡ Machiavel.

comparatively impure, but the *degree* of rectitude and purity which they possessed was their safety, and the contrary was their bane. I do not hold them up as objects to be envied, or as examples to be imitated in the gross. They became eventually the curses and scourges of the world; but they became so by their degeneracy, which proved in the end their own destruction, and—this is the point for which I contend.

In regard to the Hebrew nation, no man that has read his Bible can be ignorant, that it stood or fell by the rule that has been given. Its whole history, indeed, is, and was intended to be, little else than the history of the truth of the doctrine which I now maintain. When the people “served the Lord God of their fathers, with a perfect heart and with a willing mind:”—When they “did justly, loved mercy, and walked humbly with their God,” then they had rest; or if their enemies attempted to injure them, “one man chased a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.” On the contrary, when they forgot the Lord and walked after the imagination of their own evil heart, then they experienced every sore and destructive calamity; till at length they were completely removed out of their own land, subjected to a most humiliating captivity and bondage, while their country was ravaged and rendered desolate for the space of seventy years. The text is but a single instance, among passages innumerable, in which the general truths here stated were brought in the most striking manner to their remembrance. Read with attention the xxvi. chapter of the book of Leviticus, and you will there find specified at large, the promises and threatenings which the whole of their subsequent history demonstrates to have been strictly fulfilled. But the most awful example which the Jews offer to the world, is in the punishment which they received after their rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah, and the persecution of his apostles and disciples. An historian of their own nation,\* who was an eye-witness of what he records, gives such an account of the overthrow of their temple, city and nation, as has not its parallel in the annals of the world. It was accompanied by the most awful and ma-

\* Josephus.

nifest displays of the divine indignation, insomuch that Titus the Roman emperor confessed that it was the hand of God, rather than his own military prowess, that effected their destruction. From that time to the present hour, the Jews have been vagabonds over all the earth, furnishing a monument and miracle of the divine displeasure, against a nation that no mercies or judgments could reclaim.

If, turning from the Heathen and the Jews, we fix on the history of Christian countries, we shall find it still confirming the fact asserted, that when they have conformed to those principles of religious and moral duty, which constitute the rule of their obedience to God, they have been protected and prospered, and when they have thrown aside a regard to these, they have been blasted and cut off.

It was not till more than three centuries after the birth of our blessed Lord, that any state professed a national attachment to the religion which he taught. During this whole period, however, the light of that religion in all its purity, was diffused over many countries, and rendered them, in a degree, responsible for a conformity to it. The consequences of refusing to be guided and influenced by it have been awful indeed. The whole region of Asia Minor and of ancient Greece, where the most flourishing churches were planted by St Paul, have long since experienced the fulfilment of the threatenings which the beloved apostle was commissioned to denounce. Not only have the inhabitants of that region been deprived of the gospel which they abused, but, under the Mahomedan power, they have sunk into the most gloomy political bondage;—slavery and wretchedness have been brooding over them for more than a thousand years.

A similar fate was reserved for the Roman empire. Long had its impieties and prostrate morals been portending its fall. But when the bloody and relentless persecution, of the followers of Jesus, was added to its other crimes, the vengeance of heaven could no longer be delayed. A celebrated historian\* of this period, whose prejudice would not suffer him to learn

\* Gibbon—see his history of the decline and fall of the Roman empire, vol. i, at the end.

from it the truth of the christian system, intimates that there is reason to believe, that in one space of about fifteen years, "war, pestilence and famine, consumed the moiety of the human species." Under Constantine the Great the Roman empire became Christian; and then again her political power and internal happiness had a short revival. But in the revolution of a few years the corruptions of christianity debased and degraded the worship of God, rent and divided and dishonoured his church, and admitted of licentiousness in principle, and immorality in practice. Then desolation entered as a flood. An inundation of barbarians broke in upon the empire, razed it to the foundations, massacred its inhabitants, swept away every monument of grandeur, every achievement of art, every comfort of life; so that this period has obtained, descriptively, the appellation of *the dark ages*, and furnishes but scanty documents for its own history. To such a length, indeed, did barbarism and ignorance proceed, that for several centuries there was scarcely a term in the languages of Europe by which literature or learning could be expressed.\* This was the period in which all the abominations of Antichrist reigned without control. It was the period too in which human misery was at its height. During its continuance, several of the plagues and phials of wrath, predicted in the apocalypse, were emphatically *poured out*. The impostor Mahomet arose, and with sword and rapine extended his power, and established his superstition over a fourth part of the then discovered globe. The crusades, which the spiritual infatuation of the princes and nations of Europe carried on for a series of years, to dispossess the infidel Mussulmen of the holy land, beggared and depopulated the countries whence they proceeded, while oppression, rapacity and violence at home filled the cup of sorrow to the full. To recount the sufferings of those who bore the christian name, and subjected it to reproach by their follies, hypocrisies, impieties and vices, during this period, would carry me far beyond the proper bounds of this discourse. At length a glorious reforma-

\* See Robertson's preliminary discussion to his history of Charles the V.

tion began to dawn on the benighted and miserable nations. And then—let it be distinctly observed—then began, also, a melioration of their political state. To this reformation, beyond all question, as the fundamental and most efficient cause, has been owing the literary improvement, the civil happiness, and the general superiority of Europe over all the other people of the earth. Its influence, was by no means confined to those nations that were active in promoting it, but was greatly extended to those that contended against it. Power, tyranny and superstition, were obliged to relax their demands, and to assume a milder tone, to prevent the extension of that which they equally hated and feared.

We see, then, that the general aspect of the christian history confirms our position in the fullest manner. To descend to particulars, is forbidden by the limits to which I am confined. Let me, only, call your attention, for a moment, to the origin of that happy state of society which our own country has experienced, ever since our forefathers formed political establishments in it. Can any one deny that those establishments owe their excellence to the fervent piety and pure morals of their original founders? It is impossible to deny it. To christianity, in its genuine spirit, we have certainly been indebted for those civil institutions and those excellent social dispositions and habits, which have rendered our country the envy of the world, and which, if we are careful to maintain them, will be our glory and defence.\* Our defence they have certainly been in time past. From the first establishment of Christianity, agreeably to its original purity in these lands, till the present hour, the signal care of heaven, in preserving us from all the machinations of our

\* It requires the exercise of pity and of patience to hear an ignorant self-conceited infidel—as is often the case—endeavouring to cast contempt on the original establishments of this country, because they were not free from some imperfections, which were rather the errors of the age, than of the particular men or society, where they appeared. How might we crimson with blushes, if our pious ancestors had exhibited such scenes in their political institutions, as infidelity is now unfolding?



enemies, has been such as to confound unbelief itself, and to furnish a most comfortable illustration of the truth I inculcate. Often, very often, both in early and latter times, has the safety and salvation of our country been dependent on circumstances which no human means could manage or control, on events which no human power could produce, and on discoveries which no human wisdom could make. In all these cases, when standing on the brink of destruction, the good providence of God has interposed and saved us; so that it would seem as if it were only necessary that we should be in imminent danger, in order to see a wonderful interposition of the divine hand to deliver us from destruction—God of his mercy grant that the impieties which now prevail, may not change his dispensations toward us!

(To be Continued.)

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## THE RIGHTS OF GOD.

“Render—unto God, the things that are God’s.” MAR. xxii. 21.

(Continued from page 196.)

**S**UNDRY considerations press on the human mind God’s legislative character as an object of interesting meditation. If he be a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, he was certainly entitled to display, or give scope to the exercise of these perfections, in such a manner as he saw to be conducive to his own glory. To deny man, a similar right, is judged to be insupportable tyranny, why then should it be denied to God? Events have made it evident, that he saw it every way worthy his majesty, to command a multitude of creatures into existence. An act stupendous beyond conception! and if once his right to do so is admitted, his legislative character follows of course; so necessarily are these things connected, that no man of thought can conceive the existence of creation a moment, without the continued application of a system of



laws, suitable to regulate each of its component parts, and guide all their motions into one central point.

The existence and operation of these wise regulations, which render this world a comfortable habitation for all its inhabitants, is apparent every where we turn our eyes. And he that would not believe the testimony of day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, would not believe though one rose from the dead. To deny God's right of legislating over his creatures, is to assert that he never had any right to act at all. For if once his right to create be granted it will evidently follow that he behoved to govern the creatures made, conformable to some end, or else declare by his carelessness about them, that he made them in sport, and as a trial of his skill, and for no good, wise, or holy purpose. How horrid this blasphemy would be, is most evident. Though these remarks, being general, will apply to all these regulations under which inanimate, animal, or rational creatures are placed, yet it is principally to these moral regulations, unto which the moral nature of man was subjected, that we direct our present inquiries. And that such expressions of the moral nature of God have been made to man is clear, from his moral perceptive capacities. As well may we believe that the eye in animal nature, and the light in the heavens, have met and held sweet society together for thousands of years by chance, as believe a moral capacity in man, without moral objects with which it is designed to converse.

Man is distinguished in this property of his nature, from all inferior ranks of being, and is hereby enabled clearly to discover, that the Lord has required of him, that he should do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with his God. This power, like all others of a derived nature, must be governed, unless we suppose that it neither needs, deserves, nor admits of such rule; the absurdity of which supposition needs no remark.—The more of essence any creature possesses, it is the more capable of government. And according as dependant beings rise in the scale of excellency, legislative efficacy takes the more firm hold of their nature and operations. Will any man in his reason, say that moral nature, capable of

such extensive employment among God's works, needs not a government, sufficient to confine it within proper boundaries? The abuse of moral power has kindled the fires of hell, and still keeps them burning; and its proper application has embellished heaven with its most transparent lamps—in proportion as morality prevails on earth, it blossoms like the rose, and sends forth a scent like Lebanon. In proportion as it withers, this earth becomes desolate and bare, and puts on the attire of a mourner. Does not such a power need government? And when it is considered that a moral capacity in human nature, forms one of its principal ornaments, and is that wherein it makes its nearest approach to God, and on which he has spent much cost and pains since the world began, we will not think it unreasonable that it should be considered as a primary object of Divine legislative authority.

God's legislative right may also be argued, from his ends in creation. Whatever could move God to create, must move him to govern. It is a clear case, that creatures cannot exist a moment independent of their Creator, and consequently, cannot move on to their point of final destination without constant direction. It must therefore follow that either God had no end in view, in forming the beautiful fabric of nature, or that he has dropped the end, if ever he had any, or that he has missed the end and given over any farther prosecution thereof; or finally, that he had an end, that he has signified the same to his dependants, and will most certainly see to its accomplishment. It will be no difficulty with any pious mind, which of these suppositions ought to be adopted.

We may considerably strengthen this argument by taking into consideration the existence of civil society among men. Experience shows that this relation cannot exist, to any advantage, unless under the protecting shade of morality. An immoral society is a monster in nature; nor can any one, completely such, ever exist, even among the most barbarous nations on earth. If murder, perjury, and theft were legitimated, society must be speedily dissolved. And therefore all nations have found it necessary to encircle themselves within the inclosure of criminal codes of law, by which the lives

and properties of the community are preserved from the devouring jaws of these beasts of prey. God, the wise contriver of all things, has given such an order to the wheels of providence, especially in their motions through the human family and its concerns, that in proportion as the moral law incorporates its influences into the social compact of any collective society, that society enjoys happiness on earth, and progresses towards that which is better, beyond it. It is not to be concealed that our vicious nature, often thinks otherwise, and acts upon principles agreeable to its corrupt desires; but as certainly it follows, that such departures from the law of our natures draw after them national ruin, as has been verified in the history of all ages. The uniformity of similar effects following similar causes, clearly evidences this to be the constitution of heaven. These, therefore, who think or imagine they can perfect constitutions by abridging the moral law's operation in civil society, are mistaken in one of these points, wherein it is of the highest moment to be rightly informed. And if we admit moral considerations at all, to have a place in forming the bands of human society, no doubt then the more influences which are communicated thence, the social compact will be so much the stronger. So that it may appear from the impossibility of binding the human race together by any cords, but those of a moral nature, that God must have exercised his legislative right, in preparing that code by which our family may harmonize in the bonds of love, while sun and moon endure.

The conscience of man confirms this point, and declares him under law to God; else, whence arises the sense of blame, with which men are so severely lashed, notwithstanding all their pains to shield themselves therefrom, or cure the wounds when received. The instances of remorse which are on record, put it beyond a doubt that the heart of man by its constitution is rendered susceptible of such impressions. And however speculative and immoral men may, in their closets and upon paper, have attempted to reason themselves and others into a belief that there is no distinction between right and wrong, yet we see they have made no great progress in

bringing their proselytes to act up uniformly to such a principle. Who, in his reason, has ever been known to commend the murderer, that had just shed the blood of a father, or a child? Whoever beheld with transports of joy a beloved wife or daughter debauched before his eyes? It seems therefore, that however men may waft themselves on the wings of speculation, out of the regions of human intercourse and sensibility, when they descend and mingle in real life they cease not to feel, at least in cases interesting to themselves, as other men do, and to act on the same principles.

To this reasoning revelation sets its inviolable seal; and without doubt its testimony should be decisive. There is perhaps no one instance of all God's intercourses with man, in which he has been so abundantly and especially circumstantial in giving line upon line, and precept upon precept, as in the case before us. What is the whole Old Testament but a history of the giving of laws, the breaches made upon them, and the consequent punishment; or else of due obedience yielded thereunto, with the rewards annexed? The New, completes the business, by adding these sections which more immediately respect the methods by which God's law has been honoured, and its credit preserved, together with the functions which it continues to perform in the hearts of all who are redeemed from under its curse. As also what its office to eternity will be in and over these who remain destitute of a covering from its awful demands. Wise men will often read this law as recorded in the scriptures, and meditate upon it day and night. For men, favoured with the clear copy thereof in the volume of divine revelation, to reject this fountain of life, and go back to the dark and indistinct dictates of conscience, to regulate any part of human conduct, is an act of gross stupidity, utterly inconsistent with the christian character. It is to the law and testimony of God we must bring all actions and all relations; if they speak not according thereunto, it is because there is no light in them.

3. The third right of God, which I shall mention, is that of *punishing sin*. It may be called his punitive right. The existence of sin is essential to the exercise of this right, and

sin once existing, the exercise of this right becomes essentially necessary—I am not insensible that this last assertion has been much disputed; but it is not the less true on that account. Men whose hearts are corrupt, and who are thereby become enemies to God by wicked works, will endeavour to catch at every thing, however weak and visionary, that promises to screen them from the wrath of God and the Lamb. We had need, however, in all the fabrics of hope which we erect, to make truth the foundation, or else the consequence must be fatal in the end. If God has not a right of punishing the rebellious, his right of giving laws, is of little use, as the disobedient will not much care with how many laws they are loaded, if no penal effects are to ensue. But the design of the assertion now under consideration, is to go farther than simply to maintain, that punishing is not inconsistent with divine goodness. It goes farther than even asserting that God may punish, if he pleases, or not punish, that is, remit the punishment altogether. The intention of the remark is, *“that it is natural to God to punish sin.”* If the contrary of this is true, it might then follow, that a rational creature might revolt from its Maker, and continue to all eternity in that state, without ever being called to an account. How contrary this would be to all ideas we have been accustomed to entertain of good government, is too clear to require any illustration.

There is much reason to believe that mistakes about divine vindictive justice lie at the foundation of most heresies, with which the church has been pestered since the days of the apostles. Certain it is, that Socinians lay the denial of this divine attribute, at the foundation of their blasphemous doctrine about the divinity and atonement of Christ. There are a vast variety of considerations and distinctions on this subject, noticed and marked out by divines, of which we take no notice in this remark, especially as they are not so much disputed; and as the establishment of this point, establishes at the same time, most other truths with which the doctrine of divine justice is connected. Unless we will deny to God all liberty of acting, we must allow that he might exercise his



creative power in such manner as he judged agreeable to the honour of all his perfections. And he has chosen, in pursuance of this design, to create free, rational, accountable creatures. So doing, it was requisite, to answer the end of their being, that this end should be laid before them by sufficient intimations: this has been done. To the completing this directive manifestation of the divine will, it was necessary it should be armed with such penalties as might strongly operate on the creature by way of motive to obedience, at the same time fairly forewarning it of its impending fate, in case of failure. This law so given and so armed, being once violated, presented an object to divine justice with which it became necessarily concerned. And our assertion goes to prove, that under such circumstances, God necessarily behoved to punish sin: or in other words, that not to punish sin, under such circumstances would have been a violation of the divine honour; that honour with which he never can part, that honour upon which he never can possibly make the smallest infringement. That this sentiment is not an arbitrary or ungrounded assertion, will appear more clear if we impartially consider the following confirmatory considerations.

The scripture every where attributes justice to God, both in respect to the state of his mind, or nature intrinsically, and also in respect to his visible administrations. As to the internal state of the divine nature, the following places are clear. *“The Lord God—will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.”* *“Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.”* *“For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.”* Whence it appears if the hatred of sin in God is necessary, justice is equally necessary, because the hatred of sin is a constant disposition to punish, which cannot want its effect in him whose power is infinite. In creatures there may be indeed often aversion and hatred without punishment, either because our power is not adequate to the business, or because our doing so would infringe on the civil magistrate’s office;



but in God the thing is quite otherwise: he is possessed with infinite power and unlimited authority. If therefore he necessarily hates sin, he ought necessarily to punish it. And that he does necessarily hate sin, appears from his love of justice. As therefore he so necessarily loves justice that he cannot do the contrary, so he must of necessity hate sin and manifest his hatred by suitable acts. Nor is the scripture less full in declaring God's judicial character. "*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*" "*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men.*" "*It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them who trouble you.*"

The conscience of man, in all nations, speaks the same language; hence these awful extremities to which, often wicked men have been driven, under a sense of guilt; some to confess, even before public magistrates, at the expence of their lives; others have taken away their lives by violent hands, vainly hoping thereby to get rid of conscience; others have pined away in wretched anguish until death called them to Jehovah's august tribunal; others have invented human sacrifices, their own children not excepted, to appease their angry gods. These things clearly show the sense of divine justice which is impressed on the human heart.

We are led to the same views by the moral and ceremonial laws. The former is generally allowed to be founded in and agreeable to the nature of God. So that we can have no idea that it would have been equally agreeable to God our lawgiver, to have commanded the contrary of what we find contained in the ten precepts of the decalogue. Who can possibly believe that God might equally have chosen, without any infringement of his glory, to command men to murder one another, when he said, *Thou shalt not kill?* And if this law was founded in the nature of God, no doubt the sanction annexed is equally so: or in other words, we have every reason, that our understandings can receive, to believe that there is a natural connection between moral and physical evil, as also between moral and physical good, or between virtue and happiness. The whole tendency of the ceremonial law is to con-

firm the genuine language of the moral law. The latter says the soul that sins shall surely die; the former, by the whole retinue of its sacrificial representations, shows the necessity of an expiation of sin in order to the satisfaction of divine justice. Common sense must show that there was nothing of intrinsic value in these oblations which the ceremonial law required equal to purge away sin. Paul asserts this most explicitly, when showing the necessity of a more excellent sacrifice. His words to this purpose, are worthy of minute observation. He there says, "*it was impossible that the blood of bulls or of goats could take away sin.*" But why could not the blood of bulls and goats have taken away sin, without any thing of greater value, seeing they were offered by divine appointment, if the expiation of sin had depended upon a mere arbitrary act of the Divine will, and not upon the essential and immutable holiness and justice of his nature?

(To be Continued.)

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### LEICESTER BIBLE SOCIETY.

"He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth."— PSALMIST.

**A**N Auxiliary Bible Society has been formed at Leicester, on the same plan with that at Bristol, of which we gave an account in our last number. Thomas Babington, Esq. one of the members for the borough, has been chosen its president; and a committee has been appointed, whose labours have been successful in obtaining a very general support from the town and neighbourhood. An address has been circulated by the committee, which is drawn up with so much ability that we are induced to lay a part of it before our readers.

"Notwithstanding the diversity of sentiment which unhappily prevails among Christians, we may fairly presume on the concurrence of all parties and denominations in promoting a design so disinterested as that of diffusing the light of Revelation. In the prosecution of this design, our party is the world; the only distinction we contemplate is between

the disciples of revelation, and the unhappy victims of superstition and idolatry; and as we propose to circulate the Bible alone, without notes or comments, truth only can be a gainer by the measure. To those who confine their views to this country, the want of Bibles may not appear very urgent; but without insisting on the many thousands even *here*, who are destitute of them, it is certain, that in Pagan, Mahometan, and Popish countries, they are extremely rare, and their number totally inadequate, not merely to supply the immense population in those parts, but even the increasing demand which a variety of circumstances have combined to produce. To supply this demand, to whatever extent it may be carried, is the aim of the Society in London, with which this is designed to co-operate. Their ambition, as far as it may please Providence to smile upon their efforts, is, by imparting the Holy Scriptures, to open the fountain of revelation to all nations. It was natural and necessary for the first movement in so great an enterprize, to commence at the heart of the empire, nor is it less so, that, having commenced there, it should propagate itself through the larger vessels and arteries to the remotest extremities of the body. We have the pleasure of perceiving that the example of the metropolis has been followed in several of our principal towns and cities; and there is room to hope that similar institutions will, ere long, be formed in every part of the kingdom. Nor has the emulation excited been confined to this nation and its dependencies: societies of the same description have been formed at Philadelphia, at Berlin, and at Basle; each of which derives support and assistance from the original one established in the metropolis of Great Britain."

"In whatever light we consider the British and Foreign Bible Society, it appears to us replete with utility. Its formation will, we trust, constitute a new æra in the history of religion, which may be styled the Æra of Unanimity. It affords a rallying point for the piety of the age, an unsuspecting medium of communication between the good of all parties and nations, a centre of union and co-operation in the advancement of a common cause, which cannot fail to allay

the heats, and smooth the asperities of discordant sentiment. By giving the most effectual aid to means already set on foot for the conversion of Pagan nations, it also promises to accelerate the period when truth shall become "*victorious in the earth.*"—What incalculable benefits may be expected to result from the completion of such a plan! Wherever the Scriptures are generally read, the standard of morals is raised, the public mind is expanded, a spirit of inquiry excited, and the sphere of intellectual vision inconceivably enlarged. While they contribute most essentially to the improvement of reason, by presenting to its contemplation the noblest objects, they aid its weakness, and supply its deficiencies, by information beyond its reach. If "*to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent,*" be, as our Saviour assures us, "*eternal life,*" to adopt effectual measures for imparting that knowledge, must be allowed to be the most genuine exercise of benevolence. It is to be lamented that Protestant nations have been too long inattentive to this object: we rejoice to find that they are now convinced of their error, and that, touched with commiseration for the unhappy condition of mankind, they are anxious to impart those riches which may be shared without being diminished, and communicated without being lost to the possessor. Such is the felicity of religion; such the unbounded liberality of its principles. Though we should be sorry to administer fuel to national vanity, we cannot conceal the satisfaction it gives us to reflect, that while the fairest portion of the globe has fallen a prey to that guilty and restless ambition which, by the inscrutable wisdom of Providence, is permitted for a time to take peace from the earth, this favoured country is employed in spreading the triumphs of truth, multiplying the means of instruction, and opening sources of consolation to an afflicted world. In these eventful times, so pregnant with difficulty and danger, we consider this as affording a most favourable omen of the ultimate intentions of Providence respecting this nation."

## BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

*An Extract from the Sixth Report of their Committee.*

*Wednesday, 2d May 1810.*

**Y**OUR Committee have now to lay before the Members of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Report of their Proceedings during the sixth year of its institution.

Resuming the narrative of their Foreign Correspondence from the information in their last Report, your Committee have the satisfaction to state, that the measures adopted by them for promoting an edition of the Scriptures in the Polish language, through the agency of the Bible Society at Berlin, have proved successful. In consequence of the remittances made for this purpose, by the British and Foreign Bible Society, the first sheet of the Old Testament issued from the press in April of the last year; and with a view to give publicity to the undertaking, and to show the mode in which it was executed, copies of it were sent to all the principal Protestant congregations in Poland.

The latest intelligence from the Bible Society at Berlin, respecting the progress of this work, is contained in two letters, dated the 11th of December, 1809, and the 20th of March, 1810. From these it appears, that the proposed Edition, comprising 8,000 copies of the whole Bible, and 4,000 extra copies of the New Testament, had then been advanced to the beginning of the Prophecy of Daniel, and there was every reason to expect that the work would be prosecuted to its conclusion with all possible expedition. As the Berlin Society depended on returns from the sale of Bibles in Poland, for fulfilling its engagements with the printer, and as there was reason to apprehend that such returns might not be made in due time for this purpose, your Committee readily acceded to a proposition of the Society at Berlin, for a loan, if necessary, to be advanced after the Polish Bible should be completed, under a condition of re-payment from the sale of that work.

The preceding intelligence was accompanied by a representation, that copies of the Bible in Lithuania, from their



great scarcity, bore a most exorbitant price, and that the people of that country were in a still more impoverished state than even the inhabitants of Poland, and of course more incompetent to provide a new edition of the Scriptures, which was much wanted, from their own resources. Your Committee, deeming this a case which particularly required the assistance of the British and Foreign Bible Society, determined to grant it; they recommended the formation of a Committee at Koningsberg for the express purpose of printing a Lithuanian Bible, and authorized such Committee to draw on the British and Foreign Bible Society for the sum of £300 in aid of that work.

In another letter from Berlin, dated the 27th of February last; it is stated, that the Lithuanian nation contains upwards of a million of people, many of whom are truly pious, but very poor; and that one of the principal clergymen has caused it to be published from all the pulpits belonging to Prussian Lithuania, that a new edition of the Lithuanian Bible was about to be printed, and invited the members of the different congregations to become subscribers to this work. In consequence of which several hundreds had already given in their names.

Your Committee have the satisfaction to report the receipt of two letters from the German Bible Society at Basle, one dated the 1st of July, 1809, and a second of the 4th of April, 1810. The contents of both are interesting. The first confirms the intimation in your Committee's last Report, of the probability of a second edition of the German Bible, by stating, that it had been actually completed, and a third begun. In consequence of further information contained in this letter, your Committee were induced to remit to the Society at Basle the sum of £200 for the purchase of French Bibles and Testaments, for sale or gratuitous distribution in France, with a view to the particular accommodation of large Protestant Congregations in Languedoc and other parts.

The second letter thankfully acknowledges the receipt of this remittance, and communicates the following interesting intelligence.



That four thousand copies of the New Testament, in French, had been purchased, and sent to different depots, in Montbeliard, Nismes, and other places in France. From several parts in the south-eastern provinces of that country, authentic accounts had been received, that many Roman catholics requested copies of the New Testament, and had perused them with great eagerness and gratitude. The Romanese Testament, referred to in the last Report of your Committee, and stated to have been undertaken by a Society of active Christians at Basle, for the benefit of the Mountaineers in the Grisons, had been completed, and received with extraordinary joy by that poor people.

To the preceding information it was added, that a Member of the Basle Society had engaged to print 4,000 Copies of the *Old Testament* in French, on condition that the Committee would agree to take 1,000 of them, and that this work had already advanced to the third sheet: and further, it appeared that there were two distinct dialects in use among the inhabitants of the Grisons, and that for the accommodation of all, it was desirable that the New Testament should be printed in both dialects.

Your Committee, therefore, anxious to encourage these important undertakings, both with respect to France and the Grisons, resolved to assist the Society at Basle with a grant of £300 for the first object, and of £200 for the second.

It is important to observe, that but for such a medium as the German Bible Society affords, no communication could have taken place between the British and Foreign Bible Society and any part of France.

Your Committee have next to advert to their Correspondence with the Evangelical Society at Stockholm. In their last Report, they stated, that the sum of £300 had been remitted to that Society for the purpose of enabling it to undertake an edition of the New Testament on standing types. Encouraged by this remittance, the Society proceeded immediately to the execution of the work. The first sheet was printed in May; and by intelligence, dated March 23, 1810,

it appears the last sheet had left the press; and that a second edition of 4,000 Copies would be immediately undertaken.

A very satisfactory specimen of it has been received by your Committee. It will be gratifying to the British and Foreign Bible Society to be informed, that without its timely assistance the accomplishment of this work must have been considerably delayed.

Your Committee naturally entertained hopes, that an edition of the Old Testament in Swedish might also be printed; and it was therefore with much satisfaction they learnt, that the Evangelical Society at Stockholm had anticipated their expectations by a proposal to undertake it. Nor was that Society wanting in its exertions to procure the necessary funds for this purpose, by a public solicitation of pecuniary contributions. It was, however, apparent, that, on account of the impoverishment occasioned by the war, the solicited assistance would not prove equal to the expenses of the undertaking; and that the assistance of the British and Foreign Bible Society would still be required to forward the execution of it. In this conviction, and anxious to gratify the poor inhabitants of Sweden, with a new edition of the whole Bible, your Committee determined to assist the Evangelical Society with a further grant of £300; and they have the satisfaction to add, that, in consequence of this donation, the work was immediately begun, and Michaelmas 1811 is assigned as the expected period for its completion. The amount of contributions in Sweden, considering the pressure of the times, has indeed exceeded all expectation, but it has by no means proved sufficient to render the assistance of the British and Foreign Bible Society superfluous.

Your Committee have also availed themselves of the assistance of the Evangelical Society at Stockholm, to print, at the expense of the British and Foreign Bible Society, a New Testament in the dialect of Lapland, for the benefit of the inhabitants of that country. The necessity of this work (as the former edition of 1755 was entirely exhausted) and the despair of accomplishing it were forcibly pointed out to two Correspondents of your Committee, by Bishop Norden, at

Tornea. It appeared also, that in his diocese, which comprises the north of Sweden and Swedish Lapland, there were about 10,000 Laplanders, unacquainted with any language but that of their own country. The Bishop himself has undertaken to superintend the publication; and the sum of £250 has been voted for an edition of 3,000 Copies of the New Testament. A specimen of this work has been received by your Committee, who have reason to believe, that it is by this time considerably advanced.

The safe arrival, and due distribution of the Bibles sent by your Committee for the use of the German Colonists on the Banks of the Wolga, have been acknowledged by the Rev. Mr Hiemer, another Pastor of a German Congregation in that quarter, who distributed part of them, and adds his testimony to that of the Rev. Mr Huber in Catharinenstadt, that the present was received with the most lively emotions of gratitude. The second supply voted to them by your Committee has probably reached them by this time.

Your Committee having learnt that the edition of the Arabic Bible, printing under the patronage of the Bishop of Durham, was considerably advanced, regarded this undertaking as one in which the funds of the Society would be with the strictest propriety employed. They therefore resolved, that the sum of £250 should be granted in aid of this work, and that the Society should take 500 copies of the same at the selling price, when the impression shall have been completed.

Your Committee have now to advert to the transactions of the Society with India. On this subject it is only necessary to report, that the Corresponding Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Bengal, have availed themselves of the pecuniary aid, furnished for promoting the translation and printing of the Scriptures in the dialects of Hindustan; these translations are proceeding in the most extensive manner, by various hands. Official accounts of the manner in which the Society's funds have been applied in promoting these translations, have been announced, as transmitted by the Corresponding Committee, but have not yet been received. Copies of the New Testament in Sanscrit, and of the four Gos-

pels in Hindustanee; printed by the Missionaries at Serampore, have been presented to your Committee; and a bill for £1000, drawn upon your Society, and subscribed by all the Members of the Corresponding Committee at Calcutta, has been duly honoured.

Under the head of Foreign Connexions, it only remains briefly to report some very interesting information respecting Ceylon, for which your Committee are indebted to Sir Alexander Johnstone, who is lately returned from that island. The number of natives there, subject to the British Government, is computed at a million and a half; their languages are the Cingalese and Tamul. Nearly the first three books of the Old Testament, and the whole of the New, have been translated into the Cingalese, and printed at Columbo, at the charge of Government, for the purpose of supplying the natives professing Christianity, who are said to be very numerous. It was further stated, that the means of printing at Columbo were very limited, and that it was desirable they should be extended.

This information naturally suggested to your Committee, a desire to supply the inhabitants of Ceylon more extensively with the Holy Scriptures; and the question which occupied their consideration was, whether this could be most advantageously done, by printing a Cingalese edition of the Scriptures in this country, or by affording such assistance as might facilitate the means of printing them on that island. Your Committee have not yet obtained sufficient information on this interesting subject to enable them to adopt a determination upon it; but have taken the means to procure it, by directing inquiries to be made in this country, and by opening a Correspondence for the same purpose, both with Holland and Ceylon.

The last Report of your Committee noticed the institution of a Bible Society at Philadelphia, and expressed their hopes, that similar establishments would be formed throughout the several States in the American Union. These expectations have not been disappointed. Two Societies have been established at New-York: one under the denomination of "The

Young Men's Bible Society," and another under the designation of the "New York Bible Society." The latter, of which the Rev. Dr Livingston is President, owes its origin professedly "to the laudable example of the British and Foreign Bible Society;" and it has applied to your Committee for "information, counsel, and aid." To encourage and assist the exertions of this new institution, a grant of £100 has been made to it by your Committee, who have also deemed it advisable to recommend the incorporation of the two Societies into one Institution.

Your Committee have also received intelligence, that Bible Societies have been formed in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Jersey, and for the district of Maine; the particulars of the institutions at the two last mentioned places have not reached them; but they possess printed accounts of the Constitution of the Societies at Connecticut and Massachusetts, and have presented the former with a donation of £50 and the latter with £100 in aid of its funds.

Of the probable utility of these several Associations, a satisfactory idea may be formed from the intelligence which has been transmitted from America, expressing, that the demand for Bibles, since the commencement of the distribution of them by the Society at Philadelphia, has exceeded all expectation.

Your Committee, having thus summarily reported the most material of their foreign transactions, will proceed to state the occurrences of the last year, within the United Kingdom, in connexion with the British and Foreign Bible Society.

On this occasion it is impossible to pass unnoticed an event which has filled your Committee with the deepest regret, the death of one of the Vice-Presidents of the Society, the lamented and most respected late Bishop of London. They are persuaded that every Member of the Institution will cordially sympathise with them on this expression of their feelings, as a tribute no less due to the public and private virtues of that venerable Prelate, than to the station which he held in this Society.



The Domestic Occurrences, with a view to a clearer elucidation of them, may be conveniently arranged under the following heads:

- First, New Editions of the Scriptures printed in England.
- Second, Auxiliary Bible Societies instituted since the last General Meeting.
- Third, Distribution of Bibles and Testaments: and
- Fourth, Donations to the Funds of the Society.

Under the first head, your Committee have to report, that the edition of the New Testament in Ancient and Modern Greek in parallel columns, commenced in the last year, is nearly completed; and that the Dutch and Danish Testaments, announced in the former Report as being in the press, are now in circulation.

Your Committee have also to report their Resolution to print a Version of the New Testament in the Irish language.

This Resolution has not been adopted without much deliberation, and after the most minute inquiry into the expediency of it. The doubts on this subject, which have long delayed the execution of the work,\* are not new, as the question respecting the use of the Bible and Liturgy in the Irish tongue, was amply discussed in a Convocation held at Dublin so long ago as 1634. It was then decided in the affirmative; and the arguments admitted in favour of the proposition did not appear to your Committee to have lost their weight, when considered as applicable to the question at this time.

Your Committee will not enter into a recapitulation of them: it will be sufficient to state, that as there are still many Irish who may be induced to read the Scriptures in their own language, but who might not be disposed to read them in the English or in the Gaelic, there is reason to believe that the demand for them on this account will be sufficient to justify the experiment. The Version published by Bishop Bedell has been adopted by your Committee, for the edition now preparing, consisting of 2,000 copies of the New Testament.

The Society is not uninformed, that a Mission has been for

\* Vide Fourth Report.



these forty years past established on the Coast of Labrador, for the purpose of instructing the Esquimaux in the Christian religion. To facilitate these charitable labours, your Committee have printed a Version of the Gospel of St John in the Esquimaux language, and have further agreed to print the Gospel of St Luke. These works have been placed under the superintendance of the Rev. Mr Kohlmeister, a Missionary lately returned from Labrador, and, by a residence there of eighteen years, well acquainted with the Esquimaux language.

Your Committee will next advert to the second head of arrangement, the Auxiliary Bible Societies which have been established since the last General Meeting.

To expatiate on the advantages derived from these Associations would be superfluous: it may, however, be briefly remarked, that while they exhibit a most decisive approbation of the principle on which the British and Foreign Bible Society was formed, they afford the most efficacious means, by local and combined exertions, of promoting the great object of its institution.

The rules and regulations under which the Auxiliary Bible Societies have been constituted, will appear in the Appendix to this Report. It will be only necessary to state, that the principal aim of all is the same as that of the Parent Institution; and that their design is to promote the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, either by direct contributions to the Funds of the British and Foreign Bible Society, or by the local application of such portion of their means as circumstances may require, for the furtherance of this important object. The following is the enumeration of those Auxiliary Societies which have been added in the course of last year to the Associations and Societies in London, Glasgow, Birmingham, Greenock, Reading, and Nottingham, of which accounts have been given in former Reports.

1. "The Bible Society of Newcastle upon Tyne and its Vicinity," under the patronage of the Bishop of Durham.
2. "The Penryn and Falmouth Society."
3. "The Leeds Auxiliary Bible Society." This Institu-

tion was established at Leeds on the day of the National Jubilee, with the double object, of supplying the poor with Bibles and Testaments, and of aiding the British and Foreign Bible Society.

4. "The Manchester and Salford Auxiliary Bible Society." President, the Rev. Dr Blackburne, Warden of Manchester. The comprehensive scale on which this Society has been formed, and the zealous co-operation in which the several members of it have united to carry into effect the object of its establishment, give it peculiar claims on the respect and gratitude of the Parent Institution.

5. "The Devon and Exeter Bible Society." President, Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, Bart.

6. "The Leicester Auxiliary Bible Society." President, T. Babington, Esq. M. P.

7. "The Auxiliary Bible Society at Kendal and its Vicinity." President, the Rev. M. Murfitt, Vicar of Kendal.

8. "The Bible Society at Sheffield and its Vicinity." President, the Right Hon. Earl Fitzwilliam.

9. "The Bible Society at Hull." President, Sir Henry Etherington, Bart.

10. "The Bristol Auxiliary Bible Society," instituted under the patronage of the Right Rev. the Bishop of Bristol.

To promote the formation of this Society, the Bishop was pleased to address a circular letter to the Rev. the Clergy of his Diocese, stating "his hearty approbation of the measure, and that it would afford him the greatest pleasure to see it carried into execution."

The zeal and alacrity exhibited by Christians of all denominations to second the Bishop's recommendation, the number and respectability of the Members of this new Institution; the magnitude of their Contributions and Annual Subscriptions, prove the deep interest excited at Bristol for the success of the British and Foreign Bible Society, in disseminating the Holy Scriptures.

Your Committee have the pleasure to add, that the Bishop of Bristol is the President of it, and that he has also ho-

noured the British and Foreign Bible Society, by consenting to be one of its Vice-Presidents.

While your Committee particularize, with such peculiar marks of commendation, the Societies which have been formed at Bristol and at Manchester, they desire to be understood, as entertaining the most unfeigned respect and gratitude for those exertions which have been made by the other Auxiliary Societies, and which promise to aid, in so material a degree, both the funds and the operations of the Parent Institution.

Nor have the friends of religion in Scotland been inactive in promoting Associations for the furtherance of the same object. In that part of the United Kingdom, three new Bible Societies have been formed:—

1. “The Edinburgh Bible Society,” President, the Right Hon. Lord Cathcart.

2. “The East Lothian Bible Society;” and,

3. “The Scottish Bible Society,” by the Ministers of the Presbytery of Edinburgh.

From the co-operation of the first of these in undertaking to supply the Military with Bibles, and charging itself with the distribution of the Gaelic Bibles in the Highlands, on the behalf of the British and Foreign Bible Society, your Committee hope to receive the most useful assistance.

In Ireland, the Hibernian Bible Society, which has been already mentioned in the former Reports of your Committee, under the most respectable patronage of the Primate, and other distinguished Personages, has directed its attention to the introduction of the Institution into different parts of the country, by the establishment of Branch Societies, and several have been accordingly formed. In Dungannon, under the patronage of Lord Viscount Northland; in Armagh, under the Primate; in New Ross, and in other places. From these Branch Societies of the Hibernian Bible Society, the same co-operation may be expected as from the Auxiliary Bible Societies established in England.

To assist the efforts of the Hibernian Bible Society in the distribution of the Holy Scriptures, your Committee have voted to it a grant of £500; and it is with the greatest satisfac-

tion they also report, that a donation of £200 has been made to the same Institution by the Edinburgh Bible Society. The grant from your Society has been acknowledged in the Report of the Hibernian Bible Society, accompanied with the gratifying statement, that the issue of Bibles and Testaments from their Institution during the last twelve months, has nearly doubled that of the former years, amounting to 9034 Bibles and Testaments.

Your Committee have also granted a second Donation of £100 to the Cork Bible Society, and by the Report of that Institution, very recently received, have the satisfaction to learn, that its funds and operations are very greatly extended.

Your Committee, having been informed, that the Bible Committee of the Synod of Ulster were making great exertions in disseminating the Holy Scriptures in Ireland, presented that body with a donation of £100 to assist its charitable efforts; and they have heard with pleasure, that the Committee alluded to has raised very large contributions within the bounds of the Synod, for the distribution of Bibles and Testaments to the poor of the respective congregations.

It is matter of real gratification to observe, that the assistance so liberally granted to Ireland, has stimulated the friends of religion in that country to a degree of zeal and activity, from which, under the Divine blessing, the best consequences may be expected.

*(To be Continued.)*

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## EDINBURGH BIBLE SOCIETY.

*First Report of their Committee. Friday, 11th May 1810.*

**I**N conformity with the design of this Anniversary, the Committee of management have now to present their first annual Report.

It must afford matter for no common gratitude, that the British and Foreign Bible Society has excited such universal attention and deep interest. It was established in London

during the year 1804, and the Edinburgh Bible Society may, with much propriety, be said to owe its very existence, if not its increasing prosperity, to the spirit and previous labours of that noble Institution. Your Committee on this account will be excused from enlarging in its praise. They only add, as their own opinion of that Society, in the words of their Sixth Report, (about to be read at this meeting) that, "like the great rivers of the earth, which fertilize regions far distant from the soil in which they take their rise, it has diffused the waters of life to the remotest realms, and has held out an invitation to every accessible part of the globe, *Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.*"

At the commencement of the Edinburgh Bible Society, it became the business of your Committee to make it extensively known. Having communicated with the British and Foreign Bible Society, they received letters from their Secretaries full of cordiality and satisfaction. To interest the public mind, several thousand copies of an address were dispersed, not only in this city and suburbs, but in the surrounding country.

In laying before the Members of this Society a statement of proceedings, the Committee begin with their measures at home. The prisoners of war confined at Greenlaw depot were among the first objects who engaged their sympathy. These, chiefly of the Danish nation, amounted to between five and six hundred. They were visited by a deputation of your Members. One single copy of the Danish Bible was found among them, "which," said the owner, "had been saved out of many other things which he had lost." The letter of introduction to a confidential person among the prisoners, (a captain,) with which your Committee was favoured, and the letter of thanks and request, received after they were furnished with Testaments in their own language, rendered this service very pleasing. French and Dutch Testaments have also been distributed.

The Committee have not been inattentive to the distribution of the Scriptures in our own neighbourhood. Although Scotland in general may be considered as more fully supplied



with Bibles than any other country upon earth, and this city in particular seemed to require but little aid from your Committee; they felt the importance of investigation, and stood ready to answer every demand. Many, if not most of our deficiencies, were likely to exist in the families visited by the Destitute Sick Society. The gentlemen belonging to that institution having therefore been so obliging as to make inquiry throughout their various districts, (comprehending the city and suburbs,) only 25 families out of more than 70 were found destitute of the sacred Scriptures.—Happy were it for this capital if the *disposition to peruse* that sacred volume prevailed wherever it is possessed! Your Committee accordingly furnished the Destitute Sick Society of Edinburgh, and also that of Leith, with Bibles for distribution among the poor; and they will continue to do so when it seems necessary. Bibles of different sizes have been furnished for the use of the convicts in Bridewell, who were formerly only possessed of Testaments. The Royal Infirmary, the Lying-in Hospital, and the African Institution in this city, have been supplied. The Committee were also gratified in answering one petition relating to the military in Lanarkshire, and another to poor children at school in the north of Scotland.

Your Committee having had some correspondence with the British and Foreign Bible Society, relative to the army and navy, have, with much satisfaction, undertaken to promote the resolution of that establishment, by supplying the seamen and military in Scotland with Bibles and Testaments at *reduced*, that is, at *Subscribers' prices*. Several gentlemen in different parts, (members of this Society,) have kindly undertaken to answer applications in their town and neighbourhood. The East Lothian Bible Society have laudably engaged to attend to the soldiers in Haddington and its vicinity; and should their funds, upon any occasion, prove inadequate to the demand, they are to apply for aid to this institution. An address from your Committee to sailors, and another to soldiers, have been circulated, and will be widely dispersed upon every convenient occasion.

The Committee, wishing to relieve the parent establish-



ment of every unnecessary burden, proposed to charge themselves with the distribution of the Gælic Scriptures on their behalf, which service they thankfully accepted. It has, therefore, been intimated, that any persons who wish to purchase these Scriptures upon that Society's terms, may apply to your depository in this city, or to Messrs Lewis Grant & Co. Inverness. Those who have any information to present relating to this subject in general, will communicate with any of your Secretaries.

The foreign seamen who frequent the port of Leith, appeared to be persons well deserving the attention of this Society.—Upon being visited in a friendly manner, sailors of five different nations were found among them. A Bible or Testament was occasionally produced, but in general they were very destitute of the Scriptures. The Committee having good encouragement to make a trial, copies of the New Testament in German, Dutch and Danish, have been lodged with Members of the Society at Leith, to sell at reduced prices, so low as 1s. 6d. each. A hand bill in these languages is about to be circulated among the foreign vessels.

An institution in the metropolis, engaged in the sale, as well as the gratuitous distribution of the Holy Scriptures, is evidently called upon to present every encouragement to this country in general. Your Committee, therefore, resolved to issue a circular letter, recommending the adoption of *Assistant or Auxiliary Bible Societies in the principal towns of Scotland*. If such associations are formed, they will have a tendency to unfold the real condition of this part of the United Kingdom, and lead to more extended sympathy for heathen nations.

Consequences unforeseen by us, of a beneficial nature, may also result from the commencement of another Society, which has been formed in this city by ministers belonging to the Presbytery of Edinburgh,—The Scottish Bible Society. Though it were undoubtedly to have been wished, that the two Societies had found it within their plan to have united their efforts, and formed only one institution for this city, yet as that was prevented by circumstances which it is unneces-

sary to particularize, your Committee have only to express their sincere wishes for the prosperity of this other Society, and for their extensive usefulness in promoting the great object in view,—the circulation of the Scriptures.

The Committee have now to mention their several donations during the year. To the parent establishment, the British and Foreign Bible Society, who deserve most ardent and unabating support from all subordinate institutions, your Committee have remitted £800.—And £200 to the Hibernian Bibernian Bible Society, for whom this Committee feel much respect, on account of their active zeal in Ireland. To promote the translations of sacred Scripture into various languages of the Eastern world, £200 have been paid to the Baptist Missionary Society. And £100 have been voted to assist in printing the Bible in the Icelandic.

Here the Committee of management close the account of their transactions for the past year. They have, without doubt, been greatly animated by the prompt and generous assistance received from christians of every denomination. The Society, with a broad and extensive field of usefulness in view, has been cheered, even in the days of its infancy, with the most encouraging prospects.

Your Committee are now, therefore, desirous of proceeding with renewed vigour, and wish that the year upon which we are about to enter may be still more auspicious than the first. They hope it will not cease to be duly considered by all, that the parent establishment not only requires a continuance, but an enlargement of our bounty. In their report for this year, after mentioning the addition made to the funds of the Society, it is said, “ that the necessary expenditure for promoting the object of its institution is also great and accumulating.—The loss incurred by accommodating Subscribers with Bibles and Testaments, at reduced prices, which was originally intended to be *one-fifth* of the cost, partly by the disposition of the Committee to fix the lowest terms, and partly by the enhancement in the price of paper and printing, has now become *two-fifths*; and the annual amount of the loss, which will probably increase, has been considerable.

The claims, (they add,) on the benevolence of the Society, for which no returns are made, and which your Committee feel the strongest disposition to gratify, in the greatest possible extent, are also numerous and increasing." Indeed they have repeatedly affirmed, that "they see *no other limit* to the beneficial operation of the institution, than that which *its funds* may prescribe."

The Committee of management appointed by the Edinburgh Bible Society, will be happy to exert themselves in aiding more fully the parent institution, and in circulating the Holy Scriptures at home; but they wish that every constituent Member of the Society should consider himself a party concerned, and engage in the eager pursuit of our professed object. Let Subscribers interest their respective friends in the design of the institution, and use their privilege in the purchase and distribution of Scripture; and the happiest effects will be the consequence. Let it be remembered, we are only acting in conformity to the spirit which prevailed at the morning of the reformation, when the Bible was given to the common people in the vulgar tongue. If that spirit has revived, it is of great importance, not only to set out early in the morning, but also to make the most of the day. In sending the sacred volume into all the world, we cannot be considered as engaged in a work of supererogation. We are only doing to other nations, what we would that they should do to us, were we in their forlorn condition: and as it is "more blessed to give than to receive," the inhabitants of the United Kingdom are to be congratulated while thus employed. Not a few, besides, will find themselves great gainers in supporting such measures. Their effects, at least, will enable many more easily to receive, in their full import, the glowing predictions of divine relation; since at no remote period the very ends of the earth may be thus brought within the limits of Messiah's kingdom. Though the heathen are yet sitting in darkness, they reside, *it now appears*, in a land of promise! What Canaan of old was to the father of the faithful, the whole world itself will be to Immanuel: and if the divine Being crown the labours of our day with his blessing, the possession will at last be transferred to its rightful owner.

Many, we are aware, may see nothing interesting in the rise and progress of these Bible Societies; but they are not, on this account, left to toil in the service of indifferent or ungrateful recipients. As the actual state of mankind has unfolded itself to our view, the cries of the nations have been heard for the bread of life, and there is no reason to fear that they will be heard in vain. It is a most surprising and animating symptom in modern times, and one to which your Committee requests particular attention, that the *zeal to circulate*, and the *anxiety to receive*, the sacred volume, seem to have commenced at the same period, and they increase in similar proportions!

If we deprecate a famine of the word of God, as the greatest of all calamities, surely its dispersion, and the disposition to diffuse it, is a most unequivocal token for good; but when to this is joined the eager anxiety displayed by many to obtain, and their gratitude and joy upon receiving the Scriptures, we are confirmed in our expectation of something great, if not something wholly unprecedented.

The Committee cannot, therefore, conclude this Report, without expressing their earnest desire that the divine blessing may descend and rest upon the labours of all the various Bible Societies in existence. May they be favoured to prepare the nations for that glorious day, when "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, when the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; when the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and *all flesh shall see it together*, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

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### THE POPEDOM.

**B**Y a decree of the Conservative Senate of France, the state of Rome is united to the French empire. The city of Rome is to be the second city of the empire, and shall enjoy peculiar privileges; and the Prince Imperial is to assume the title and receive the honours of the King of Rome. And

after having been crowned at Paris, the emperors shall, previously to the tenth year of their reign, be crowned in the church of St Peter at Rome. Palaces, it is further ordained, shall be prepared for the Pope at Paris, at Rome, and in different parts of the empire; and he shall have rural property assigned to him to the amount of two millions of livres in different parts of the empire: but the expences of the sacred college, and of the Propaganda, are declared to be imperial. The most remarkable part of the decree is that which, after affirming that all foreign sovereignty is incompatible with the exercise of any spiritual authority within the empire, ordains, that "the popes shall at their elevation take an oath, never to act contrary to the four propositions of the Gallican church, adopted at an assembly of the clergy in 1682; and that these four propositions shall be common to all the catholic churches of the empire."

In order rightly to understand the import of this decree, it will be necessary to state what the four propositions are, which are thus revived and confirmed by the fiat of Bonaparte. They are these:

1. That neither St Peter nor his successors have received from God any power to interfere, directly or indirectly, in what concerns the temporal interests of princes or sovereign states: that kings and princes cannot be deposed by ecclesiastical authority; nor their subjects freed from the sacred obligation of fidelity and allegiance, by the power of the church and the bulls of the Roman pontiff.

2. That the decrees of the council of Constance, which maintain the authority of general councils as superior to that of the popes in spiritual matters, are approved and adopted by the Gallican church.

3. That the rules, customs, institutions and observances, which have been received in the Gallican church, are to be preserved inviolable.

4. That the decisions of the pope in points of faith are not infallible, unless they be attended with the consent of the church.



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THE

# CHRISTIAN SELECTOR.

NO. VII.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 25. 1810.

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## ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

*State of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, from her Establishment until the Revolution Settlement.*

**T**HE Church in Scotland enjoyed advantages in prosecuting reformation which were unknown to the other Presbyterian churches. The poverty of the nation laid a restraint upon the ambition of ecclesiastics, preserved a singular simplicity of manners, and rendered religious controversy what it always ought to be, a contest for principle, not for worldly interest. The insular situation of the inhabitants prevented foreigners from mingling with them; and the reformers, undisturbed, in a great measure, by the factions which distracted the protestant interest upon the continent of Europe, were enabled to direct their faithful exertions to the establishment of regular order and discipline in their own churches.

The power of England overawed the popish party of Scotland; and while itself was but half reformed, served as a protection to their more faithful northern neighbours from the Antichristian empire. The Scottish crown did not possess sufficient power, as in the other countries, to render the reformation an engine of state policy; and being restrained by the nobles, who formed a strong barrier between the king



and the people, the presbyterian ministers organized the church upon its pure and primitive plan, establishing its doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, perfectly distinct from the civil authority, and independent of the power of the magistrate. God, by his providence, directing the external affairs of the nation in subordination to religion, he animated his faithful servants by a remarkable degree of knowledge and holiness. The presbyterians in Scotland learned from their bibles, that the system of grace is the chief of God's works; that the saints are the salt of the earth, and Jesus is King of kings, and Lord of lords. Having organized the church as the peculiar kingdom of the Redeemer, upon principles which maintained the exclusive headship of Christ, they demanded that the crown of the nations should be laid at the feet of Messiah. They required that the church should not only be tolerated to establish her distinct ecclesiastical organization, but that she should hereafter be supported by the civil power of the nation in the enjoyment of her established rights. Those pious politicians argued upon scriptural principles. God preserves the world on account of his church. Christ administers the government of the universe in subordination to the church; angels and men are commanded to obey him; and all civil constitutions should be nursing fathers and nursing mothers to the church. They required, therefore, that the king of Scotland should no longer give his power to the Antichristian beast; should no longer drink of the intoxicating cup of the mother of harlots; but bow before the Prince of the kings of the earth. The majority of the nation required that the government should be administered, not for the glory of men, but for the welfare of society, the good of the church, and the glory of God. They were successful. The nation entered into these measures by solemn covenant; and their pious neighbours in England and in Ireland joined in a solemn league, to preserve the established order of religion in Scotland; and to use their endeavours for the introduction of a similar order in these two nations. In consequence of this union the English presbyterians in the assembly at Westminster, with the assistance of commissioners

from the church of Scotland, completed those ecclesiastical standards which have been received as agreeable to the scriptures, and as the bond of the covenanted uniformity between the reformed presbyterian churches in the British empire.

This system was reduced into operation in Scotland, and constituted the finishing part of the second reformation throughout that kingdom. The church enjoyed these attainments in peace but a very short time.

The period appointed in God's purpose for the destruction of Antichrist, and for the kingdoms of this world to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, had not yet arrived. God's visible covenant society had not as yet finished the testimony which the witnesses were appointed to give. They must still appear in sackcloth, and seal by the blood of martyrdom, the testimony which they held. Several causes contributed, under a holy Providence, to bring the church into severe troubles and trials, which should prove the faithfulness of the saints.

The presbyterians used power with moderation. They never proposed to render men pious by compulsion. They restrained open irregularities; they punished the profanation of the sabbath, daring blasphemy, and public overt acts of idolatry. They procured acts of parliament to exclude from civil office all those who, evidently disaffected to the reformed constitution, might be expected to make use of their power and influence to subvert the beautiful and venerable fabric. They were, however, unwilling unnecessarily to embroil the nation by a total dissolution of the monarchy. They even still retained some veneration, for the principle of the hereditary succession of royalty. And when the English independent faction, executed upon the first Charles the demerit of his crimes, the Scottish parliament being then sitting at Edinburgh, did immediately order his son, Charles II, to be proclaimed king. They accompanied the proclamation, however, with a declaration, that before he be admitted, to the exercise of the royal power, he shall give satisfactory evidence to the kingdom of his attachment to the constitution

of government as now reformed, according to the covenant and solemn league.

This was rash and highly imprudent conduct—The friends of Scottish liberty, and even the most faithful friends of religion, were hurried into the measure, by the dread of being overwhelmed with the anarchy which now began to prevail in England, under the influence of their present mock parliament. They made a dangerous experiment; and they had afterwards abundant cause to repent their own rashness. Power should not be conferred on any, whose previously tried and established conduct does not afford a prospect that he will use it in the cause of righteousness. No profession can bind a man without principle. To require a profession of virtue from an unprincipled man, is to tempt him to hypocrisy. Such was certainly the case in respect of the infamous and perjured tyrant, who bore the name of Charles the second. He was at the Hague, a town in Holland, when he was proclaimed king. Commissioners were immediately sent to treat with him, but he refused to give the required satisfaction, and they returned to Scotland without him. Happy would it have been for the nation had they then placed the reins of government in the hands of some of their own able and virtuous citizens; but their connexion with England would not admit of this measure.—Next year commissioners were again dispatched to treat with the exile king. They found him at Breda, a city of Dutch Brabant. He there pursued his wanton pleasures, and upon the Saturday before he left that city, after having agreed to the terms of the treaty, he returned from his revellings, and refused submission to the terms. Upon the following Sabbath, he, as an Episcopalian, took the sacrament kneeling, and thus sealed, by unworthy communicating, his opposition to presbyterians, and to the God whom they adore. The Rev. Mr Livingston, one of the commissioners, an eminently godly man, disapproved of the whole procedure respecting his recal, and declared, that in Charles Stewart, they carried the plague of God to Scotland.

Upon the king's arrival in Scotland, he solemnly swore to

maintain the covenanted reformation: and upon the 16th August, 1650, published a declaration, in which he abjured popery and prelacy, lamented his father's tyranny and idolatry, promised that he should have in future no friends but the friends of the reformation, and no enemies but the enemies of the covenanted uniformity. He was publicly crowned at Scone, on the 1st of January, 1651, after an excellent sermon, preached by the Rev. Mr Douglas, from 2 Kings xi. 12, 17. In the presence of the national representatives and the commissioners of the church, he renewed his covenants, solemnly swearing, with his hands lifted up to God, to rule the kingdom in agreeableness to the established constitution. The people, by their representatives, then declared their choice of him to be their king. The Marquis of Argyle placed the crown upon his head, and then the nobles and commons took the oath of allegiance, that they should be faithful to the king, according to their national and solemn vows in defence of religion and righteousness.

Never were king and people more strictly bound to God, and to one another, than were this king and these people. But it soon appeared that the people had committed the guardianship of their rights to very treacherous hands. Cromwell, the English usurper, had invaded Scotland with a powerful army. In this kingdom there was a minority, who, on account of their attachment to prelacy and arbitrary power did not acquiesce in the present established constitution. Vicious in morals, considering religion only as an engine of power, opposing the liberty and independence of the church, and entirely devoted to prelacy and arbitrary government, they were by law excluded from places of power and trust in the state and in the army. They had served king Charles the first in his endeavours to enslave the nation; and the commonwealth having succeeded in throwing off the yoke, did not choose to intrust these men with power. They enjoyed unmolested their personal liberties and property under the law; but no policy could justify their promotion to official stations, without evidence of their having changed their sentiments. The principal men of this party, remarkable for

their immorality, as well as their opposition to the reformation establishment, were called *malignants*. As they had long enjoyed the patronage of the tyrannical house of Stewart, in the chief offices of state and army, some of them were experienced warriors and able politicians. Although now a very small minority, they were still formidable, and ought to have received a more effectual debasement than the generous and pious people who now possessed the power, were disposed to give even to their enemies.

Such was the state of parties in Scotland, when the army appointed to support the young king and his people, under the conduct of general Leslie, was defeated at Dunbar, by Oliver Cromwell. The king was pleased at this defeat. It afforded an argument for the admission of the malignants, who were known enemies to Cromwell, into the army which defended Scotland. By private intrigue, this impious monarch and these malignants formed plans for the overthrow of the constitution. They professed reformation; they were admitted to military power; they took the oaths of office, and were admitted into the councils of state. Their hypocrisy did not, however, deceive all the friends of the reformation interest. There were many faithful men who considered their penitence as mockery, their submission to church discipline for their immorality, as hypocrisy, and their oath as perjury. The most faithful ministers and presbyteries, opposed the admission of these malignants into communion, and the most virtuous politicians opposed their admission to civil office. Presbyterians were thus, by the impious cunning of their enemies, divided among themselves. Those who favoured the malignants were called *Resolutioners*, and those who opposed them, *Protestors*. This division produced the ruin of the civil constitution, and prepared the way for that persecution which soon destroyed the church.

The English arms having prevailed over those of the king and the Scots, Charles escaped to France, and threw off the mask of presbyterianism. Despairing of obtaining the crown of England by means of the Scottish reformers, he applied for assistance to the popish powers of the continent,



and embraced the Roman religion. He still, however, pretended to be a protestant. Scotland, in the mean time, was reduced under the English usurper. This occasioned further dissensions among the presbyterians. The reformers were in the habit of referring every part of their conduct to some general principle, and if the principle was not correct, to condemn the practical application of it. They were sensible that morality could not otherwise be well understood or practised. It was of course a question of a very serious nature that now demanded their attention—Was Oliver Cromwell to be considered as a usurper, or as a lawful ruler, to whom obedience is due for conscience sake? The friends of the Protector, as Cromwell was called, were few, but they were formidable. The army was under their command. They required also conscientious submission to the power of the protector. They reasoned thus: “the powers which he exercises are in themselves lawful, and he has acquired from God’s providence a *right* to exercise them. *The powers that be, are ordained of God.*” To these arguments it was replied, that although tyranny and usurpation were permitted by a holy Providence, and over-ruled for the good of the church, they had not the divine approbation, had no claim on the obedience of christians, and might not only be lawfully resisted, but completely overthrown. That Cromwell was an usurper was manifest. He was never chosen by the nation to govern it; and the constitution, ratified by solemn oath, excluded him from power. To this constitution the more faithful presbyterians considered themselves bound by covenant to adhere.

The disputes between the Resolutioners and the Protestors were still agitated with a vehemence which distracted the church. The most faithful ministers were of the *protesting* party. They condemned the resolutions which admitted into church communion, and into civil and military power, the malignants. They condemned these measures as ministers and as patriots, who sought the good of their country in subordination to Christ’s kingdom. They maintained, that none should be admitted to church fellowship, or continued



in it, unless they professed the true religion, and understood what they professed—unless they evidenced repentance of all their sins—led a holy and religious life—and promised submission to all the ordinances of the gospel. They considered as no recommendation a hasty profession of repentance, and a promise of submission to ecclesiastical order, coming from persons who were uniformly remarkable for their impiety: and who now had a motive for hypocrisy, in the expectation of power and office. They declared it to be a prostitution of the privileges of the church to confer upon them such characters. They urged it upon the public mind as an important maxim, that no enemy of the civil constitution should be intrusted with a share in its administration. They exposed the folly and madness of bestowing military power upon the inveterate enemies of religion, liberty, and law. They fortified these declarations by judicious arguments from the scripture. Two very judicious dissertations against associations with malignants were published and circulated, the one by the famous Mr Gillespie, and the other by Mr Binning.

(To be Continued.)

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## THE RIGHTS OF GOD.

“Render—unto God, the things that are God's.” MAT. xxii. 21.

(Continued from page 219.)

I MIGHT add to what has been said, a consideration borrowed from the death of Christ. And I must confess, it appears, that this awful transaction speaks out the doctrine of God's vindictive justice, whether we consider it in regard to God, to Christ, or to the church. If executing adequate punishment on sin was an act optional with God, suspended merely on his will, how could it comport with his infinite goodness, to heap such a load of sufferings upon a dutiful and innocent person, without any real necessity, seeing every end to be answered by such an event, could have been equally answered another way? This surely is not a supposition

friendly to the honour of God's infinite goodness and love to his creatures, not to say to his own eternal Son. How will this view of things comport with God's declaration when he says, "*as I live saith the Lord, I have no delight in the death of sinners?*" and if no delight in the unnecessary death of sinners how much less in that of an innocent person? As to Christ, how must he have felt, when in his extreme agony he said, "*Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,*" if in place of hearing his Father say, I grant thy innocent request, and with good reason, seeing my glory loses nothing: he had heard him say, No. "*Though it makes no odds to me, yet I will not alter the ground which I have arbitrarily and unnecessarily taken.*" How the Son of God could have borne this, when nailed to the cross, and during the time his soul and body struggled under a pressure, such as no imagination besides, ever conceived, is beyond the power of rational conjecture. But if we suppose punitive justice essential to God, all things in this mysterious business become easy to the renewed mind. *Not my will but thine be done*, has then a glorious meaning. It is as much as to say; since there is no other honourable channel, oh! my Father, through which thy love and pity to sinners can flow, but the rent veil of my flesh, "*not my will but thine be done.*" If all that was undertaken and conducted to its eventful period, in behalf of sinful man, is to be considered as nothing more than an arbitrary effect of the Divine will, and not a necessary sacrifice to offended justice, absolutely requisite to lay a permanent foundation for peace between God and man, then indeed the wonderful magnitude of divine mercy will be amazingly diminished. On this supposition, a minister of the gospel finds the glad tidings of great joy die away upon his tongue. The mighty ocean of divine love sinks almost under ground. The astonishing words of Paul, lose their emphasis. "*For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*"

To the greater part of these born in Christian countries,  
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the doctrine of the cross has been familiar from their infancy, and in its continued discussion, passes over their ears without much attention. In what light it is to be viewed, is a matter that has never fallen under their thoughts. And therefore the messengers of a crucified Jesus are seldom troubled with any inquiries from a thoughtless world about the blood of the covenant, or the reasons why it was shed. It is not, however, likely that a missionary sent to explain the Christian dispensation to a well-informed Pagan philosopher, unacquainted with God manifested in the flesh, would find it so easy to slip with decency through this interesting subject. In such a case, he would probably find himself entangled with sundry perplexing questions, which perhaps he had seldom or never considered before, with suitable attention. It is reasonable to suppose the teacher, in such a case, would dwell much on the death of Christ. Would it be too much then to expect that his pupil would inquire into the truth, reasonableness, and necessity of such an event, with the most minute investigation.

The death of God's eternal, and spotless Son, is a fact which attaches to it too much magnitude to be passed over, by a serious inquirer after truth, without the most scrupulous examination. And I must acknowledge, upon the supposition that punitive justice is not essential to God, I am at a loss to think how this matter could be accounted for in a manner likely to procure veneration and esteem for the christian faith. I know of nothing that could be said, if the truth was told, but something to the following purpose. The eternal Son of God assumed flesh among men, and with this flesh, a load of troubles utterly unparalleled in the history of humanity! For upwards of thirty years this matchless person spent his strength in the most unwearied piety and benevolence, though subjected to every indignity that malice could invent, or cruelty inflict; and in the prime of his life, and the midst of his tender and sympathizing exertions for afflicted humanity, he became a prey to his murderous enemies, without the smallest visible intervention of Heaven in his behalf! And all this scene was foreseen and contrived and carried into ex-

ecution under God's own eye, without the least necessity, as every end aimed at by this accumulated misery, could have been equally answered, if God would only have consented, without the falling of a tear, or the uttering of a groan! Would such a representation clothe christianity in a venerable dress to the eyes of reasonable men? No man of reflection can imagine any such thing! On the contrary, a man of delicacy would blush to subject the examination of such a sentiment, to the eye of even reason itself! But if a preacher of the gospel, in place of such a sanguinary despotism, presented the necessary relation between sinning and adequate suffering, and the absolute need of the latter, to obtain the deliverance of mankind from everlasting ruin, I should consider his argument clad with the armour of truth, and well entitled to attention from the most contemplative inquirer in the whole school of human reason.

This view of the justice of God, does not abridge his royal prerogative in any necessary part of its exercise. We ought, however, to beware of measuring this by the weakness that often accompanies judicial proceedings among men. One reason why it is not necessary to punish all crimes on earth, is, because there is a God in heaven to punish them, when the criminals leave this present world. And, therefore, so far is it from being the case, that God should proceed to eternity, as the inferior administrators of justice have done in time, that to secure the honour of universal justice, the very contrary is necessary.—Besides, human laws are often too severe to be indiscriminately applied to all whose conduct may seem to fall within the letter of their penalties. This, however, is never the case with God's laws. And, finally, the proof of crimes, owing to the weakness of our discernment, the mysteriousness of human conduct, and the uncertainty of human testimony, is often far from being full, clear, and completely satisfactory, and therefore humane judges lean, and perhaps not without reason, to the merciful side, especially as they know there is a Judge to come after them, who cannot be deceived. Taking all these things into consideration, it will appear very improper to limit God's ju-

dicial proceedings, by the imperfect acts of creatures, who occupy such a limited sphere, as that in which the human understanding at present moves.

It is questionable whether the nature of man, in its present state of animal sensation, be capable of receiving the doctrine of inflexible justice, without shrinking. Like a judge passing the sentence of death upon a son or a brother, it is too much interested, to approach the subject with firmness and impartiality. The righteous administrations of God, are not, however, to leave their road for the sake of humouring our effeminate sensibility. Though the nature of God, the dictates of reason, and the testimony of revelation, agree that every sin which has been, or ever will be committed, must receive adequate punishment, yet God has manifested wonderful sovereignty in transferring the punishment of sin from its immediate subjects to Christ the Redeemer, as also in suspending, for wise reasons, the complete punishment of the most guilty criminals, until their cup be made full, and the other mysterious ends of his divine wisdom be answered by such seasons of forbearance. We are no way fit to judge at present of that latitude requisite to be taken by God, in timing his holy administrations so as to have the most happy effects upon the general system. It should fully satisfy us "*that justice and judgment are the everlasting habitations of his throne;*" and that however slow and sometimes interrupted, the executions of judgment may be, during time, the end of time is reserved for finishing whatever shall then remain necessary to seal the honour of God's justice and veracity to endless ages.

It is not necessary on this subject to entangle it with any minute inquiries about the powers that shall be exercised by Christ in his mediatorial character, in the last general judgment. The most interesting truth, to those who are now going on in their trespasses, is, that from day to day they are adding to a load of guilt, which God, with reverence to his holy name be it spoken, cannot cancel any other way to eternity, but by faith in his Son. And that he has appointed

this Son judge of the world, “*who will take awful vengeance on them that obey not the gospel.*”

It will be observed that in the preceding remarks on the rights of God, we have joined the legislative and judicial rights in the same hand. This is thought an imperfection in human governments, and accordingly, nations anxious for the safety of their liberties, have endeavoured to separate these powers as much as possible. It will, however, easily appear, that there is no need for, nor indeed any possibility of such an order of things in the Divine government. The reason why such a precaution has been introduced into well ordered civil governments, is, to prevent more effectually that insolent usurpation which generally arises from the possession of extensive powers. Where the right of legislating, judging, and executing, reside in the same hands, we often find cruel and oppressive laws made for the sake of directing their judicial application to accomplish the black designs of malice, avarice or pride. Was there no possible danger on this quarter, it is not evident that there would exist any necessity for dividing these powers, and placing them in a situation favourable for counteracting each other. Now as there is not found the shadow of a doubt about God’s perfect rectitude, either in legislation, or execution, a good mind rests perfectly easy in beholding justice and judgment flow eternally through the channel of the Divine perfections, a channel which never can corrupt its streams nor injure any but those who attempt to block it up.

4. The fourth and last article I shall mention, under this general head, shall be, God’s *providential right* of guiding all the motions in creation, not excepting even the most minute, *to their final point of destination.* The vessel of universal creation is richly laden, and requires infinite wisdom at the helm, to steer it against all winds and tides, to the destined harbour. That God keeps this business in his own hand is a happy consideration for his friends, who are often tossed about on the boisterous seas of this present life, where they can see neither sun nor stars, for many days, while such a tempest lies on them, that almost all hopes of safety are ta-



ken away. The hope of the believer in such cases, is, that all his interests are committed to his care, who slumbers not nor sleeps, who is perfect in wisdom, goodness, and power,—and who, therefore, may be confidently trusted to order and execute all things, according to the holy counsels of his unerring will. Here it is that we see the hopes of the atheist in their true light. These hopes are the most feeble and sickly things in nature, more easily torn than the spider's web. Could he even abolish God out of his thoughts; nay, could he with mathematical certainty, demonstrate that there is no God, nor future judgment; yet he never can be certain that there will be no hell. How does he know but those wonderful dancing atoms, which he supposes, have produced all those strange appearances which we behold, may in some of their future dances, dance themselves into the hottest hell, and dance himself to its lowest place? I only mention this, to show what a gloomy life these miserable outcasts must spend, on whom hope never casts one joyous ray. It is true, in this present life, many and sore evils abound: but, can we reasonably hope to diminish their number, by thrusting out a wise and holy God from among the armies of heaven and earth? Their jarring motions would seem at least, to require some infinite arm to keep them from running into wild disorder, and rendering all nature an heap of endless confusion.

Though what has already been said, will necessarily establish the point under consideration; yet as it is of great importance to the believer's peace, and the good order of this lower world, it may be proper to bestow upon it a few separate remarks. The church of God consoles herself abundantly under this comfortable shade. The wiser heathens, have clearly seen that the system of creation cannot be separate a moment from the provident care of God. And the faith that is able to encounter the difficulties that would attend the contrary supposition, need not be afraid of meeting any thing so shocking to reason, in the whole book of Providence, mysterious as it is. Yet though it be true, that the testimonies of men, guided merely by the light of rea-

son, are worthy of our most attentive observation, it is from divine revelation alone, that true christians ought to derive their principal support, in believing the doctrine of Providence. Its testimonies on this subject are so numerous, that we might adduce them from almost every page: one or two may suffice. Memorable to this purpose are the words of Christ, "*Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God, but even the hairs of your head are all numbered.*" The Apostle Paul, bears ample testimony to this truth, on various occasions. Reasoning with the men of Lystra, he tells them, that the providence of God had been unweariedly exercised even among the Gentiles; "*so that he had not left himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.*" And again, writing to the Ephesians, he said, "*That God worketh all things according to the counsel of his will.*"

In no instance, is there a more striking analogy between the book of nature, and the book of scripture, than in the accounts that each give of the providence of God. The perfections displayed in creation, leave no room to doubt of a Providence, as no possible reason can be given, why God should confer so much beauty and order on the visible creation, which will not equally prove the necessity of a Providence. All its harmonizing parts agree in their testimony, to confirm the glorious doctrine of one wise first cause, which gave existence at first, and still continues to give energy to all the wheels of creation, by an uninterrupted providential agency. These move on from day to day, with wonderful exactness, though utterly unconscious of their being or end, and though they contain a machinery almost infinite. If any thing more than what appears on the very surface of these things was necessary, to persuade us that they are not the effect of chance, it may be found in these infallible predictions by which God has, with the most perfect exactness, foretold events depending on seemingly the most uncertain circumstances, so long before they come to pass, that the most confirmed infidelity cannot dream that these predictions

could be founded on any possible conjectures of the wisest politicians or philosophers. No! this light which has been cast upon futurity, most evidently proceeds from his infinite understanding, who saw the end of all things from the beginning,—who perfectly knew what latent tendencies he had lodged in every part of the general system, and on what occasions, and by what means, they should unfold themselves in producing these illustrious effects, upon which the manifestation of the divine glory should depend.

(To be Continued.)

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## OBEDIENCE TO THE LAWS OF GOD THE SURE DEFENCE OF NATIONS.

*“Hear ye me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin, The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him he will forsake you.”* 2 CHRON. xv. 2.

(Continued from page 211.)

**T**HE nation that adheres to the laws of God shall be protected and prospered by him, but the nation that forsakes those laws he will destroy.

Notwithstanding what has already been advanced in support of this proposition, if it be yet demanded, whether history will not demonstrate that some nations, distinguished for religion, have not suffered by the attacks of others, and whether some, that have been distinguished for irreligion, have not been prospered?—the demand may be met without the least disadvantage to my argument.

As a reply to the whole it would, I think, be sufficient to remind you of the remark already made, that, as in all the other divine dispensations, so in this, it is to be expected that there will be some appearances which seem to be exceptions to a general rule, which we must resolve into the sovereignty of God—or into our imperfect views and knowledge of his designs; and that such appearances ought by no means

to weaken the influence of the general rule, or to diminish our care to walk agreeably to it. But though this might be a sufficient answer to the inquiry, and though there may be some real need for it, in a few cases that might possibly be specified in regard to this subject; yet I am persuaded that there is much less occasion for such remarks on this subject, than on almost any other, where the ways of God are concerned.

In answer to the first part of the demand, let it be observed that the conformity of nations to the standard which ensures protection is often very *imperfect*, while yet the fear of God and obedience to his law are *considerably regarded*. In these circumstances the Deity may, and commonly does, afflict to a certain degree, with a view to reform and not to destroy. If reformation take place, the correction is withdrawn, and his favour returns. This is precisely the statement of the text, where we are assured that if a nation *seek* the Lord he will be found of them. But if reformation do not take place, chastisement will continue and increase, till, at length, the people who prove incorrigible will be finally destroyed. This accounts for the appearance—It shows that the divine blessing is not only conferred on obedience but is *proportioned* to it. But my recollection does not serve me for a single instance, in which a nation, however small, that could make any plausible pretensions to religious and moral purity, was ever totally destroyed. On the contrary, a number of the small states of Europe have been almost miraculously preserved, when contending for real liberty and religion, against the most powerful and impetuous nations of the earth. Different, I know, has been the effect of the struggles of some of those nations, lately, to preserve their very existence. They have been carried away like dust before the whirlwind. But what has been the cause? Examine it well, and you will find the doctrine I inculcate very powerfully supported by the result. You will find that the punishment inflicted on these nations, has been most wonderfully *proportioned* to the measure of their previous and notorious hypocrisies, impieties and immoralities.

But it is time to turn to the opposite part of this inquiry, and attempt to answer what many will esteem a more formidable objection, namely—that impious and immoral nations have sometimes been blest and prospered. It may even be supposed, that this point has already been yielded in a measure, when it was suggested, that the conquerors of the earth have frequently been distinguished by a disregard to every thing sacred. Such a conclusion, however, does not follow with justice, from the premises whence it is drawn. Why may not God, for the purposes of chastising those whom ultimately he intends to save, confer success on the unlawful enterprizes of wicked nations, as he does on those of wicked individuals, and yet, in both cases, be only preparing the way for the final and more awful ruin of the transgressors? That he may do this is not only possible but in some instances certain.

There cannot be two grosser errors than to believe, that military success is always a mark of the divine approbation, and that conquest or extended dominion always secures happiness and prosperity to a conquering nation.

As to the first, which is a favourite idea with some, that military success is a proof of the divine approbation, I would beg of those who cherish the delusion, to consider where it will lead them. It will lead them unavoidably to maintain, that Alexander and Cæsar, that Goths and Vandals, that Turks and Tartars, have been the most distinguished favourites of Heaven, for in military success none have been equal to these. No, my brethren, military success is, by itself, no proof of the divine patronage. God may, as already intimated, use a nation as the rod of his anger to chastise the guilty, and then he may break and burn it, and make its destruction an instructive warning to every beholder. We are assured by scripture, that he did so with the Assyrian empire of old—Nay, he hath done it in every age, and it is his usual method of procedure. Military success, in war merely *defensive*, may be evidence of the divine favour; but in every other case, if we judge from experience, the presumption is against the victor.

Neither is conquest and dominion a proof that the conquering nation is truly prosperous. A few of its distinguished chiefs may acquire fame and wealth, while the mass of its inhabitants are wretched in the extreme. The fact commonly happens thus—It has happened thus remarkably, with that nation of Europe, that is subduing others, and threatening us. Is it really prosperous? Are its subjects happy? Have they, while they have been ravaging and subduing other kingdoms, possessed true national felicity among themselves? No, assuredly—Fear and anxiety, convulsion and terror, massacre and blood, the destruction of arts, of property, of all domestic enjoyment, of all religious, moral, and social principles, of all that renders existence not a curse, has reigned in the midst of them, with infernal triumph. It is even true, that among all the nations that they have conquered, rendered tributary, pillaged, partitioned, bartered and trafficked away, not one has suffered more than themselves. The volcano which has poured desolation in burning torrents on every circumjacent region, has still glowed most intensely at the centre of its force, and there, in its own bowels and crater, with the most rapid and energetic fury, it has tortured, transmuted and consumed, every useful material, which heaven, nature, art or accident, has offered to its touch. The scene with this nation is yet unclosed; and I grant the conclusion, that its fate will subvert the doctrine of my text completely, if its catastrophe be not an illustrious display of the divine indignation: For in the most shocking and avowed atheism, in the most marked contempt of all the dictates of religion, both natural and revealed, it has exhibited a specimen, which, as far as my knowledge extends, has never been witnessed before since the creation of the world. But that it is ultimately doomed to peculiar judgments, I have, for myself, no more doubt than of the truth of God—no more question than of my own existence. And I should feel that I acted as a traitor to my sacred trust, if, when the successes of this nation are held up (and thus they have been) as a contradiction to the word of life, and when they stand particularly opposed to the



truth, which from that word, I am called to maintain, I should hesitate to make this avowal, and to make it publicly.

Perhaps some will now be ready to remark, that the prosperity which it must be confessed, accompanies a national observance of the divine laws is owing to the *natural influence* which religious and moral observances have to produce this desirable effect. Be it so; this influence I do not deny, but maintain. But remember, that this natural connexion between piety and prosperity, vice and ruin, is still the appointment of God, and even, on this plan, is as much his order as if it had been made for every particular case, in which its effects are felt. Scripture and experience, however, do, I think, concur in teaching, that *beside* this natural connexion, God does often and *especially interfere* by his providence, both to preserve and bless those who obey him, and to destroy those who reject and despise his laws.

It may be objected, finally, that the representation given, goes to unsettle an important principle which has generally been understood to belong to the Christian system, namely, that the present is a state of probation, and not of retribution.

A short answer to this would be, that whatever doctrine is established by facts, is not responsible to theory for its consequences, and that all that has been said, is but an appeal to undeniable experience. But I will never answer thus where Christianity is even *supposed* to be implicated by it—its dictates are eternal truth. I grant that the doctrine I advocate requires some explanation in regard to this point, and I am confident it may be given in a manner that shall be perfectly satisfactory to every candid mind, and even illustrative and confirmatory of the doctrine itself.

It will be remembered, then, that the concession has already been made and repeated, that righteous nations may experience partial and temporary sufferings, and that those of an opposite character may obtain some temporary, or rather apparent advantages. This will be a call for the faith and patience of pious men, who may suffer in the general calamity, and may teach them to look forward to that better

world "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest."

But in reality, the doctrine which teaches that men are not to look for rewards or punishments in this life, though true and important when judiciously applied to *individuals*, is often mistaken even in its relation to them, and when applied to *nations* and considered as a *general principle*, is not true at all. It is only in *this world* that communities *as such* have an *existence or character*. In the world to come the whole of our race will appear as *individuals*, and not as communities. If any retribution, then, be awarded to nations, *as nations*, it *must* be in the present state, and not in that which is to come. But it appears to be of the highest importance in the moral government of God, that *national character* should be the subject both of his favour and of his frowns; and this, consequently *must* be experienced in the present state. It accordingly does take place in fact, and is generally to be expected.

(To be Continued.)

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## BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

An Extract from the Sixth Report of their Committee.

Wednesday, 2d May 1810.

(Continued from page 233.)

**U**NDER the general head of distribution of the Scriptures, on which your Committee have now to report, they mean to include not only Donations, but supplies of the Scriptures furnished by the British and Foreign Bible Society to other Associations and individuals, at the cost, or reduced prices.

The total of such Donations and supplies has been very considerable during the last year, both at home and abroad. Copies of the Scriptures, either in whole or in part, and in various languages, have been sent

Abroad—to Southern Africa, for the benefit of the converted Hottentots.

To Paramaribo in Surinam.

To the West Indies, for the use of the Christian Negroes.

To the Islands of Sark, Jersey, Madeira, Sicily, Dominica, Bermuda, Jamaica, Guadalope, Martinique, Trinidad, Antigua, St Thomas, and Prince Edward's.

To St Domingo.

To the Cape of Good Hope.

To Quebec.

To Demerara; and

To different stations in India.

At home—the Naval and Military Bible Society has been furnished with large supplies of English Bibles at the cost prices: the same advantage has been afforded to the Society for the Support and Encouragement of Sunday Schools, which has been supplied with a considerable quantity of the Welsh Scriptures: some Copies of the Gospel of St Matthew in Hebrew, presented to the British and Foreign Bible Society by a Clergyman, have been granted to the Missionary Society: the Philanthropic Society has been accommodated with the Scriptures at reduced prices: copies have been furnished gratis to the London Female Penitentiary, to the Refuge for the Destitute, and to the Female Penitentiary at Bath. Bibles and Testaments have been granted at half the cost prices, for the accommodation of Schools in various parts of Ireland; and a very considerable supply has been committed to an Association at Cork, under the designation of “The Indigent Room Keepers’ Society,” for sale or gratuitous distribution. The last mentioned Association is most benevolently and extensively occupied in visiting the poor, particularly those of the Roman Catholic persuasion.

To specify particular instances, in which individuals have been supplied with the Scriptures for sale or gratuitous distribution, would occupy too large a portion of this Report. The trustees of some charitable funds for the distribution of the Scriptures to the poor have been permitted to purchase them of the Society at the cost prices, by which they have

been enabled to extend the benefits of their respective trusts considerably farther than they could otherwise have done. The poor in several work-houses have been supplied, under the direction of a Committee appointed for that purpose. In short, the most unremitting attention has been paid to the accommodation of Prisoners of War, to that of Soldiers and Seamen, and to all such wants of the poorer classes of all countries and descriptions within the United Kingdom, as were stated to require the benevolent assistance of the Bible Society. With a view to the particular supply of Soldiers and Seamen, the Committee are engaged in making arrangements for the appointment of Agents at all the Military and Naval Depots, for the sale of Bibles and Testaments at reduced prices. Of the extent to which the Scriptures have been thus disposed of, or gratuitously bestowed, the Society will be enabled to judge, from the following fact, viz. That, within the last two years, no less a number than five thousand three hundred and seventy-seven Bibles and Testaments have been distributed by one Correspondent only of your Committee, principally to the Army and Navy; with a zeal and discrimination which are entitled to the highest commendation, and which have received the most cordial thanks of your Committee.

But it will be gratifying to the British and Foreign Bible Society to know also, that its benevolence has been accepted with the same cordiality with which it has been granted.

The 500 Copies of the Italian New Testament, sent to a respectable Correspondent at Malta, have been received and put into distribution. Roman Catholic Priests, upon obtaining Copies, expressed their joy, that they now had the Scriptures in a language which they understood.

Of 500 Testaments sent to Martinique for sale or gratuitous distribution, among the negroes and other poor people, 450 were eagerly and rapidly purchased; and the remainder reserved for donations. The French and Spanish prisoners of war have testified their grateful acknowledgments for the benevolence of the Society; and your Committee have information on which they rely, that the Danish prisoners, to whom

791 New Testaments were presented, were daily employed in reading them; and that large companies in different parts of the ship were seen thus engaged. From the correspondence of your Committee many other accounts might be extracted, equally gratifying to the feelings of the Society.

Your Committee, have lastly to notice the addition made to the funds of the British and Foreign Bible Society, by Donations, Bequests, and Congregational Collections, during the last twelve months.

From the Auxiliary Bible Societies the following Donations have been received—

Bible Society of Nottingham and its Vicinity, £223, of which one half is a Donation, and the other for the purchase of Bibles and Testaments.

Bible Society of Newcastle upon Tyne, £327, of which £142 is a Donation, and the remainder for the purchase of Bibles and Testaments.

Devon and Exeter Bible Society, £210 subject to an appropriation of one moiety for the purchase of Bibles and Testaments.

Leicester Bible Society, a Donation of £300.

Kendal Bible Society, a Donation of £226.

Edinburgh Bible Society, a Donation of £800.

Bristol Auxiliary Bible Society, £2,700 in part of the Subscriptions and Donations to that Society.

Sheffield Auxiliary Bible Society, £423 of which £100 is for the purchase of books.

Greenock and Port Glasgow Bible Society, a Donation of £63. The liberality of this Society has been noticed in former Reports.

Hull Bible Society, a Donation of £168 with the expectation of a considerable augmentation.

Manchester and Saliford Auxiliary Bible Society, £1,200 reserving a further sum of £600 for the purchase of Bibles and Testaments.

Leeds Auxiliary Bible Society, a Donation of £285.

These several Donations have been thankfully acknowledged by your Committee.

The zeal and liberality of the Reverend Presbyteries in the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, collectively and separately, have been often and thankfully acknowledged; and your Committee have now the grateful duty to perform of reporting, that the sum of £2,296 has been remitted to them by William Muir, Esq. their Treasurer, at Glasgow, from various Presbyteries, &c. in the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, since the close of the Accounts in 1809, which are particularly specified in the Appendix to this Report, and in which the liberality of the Presbyteries of Glasgow and Paisley are conspicuous.

The Society will recollect a notification in the last Report of the Committee, that the Reverend the Presbytery of Glasgow had unanimously appointed an *Annual* Collection to be made at the Churches and Chapels within its bounds. This Resolution had no precedent. Your Committee have farther to state, that the Reverend the Presbytery of Glasgow have commenced its second *Annual* Collection, the amount of which is considerable, although the Collection is not yet completed.

To the Reverend the Presbytery of Inverness, the Society is indebted for a Donation of £179, being the amount of a Collection made in the several Parishes belonging to it. The letter from the Reverend Mr Fraser accompanying the Donation, expresses the grateful thanks of the Presbytery of Inverness to the British and Foreign Bible Society, for a liberal and seasonable supply of the Gælic Scriptures at a cheap rate.

The Rev. the Presbytery of Fordam have also remitted £73 11s. collected in their Churches: one Parish had not made its return, when this remittance was received.

The funds of the Society have also been augmented by various Congregational Collections both in England and Scotland, for all which the thanks of your Committee have been returned. The particular sums will be stated in the List of Subscriptions and Donations, but it may be satisfactory to mention the places from which they have been received. In England, &c.—from the Parish Churches of Uttoxeter, New-



castle under Lyne, Lane-end, Wallingford, Wellington, Wrington, Macclesfield, Baccup near Rochdale, Dewsbury, Falmouth, Shawbury, West Thurrock; from Surrey Chapel; from the Meeting Houses at Homerton, Lock's Fields, Ipswich, Baccup, Chester, Debenham, East Stonehouse, Holywell, Berwick upon Tweed, Falmouth (Independent and Baptist), Newington, Liverpool, Melbourn, Penryn, Thornbury, and Wallingford. In Scotland—from the Parish Churches of Stirling, Auchterarder, Cambusneathen, Dunblane, Larbert and Duniface, Tweedsmuir, and Perth; the Relief Congregations in Edinburgh, by appointment of the Synod; the Congregations of different denominations, at the Nether Kirk-gate, Aberdeen; at Glasgow, West Calder, Airdrie, Hawick, Hamilton, Mearns, Paisley, Abernethy, Badernoch, Burnt Shields, Caputh, Fergandenny; Perth, two Congregations; Tolcross, near Glasgow, and Stirling.

From several United Congregations in Nova Scotia, the sum of £49 has been collected and remitted to your Committee.

The Associations mentioned in the former Reports have also continued their zealous exertions for aiding the funds of the Society. The Holborn Sunday School has made an additional Donation of £21 10s; the "Association in London for contributing to the Funds of the British and Foreign Bible Society by means of small Subscriptions and Donations;" has presented a fifth Contribution, amounting to £92; and to the zeal of the Association at Birmingham, the Bible Society is indebted for another Donation of £285.

The zealous efforts of a Member of the Society have also procured Annual Subscriptions amounting to £50, and a Donation of £63 from the Friends of the Institution at Shrewsbury.

Your Committee have also the particular satisfaction of reporting, a Donation of 50 Guineas, unanimously voted on the day of the National Jubilee, by the Right Reverend the Bishop of Bristol, Master, and the Seniors, of Trinity College, Cambridge. Your Committee have expressed their acknowledgments for this Donation, by presenting a set of their

Reports, and copies of each Foreign Version of the Scriptures printed by the Bible Society (including the Welsh and the Gælic) to the Library of the Trinity College.

Respect for the memory of the late Bishop of London, whose name has been mentioned in another part of this Report with the honour which it deserves, calls upon your Committee to mention, that he, about a week previous to his decease, expressed his intention of presenting the Society with a Donation of £50. His Executors, having been informed of this circumstance, very honourably gave effect to his dying intentions, by a Donation to that amount.

The Right Reverend the bishop of Durham has also given an additional Donation of £50 to this Society, and the like sum to the Newcastle Auxiliary Society.

It only remains further to report the following additions to the funds of the Society by Bequests.

The late Mr Hawkes, of Piccadilly, has bequeathed to the Society the sum of £1000 in the 4 per cent. Consol. Ann. free from any deduction on account of the Legacy duty.

From the late Mrs M. Bassett, the Society has received a Legacy of £20. She has also left £10 for the purchase of Bibles to be distributed to the poor.

William Gray, Esq. of York, and the Rev. Samuel Bottomly, of Scarborough, Trustees for religious and charitable purposes, under the Will of Mrs Ann Greenwood, deceased, have presented to the Society the sum of £200. The Trustees have also allotted £100 to the translations of the Scriptures carrying on in India, and £50 to promote those undertaken by the Missionaries at Karass.

Your Committee, having now reported the addition made to the funds of the Bible Society, deem it their duty to remark, that the necessary expenditure for promoting the object of its Institution, is also great and accumulating. The loss incurred by accommodating Subscribers with Bibles and Testaments at reduced prices, which was originally intended to be one-fifth of the cost, partly by the disposition of the Committee to fix the lowest terms, and partly by the enhancement in the price of paper and printing, has now become two-fifths,

and the annual amount of the loss, which will probably increase, has been of course considerable. The claims on the benevolence of the Society, for which no returns are made, and which your Committee feel the strongest disposition to gratify, in the greatest possible extent, are also numerous and increasing.

Your Committee do not mention these circumstances from any despair that the funds of the Society will prove inadequate to the demands upon them; such an apprehension would ill accord with that disposition which has been so cheerfully, generally, and liberally manifested to promote the great and charitable object of its institution. On the contrary, they rely with confidence on the continuance and increase of the same liberality, not merely for supporting the Institution, but for enlarging its means and capacity to do good.

Your Committee have only further to add, that a very considerable addition had been made to the Collection of Books belonging to the British and Foreign Bible Society by the generosity of individuals. The particulars of these Donations, which have been thankfully acknowledged, will, as usual, be specified in the Appendix to the Report.

It only remains to add some reflections naturally suggested by the facts which have been communicated to the Society.

It is now about two hundred and seventy years, since the light of Revelation shone with full lustre on this country; for it was then that its inhabitants first obtained the invaluable privilege of perusing the Bible in their own language. The moral and religious effects which have flowed from the use of this privilege, prove, what is in itself most evident, the influence of the Holy Scriptures in promoting the best interests of individuals and society, and hence afford the most solid ground of encouragement to the circulation of them in the greatest practicable extent. It must not however be unnoticed, that the encouragement thus held out, points to the performance of a duty (for surely it is a duty) of primary obligation in those who have free access to the waters of life, to open channels for conveying their streams to the parched and deplete portions of the earth which they have not yet pervad-

ed; and to remove those obstructions which interrupt their currency. To what extent this has been effected by the British and Foreign Bible Society, is sufficiently apparent from the present and former Reports of its Proceedings: like the great rivers of the earth which fertilize regions far distant from the soil in which they take their rise, it has diffused the waters of life to the remotest realms, and has held out an invitation to every accessible part of the globe—  
*“Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.”*

The establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society will undoubtedly form a distinguished era in the annals of the nineteenth century. It is to the honour of this country to have produced a religious Institution (for such the British and Foreign Bible Society may with strict propriety be denominated)\* the utility of which has received the most ample and gratifying acknowledgments, both at home and abroad; an Institution, founded on a principle so simple, so intelligible, and so unexceptionable, that persons of every description who profess to regard the Holy Scriptures as the proper standard of faith, may cordially and conscientiously unite in it, and in the spirit of true Christian charity, harmoniously blend their common endeavours to promote the glory of God; an Institution, which has excited the emulation of thousands to disseminate the knowledge of divine truth, and has given birth to the most extensive and respectable Associations for the express purpose of aiding its exertions, and co-operating in the promotion of its glorious object; an Institution, which secures an adherence to the integrity of its principle, by regulations so precise and defined as not to admit of dubious interpretation.

Referring to the notice which has been taken of the first

\* To some this may seem inadmissible. The terms of membership with this Society are not religious. They neither engage its constituents to the profession nor practice of religion. Considerations of this nature induced to erase the same disputable idea, suggested in page 64. The British and Foreign Bible Society, however, is unquestionably a most laudable institution. Its sole object is “to encourage a wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures, without note or comment,—by means the most peaceable, mild, and congenial to the nature of Messiah’s kingdom.”

promulgation of the Scriptures in this country for public use, it is impossible not to recollect the eager delight with which this new and precious privilege was embraced and enjoyed. It is matter of real gratification to be enabled to remark, that the spirit which prevailed at that memorable era, is not extinct. The facts stated in the present and former Reports, prove the high veneration in which the Bible is held throughout the United Kingdom, and the public sense entertained of its supreme importance to the temporal and eternal welfare of mankind. It is no slight recommendation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, that it has been the means of exhibiting this proof in a conspicuous view, as well as of cherishing and enlarging the feeling to which it applies. Who that loves his country and fellow-creatures, but must rejoice, at the notification of facts which may fairly be considered as affording an omen so favourable to the prosperity of both? "*Blessed are the people,*" says the Psalmist, "*that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.*"

Your Committee, therefore, anxiously desirous that the blessing of God may accompany the Circulation of the Holy Scriptures, conclude their Report in the spirit of their Institution, by pressing upon its Members and Friends in every part of the world, the advice of the Apostle—" *Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified.*"

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### ROMAN CATHOLICS.

" *We declare, affirm, decree and pronounce to every human creature, that it is absolutely necessary to salvation to be subject to the Pope of Rome.*"

BONIFACE VIII. 1294.

**T**HE English Roman Catholics have presented a petition to Parliament, praying for a total repeal of every test, oath, declaration, or provision, which has the effect of subjecting them to any penalty or disability whatsoever, on ac-

count of their religious principles. They plead, that though they profess some religious principles which are not professed by the established church, yet their creed was once the creed of the three kingdoms. "It is," say they, "the actual creed of four-fifths of Ireland, and of much the greater part of Europe. It was the creed of those who founded British Liberty at Runymead,—who conquered at Cressy, Poitiers, and Agincourt. Among those who repelled and annihilated the Spanish Armada, none bore a nobler part than those by whom this creed was professed. In all these achievements, in every other scene in which the ancient valour or ancient wisdom of this country has been displayed, the ancestors of several of your petitioners have been distinguished. Their creed did not lessen their zeal for their King and Country: it does not lessen that of their descendants."

The Catholics of Ireland have signified their total disapprobation of a measure formerly proposed by some of their denomination, viz. that his Majesty should have a *veto* or negative to their choice of Bishops. This is likely to oppose a new obstacle to the success of their application.

The Roman Catholic Bishops of that kingdom assembled in Dublin on the 24th of February last, came to a resolution not to concede to the king a *veto* on the appointment of Bishops. They have disclaimed, they say, all right of the Pope to interfere in temporal concerns; and therefore an adherence to the ancient usages of the church in this respect cannot tend to produce any injurious exercise of foreign influence. But is not this reasoning utterly fallacious? They have disclaimed, let it be admitted, the right of the Pope to interfere directly in temporal affairs. But can they, by any possibility, prevent that indirect and more mischievous interference which is exercised by the nomination to the Episcopal office of disaffected, intriguing, factious individuals? Is not the power of doing this reserved to the Pope? Is not the Pope reduced to a state of absolute dependance on Bonaparte? Suppose, therefore, that Bonaparte should take Arthur O'Connor into his Irish council; may we not fairly doubt whether the Bishops whom that traitor would recommend, would be the most



loyal and peaceable of the Roman Catholic clergy? And whoever pretends to say, that Bishops so appointed would not be disposed to exert a malign influence on the population of Ireland, or, if they were, that they would possess no power of doing mischief, must be equally ignorant of human nature, and of the state of society in the sister kingdom. It is impossible for any man, who regards consequences at all, to shut his eyes to the tremendous evils of such a system.

Is it not a little remarkable, at the moment when Bonaparte is circumscribing the power of the Pope, already much abridged by the Concordat, which conceded, among other things, the sole appointment of Bishops, that the Roman Catholics of England and Ireland should refuse to their king a negative even on the Pope's appointment of their Bishops, although the Pope can now be considered in no other light than as the metropolitan of France!

In the petition of the Roman Catholics of Ireland presented to the House of Commons a few days since, it is stated, (as represented in the public papers), that by the operation of the penal laws still in force against them, "they are not only set apart from their fellow-subjects, as aliens in this their native land, but are ignominiously and rigorously proscribed from almost all situations of public trust, honour, or emolument, including every public function and department, from the Houses of Legislature down to the most petty corporations."

A person unacquainted with the real state of the case, (as most people are), would naturally conclude from this bitter complaint, that the Roman Catholic persuasion are labouring under the most intolerant and inquisitorial laws. The *fact*, however, is, that in every thing which respects religious and civil liberty, the Roman Catholics are placed upon the same footing as other Dissenters from the established church. The *test* which prevents many conscientious Dissenters from holding certain national and municipal offices, is stronger indeed in the mind of a conscientious Roman Catholic, because he holds principles, not only inimical to the national church, but

subversive of Protestantism altogether: Popery always was, and must in its very nature continue, an *exclusive* religion.

It is to be observed, however, that the tests, even the strongest, are not *preventive*, but *supervenient*. Very many Dissenters hold offices; from which the Test and Corporation Acts would expel them after *six months nonconformity*; but these laws are annually *suspended* by a bill of indemnity; and it is a more than tacit agreement that such a bill will be annually passed, so long as the Dissenters act loyally.

It is obvious, as just remarked, that some tests, the Parliamentary in particular, affect the Roman Catholic more than the Protestant Dissenter; and there is much reason in this. If the majority of both Houses of Parliament were Protestant Dissenters, there might, perhaps there would, be danger to the church-hierarchy; but none to civil and religious liberty. Whereas a parliamentary majority of Papists would be *compelled*, if honest men, to overthrow a heretic king and a heretic church, and compel the heretical successors of *heretic rebels*, to atone for the great damage done to "*their holy mother the Church of Rome, and their holy infallible Lord the Pope.*"

We are told, however, that there is no danger of seeing a majority of Roman Catholic members in either House; and even if there was such a majority, it would be harmless. This is like a man indulging in some sins, by persuading himself that they are small, and so innocent as not to endanger the pious habit of his mind. The inevitable consequence in this case is too lamentably experienced in the Church, to need any other refutation of this delusive principle; and if Protestants throw open the doors of Parliament to Papists, they deceive themselves most awfully, if they do not also prepare to suffer the infuriate rage of Antichrist.

"Be no deceived;" Popery is the religion of the vicious in all ages and places; "of the profligate and unbelievers," says an able writer; "we can believe, that if the opportunity offered, they would embrace Popery with open arms, and feel well contented to have the pompous superstition, the *tolerated immorality and the licensed impiety*, of that idolatrous re-

ligion restored in the country. What shall we say of its spirit of persecution? Let the massacres of France and Ireland, and the flames of Smithfield, only, bear testimony among the thousand witnesses of a blood-stained history!"\*

"Popery," says a great historian, "is that false religion, remarkable for the strong possession it takes of the natural vices, fears, and prejudices of the human heart. Contrived by men of deep insight in the human character, and improved by the experience and observation of many successive ages, is arrived at last to a degree of perfection, which no former system of superstition had ever attained. It chains the mind; there is no power in the understanding, and no passion in the heart, to which it does not present objects to rouse, and *indulgences* to interest them."†

How many are already known, who would publicly profess Popery, if it involved *no forfeiture* of their places, sinecures, pensions, or privileges! But how many, from motives of vicious indulgences, would embrace Popery, will best be estimated by those who are most experienced in the exceeding deceitfulness of the human heart.

Eligibility to Parliament, and to the great offices of the state, is that which the Roman Catholics demand. In all other respects, they are on a footing with Protestant Dissenters. They enjoy in common with them all the blessings of civil and religious liberty; and that too, notwithstanding they acknowledge *a paramount allegiance* to a foreign potentate, now become the passive tool of our most implacable enemy!

Is it not, then, an uncommon outrage upon reason and common sense, to suppose that Protestants will quietly surrender the sword to a power *sworn* to "*persecute and destroy*," all schismatics from the Papal authority? It would not only be *felo de se*, but the greatest disservice to our fellow-subjects of the Roman Catholic persuasion, for no Papists ever enjoyed the liberty they enjoy, nor can any ever obtain or preserve these blessings, under any but a Protestant government; for the Antichristian power is an *enemy to all liberty*.

\* Christian Observer, vol. iv page 618.

† Robertson's Scotland, book iv. page 359.

While the Lord reigns in Zion, which he has founded, we have no risk that "*the gates of hell will prevail.*" We also hope his Britannic Majesty is too conscious of the obvious import of his Coronation oath, too sensible of the dangers of Popery, and too virtuous, to give up the principal barriers against a recurrence of authorized impiety, profligacy, and idolatry; to suffer the intrusion of the *sworn enemies* of Protestantism into power. But, is it not lamentable, that he has been left in his old age to stand almost alone in the gap, against all the powerful enemies of the gospel? Surely there are several millions of Protestants in the British Isles, who deprecate the Roman Catholic claims; why is it, let me ask, that *addresses are not presented to the king*, expressive of the gratitude of the nation, for the noble stand he has made against his most powerful ministers, upon this seriously important point? Why is nothing heard but the *presumptuous demands* of the Papists on the one hand, and the declamations of *nominal* Protestants in their favour on the other? Why are the sentiments of the *vast majority* kept back? Why should this apathy encourage the enemies of true religion to boast? "*Tell it not in Gath!*" for the daughters of the uncircumcised already taunt us.

See *Chris. Mag.* for May and June 1810.

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## POWER OF IMAGINATION.

### *Anecdotes.*

IT is difficult to give credit to every thing that has been said on this head, it is evident, however, that there have been many strange and extraordinary instances of the strength of imagination.

An old writer gives us the following instance. A man in a burning fever, leaning over his bedside, pointed with his finger to the chamber door, desiring those who were present to let him swim in that lake, and that he then should be cool. His physician humoured the conceit: the patient

walked carefully about the room, seemed to feel the water gradually ascending to his neck, and, at length, having said that he felt himself cool and well, was found, in reality, to be so. Medical men acknowledge that imagination has much to do both in inducing and curing many disorders.

Many have imagined their limbs to be made of glass, of wax, &c. of enormous sizes, and of fantastical shapes; and others have even fancied themselves dead.

In the Memoirs of Count De Maurepas, we find an account of a most singular hypochondriac in the person of the prince of Bourbon. He once imagined himself to be a *hare*, and would suffer no bell to be rung in his palace, lest the noise should drive him to the woods. At another time he fancied himself to be a *plant*, and, as he stood in the garden, insisted on being watered. He sometime afterwards thought he was dead, and refused nourishment; for which, he said, he had no farther occasion. This whim would have proved fatal, if his friends had not contrived to disguise two persons who were introduced to him as his grandfather and Marshal Luxembourg; and who, after some conversation concerning the shades, invited him to dine with Marshal Turenne. Our hypochondriac followed them into a cellar prepared for the purpose, where he made a hearty meal. While this turn of his disorder prevailed, he always dined in the cellar with some noble ghost. We are also informed that this strange malady did not incapacitate him for business, especially when his interest was concerned. This account is drawn from the Appendix to the Monthly Review for December 1792.

Fienus, who wrote upon this subject, relates a singular instance of one whose delusion represented his body so large, that he thought it impossible for him to get out of the room. The physician, fancying there could be no better way of rectifying his imagination than by letting him see that the thing could be done, ordered him to be carried out by force. Great was the struggle; and the patient no sooner saw himself at the outside of the door, than he fell into the same agonies of pain as if his bones had all been broken by being

forced through a passage too little for him, and died immediately after.

Of the important effects arising from bodily labour, when united with mental excitement, we have recorded a remarkable instance in the *Monitor et Preceptor* of Dr Mead. - "A young student at college became so deeply hypochondriac, that he proclaimed himself dead, and ordered the college bell to be tolled on the occasion of his death. In this he was indulged; but the man employed to execute the task appeared to the student to perform it so imperfectly, that he arose from his bed, in a fury of passion, to toll the bell for his own departure. When he had finished, he retired to his bed in a state of profuse perspiration, and was from that moment alive and well."

Simon Brown, a dissenting minister, was born at Shepton Mallet, in Somersetshire, 1680. Excellently well qualified, he early entered into the ministry. A complication of misfortunes, however, affected him so as to deprive him of his reason.—He imagined that God had caused his rational soul to perish, and left him only an animal life in common with brutes: that, though he retained the human shape, and the faculty of speaking in a manner that appeared to others rational, yet he had all the while no more notion of what he said than a parrot.—Consistently with this, he considered himself no more as a moral agent, or subject of either reward or punishment:—and although he was perpetually contending that his powers of reason and imagination were gone, yet he was as constantly exerting both with much activity and vigor, in the composition of several able works. One of these he intended to dedicate to Queen Caroline; but as the unhappy state of his mind appeared in the dedication, some of his friends very wisely suppressed it, as sure to defeat the use and intent of his work. The copy, however, is preserved, and, as it is a great curiosity, we here present it to the reader.

"Madam,

"Of all the extraordinary things that have been rendered to your royal hands since your first happy arrival in



Britain, it may be boldly said what now bespeaks your majesty's acceptance is the chief. Not in itself, indeed, is it a trifle unworthy your exalted rank, and what will hardly prove an entertaining amusement to one of your majesty's deep penetration, exact judgment, and fine taste, but on account of the author, who is the first being of the kind, and yet without a name. He was once a man, and of some little name, but of no worth, as his present unparalleled case makes but too manifest; for, by the immediate hand of an avenging God, his very thinking substance has, for more than seven years, been continually wasting away, till it is wholly perished out of him, if it be not utterly come to nothing. None, no not the least remembrance of its very ruins, remains; not the shadow of an idea is left, nor any sense, so much as one single one, perfect or imperfect, whole or diminished, ever did appear to a mind within him, or was perceived by it. Such a present, from such a thing, however worthless in itself, may not be wholly unacceptable to your majesty, the author being such as history cannot parallel: and if the fact, which is real, and no fiction or wrong conceit, obtains credit, it must be recorded as the most memorable, and indeed astonishing, even in the reign of George II, that a tract, composed by such a thing, was presented to the illustrious Caroline; his royal consort needs not to be added. Fame, if I am not misinformed, will tell that with pleasure to all succeeding times. He has been informed, that your majesty's piety is as genuine and eminent as your excellent qualities are great and conspicuous. This can, indeed, be truly known to the Great Searcher of hearts only. He alone, who can look into them, can discern if they are sincere, and the main intention corresponds with the appearance: and your majesty cannot take it amiss, if such an author hints, that his secret approbation is of infinitely greater value than the commendation of men, who may be easily mistaken, and are too apt to flatter their superiors. But, if he has been told the truth, such a case as his will certainly strike your majesty with astonishment, and may raise that commiseration in your royal breast, which he has in vain endeavoured to ex-

cite in those of his friends, who, by the most unreasonable and ill-founded conceit in the world, have imagined that a thinking being could, for seven years together, live a stranger to its own powers, exercises, operations, and state, and to what the Great God has been doing in it and to it. If your majesty, in your most retired address to the King of kings, should think of so singular a case, you may, perhaps, make it your devout request, that the reign of your beloved sovereign and consort may be renowned to all posterity, by the recovery of a soul now in the utmost ruin; the restoration of one utterly lost at present amongst men. And, should this case affect your royal breast, you will recommend it to the piety and prayers of all the truly devout who have the honour to be known to your majesty: many such, doubtless, there are, though courts are not usually the places where the devout resort, or where devotion reigns; and it is not improbable that multitudes of the pious throughout the land may take a case to heart, that, under your majesty's patronage, comes thus recommended. Could such a favour as this restoration be obtained from heaven by the prayers of your majesty, with what transport of gratitude would the recovered being throw himself at your majesty's feet, and, adoring the Divine Power and Grace, profess himself,

Madam,

Your Majesty's

Most obliged and dutiful servant,

SIMON BROWN."

A complication of distempers, contracted by his sedentary life (for he could not be prevailed on to refresh himself with air and exercise,) brought on a mortification, which put a period to his labours and sorrows about the latter end of 1732. He was, unquestionably, a man of uncommon abilities and learning. His management of Woolston shewed him to have also vivacity and wit; and, notwithstanding that strange conceit which possessed him, it is remarkable that he never appeared feeble or absurd, except when the object of his frenzy was before him.

*See Buck's Anec.*

## UNIVERSAL SALVATION.

*An Anecdote.*

A VENERABLE clergyman in America, grieved to see the doctrine of *universal salvation* prevailing in his congregation, was desirous of preventing its progress by convincing Mr M——, the preacher of the doctrine, that his system was unscriptural and dangerous to society. For this purpose he requested the company of Mr M—— an evening, and being too old to manage the argument with dexterity himself, he desired a young clergyman of his acquaintance to attend and assist him. The aged gentleman opened the conversation of the evening by informing his younger brother in the ministry, that he had requested the company of Mr M—— and himself, in order to have the doctrine of *universal salvation* fairly discussed in his presence, for he thought Mr M—— might be convinced of his error; but he was too old himself to manage the debate—he therefore desired the young clergyman to enter upon the argument with Mr M——. “Why Sir,” replied the gentleman with his usual address, “Jesus Christ says, *He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned*; Mr M—— says, *No one shall be damned*; the dispute therefore is wholly between Jesus Christ and Mr M——, and I wish to be excused from an interference.”

*Columb. Mag.*

## E P I T A P H

ON FOUR CHILDREN LAID IN ONE GRAVE.

*By the late Rev. Mr Robison of Cambridge.*

BOLD Infidelity, turn pale and die!

Beneath this stone four sleeping infants lie:—

Say, are they lost or sav'd?

If death's by sin, they sinn'd, for they are heré;—

If heav'n's by works, in heav'n they can't appear:

Ah! Reason, how depriv'd!

Consult the Bible's sacred page, the knot's untied,—

They died, for Adam sinn'd,—they live, for Jesus died.

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WEDNESDAY, AUG. 29. 1810.

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ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

*State of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, from her Establishment until the Revolution Settlement.*

(Continued from page 248.)

THE faithfulness of the *Protestors* excited the *envy* of their brethren, the *Resolutioners*, and provoked the *enmity* of the *malignants*, who now waited for an opportunity of vengeance.

The opportunity, alas! soon arrived. After nine years exile, king Charles was restored, and monarchy was re-established in England, as well as in Scotland. General Monk was the principal agent in accomplishing this flattering, but fatal change. He was the second son of an ancient, but decayed family. He betook himself in early youth to the profession of arms, and sought military experience in the low countries, the great school of war. When the quarrel between Charles the first and the parliament broke out, he returned to England and joined the standard of tyranny and royalty. After the overthrow of the English monarchy, this adventurer enlisted under the republican banner, and fought against king Charles II. in Scotland. When this kingdom was reduced under the English arms, Monk was left by Cromwell with the supreme command. He served Oliver,

and his son Richard, until he was deposed; and to the parliament afterwards, he gave entire submission. He protested, however, against the violence of the English army which invaded the parliamentary privilege, and established military government in England. He was a man of much apparent moderation, and of deep design. He perceived that the English were wearied of anarchy, and that the Scots longed for the re-establishment of their monarchical constitution, as limited and reformed agreeably to their solemn covenants. He determined to take the advantage of these dispositions. He was covetous in the extreme, possessed a vicious mind, and could not be exceeded by any man in dissimulation.

The Rev. Mr Douglas first proposed to General Monk the king's restoration; and he did himself travel through a great part of England and Scotland, to engage the leading presbyterians in his majesty's service.

Monk in the mean time marched to England; defeated the prevailing faction; restored the parliament; and took the oath of allegiance to the commonwealth. The whole power of the nation being now in the hands of the presbyterians, the covenants between the nation and the Scots, in defence of religion, are again publicly acknowledged as law.

The new parliament was inclined to a limited monarchy. They beheld a covenanted presbyterian king, ready to accept an invitation to the throne of his ancestors, and they proposed to enter into immediate stipulations with him.

At this critical juncture Monk acted the part of a traitor. He, with military power, overawed the parliament, and the king was restored without conditions. Charles, too, again played the hypocrite. A committee of presbyterian ministers waited upon him at Breda, and he publicly thanked God that he was a covenanted king. Thus was the nation plunged into ruin.

Charles the II. was no sooner settled upon the throne, than he discovered a disposition to oppose to the utmost that covenanted reformation, to the support of which he had been repeatedly bound by oath. Having embraced popery, he resolved to suppress presbytery. He made the experiment first in Scot-

land. This nation had been reduced under England by the parliamentary forces. As a conquered kingdom, Charles concluded that he might destroy with ease its remaining liberties. He immediately assumed unlimited power, both in ecclesiastical and civil things; re-established the prelacy, and caused himself to be acknowledged the head of the church. The first blow fell upon the most valuable man in the nation, the pious marquis of Argyle. The ungrateful monarch procured the murder of the nobleman who patronized him in his youth, and placed the crown upon his head. The protestors were the persons most obnoxious to the king; but the whole reformed presbyterian church was devoted to destruction by this impious apostate. He had selected a suitable person as an accomplice in his crimes. Mr Sharp was commissioned by the presbyterians of Scotland to wait upon the king at his restoration, and negociate with him in favour of the church. He also, in the secret with Monk, acted the traitor; was consecrated a bishop; and returned to Scotland as Archbishop of St Andrews, and Primate of the kingdom.

The episcopal church being now fully established in England, Ireland, and Scotland, over the ruins of the reformation, presbyterians were called to seal with their blood the testimony which they held. Upwards of two thousand godly ministers were banished from their congregations and their livings in one day, in the kingdom of England; and upwards of twenty thousand presbyterians suffered martyrdom in Scotland, during the reign of Charles the second and his brother James. Several of the ministers fled to foreign countries; some were indulged in their parishes, upon renouncing their covenanted reformation; but those who continued faithful, were driven to the mountains, hunted, and butchered without mercy.

As faithful witnesses for the truth, these eminently godly men published many valuable testimonies against the prevailing evils; and while they were permitted to live, they exhibited in their own persecuted churches the doctrine, worship, and discipline, which had been appointed by Christ for the New Testament church. They opposed with solid arguments the



present constituted authorities in church and in state. They even declared it rebellion against Heaven to be in allegiance with the house of Stewart. Their cruel persecutors sometimes attempted to reason with the martyrs, when they were called before their courts. The arguments which the persecutors used were more plausible than substantial. "Christians are commanded to be subject to the higher powers. Ecclesiastical persons are not exempted. Ministers are bound to pray for all who are in authority. When God in his providence exalts a man to power, all should submit to the exercise of such power, as the ordinance of God. Even absolute tyranny is from the Lord. There is no power but of God. The apostle Paul required the Romans to obey the emperor Nero, a heathen, a persecutor, an infamous man, and an absolute tyrant. It is certainly more reasonable to submit to the authority of the present reigning family. Presbyterians, therefore, in disowning the king's authority, are worthy of death." Such were the arguments used by the perjured prelates, to ensnare the consciences of those who adhered to reformation principles. These infamous men sheltered their principles under perverted texts of scripture, and called their murder of the pious presbyterians by the name of justice.

To these arguments the persecuted saints, when permitted to speak, made a judicious reply:—

"Every immoral constitution is disapproved of God; and no man ought to swear allegiance to a power which God does not recognize. All kings are commanded to promote the welfare of the church; and those who own allegiance to Christ, cannot consistently pray for the prosperity of the church's enemies, or for the establishment of thrones founded on iniquity.

"It is certainly the duty of christians to be peaceable members of civil society. If they are permitted to enjoy their lives, their property, and especially their religion, without being required to make any sinful compliances, it is right that they should behave peaceably, and not involve society in confusion, even although the power of the empire in which they reside should be in evil hands. Every burden which

God in his providence brings upon them, they must cheerfully bear. But *never are christians called upon by their God to own as his ordinance any thing which is contrary to his law.* The civil powers of which he approves, are a terror to them who do evil, and a praise to them who do well. Tyrants and persecutors, usurpers, and despisers of religion, may be set up, in his holy and just providence, to answer valuable purposes in his hand; but he himself declares in his word, that such kings are set up not by him. The pagan Roman government is described, in Revelation, as the empire of the dragon, and all the kings who support Antichrist, are said, in the same infallible word, to have received from Satan their authority. God has declared their overthrow and destruction, and no protestant should recognize them as the ordinance of God, to which they must yield conscientious support. The present king Charles II. has violated the constitution of Scotland; he has broken the covenant which he made with God and man; he hath claimed, as an essential part of royal prerogative, a blasphemous supremacy in the church; he has overturned our ecclesiastical order, banished the faithful ministry, and persecuted the most virtuous inhabitants of the land: such a perjured usurper and tyrant cannot be considered as a lawful magistrate by the reformed presbyterian covenanters."

These arguments exhibit the good sense and courage which sincere piety infused in the Scottish martyrs. Power, however, was upon the side of the oppressor. Twenty years of persecution reduced the reformed presbyterian church to a small number of ministers. The courts of judicature had been prevented from meeting from the very beginning, and no regular processes for ecclesiastical discipline were attainable. It was necessary, however, to administer church censure upon those who betrayed the cause of religion, and who gave themselves up to immorality. The king himself had been admitted a member of the church, and many of his courtiers had formerly been professed disciples of Christ. Those who renounce the faith, however high in power, should never be admitted to escape, as fugitives from discipline. These

correct sentiments about the discipline of the church, influenced one of the pious and most faithful ministers of the gospel then living, to pronounce the solemn sentence of excommunication upon the base apostates, who had thrown aside even every pretension to religion.

The Rev. Donald Cargill did, upon the 17th day of September, 1680, at Torwood in Stirlingshire, excommunicate Charles II. and six others of the most noted persecutors, in the presence of a vast concourse of people. Sufficient documents were produced of their having been guilty of drunkenness, hypocrisy, perjury, heresy, bloodshed, and adultery; and although they were now publicly caressed as suitable members of the episcopal church, and one of them was the avowed head of that church, they certainly deserved this awful and solemn sentence. The faithfulness of Mr Cargill excited the persecutors to madness. They, in return for his casting them out of the church of Christ, persecuted him unto the death, and thus hastened him to the kingdom of glory. He died in the full assurance of faith. After his death, the church was left destitute of a regular ministry. Search was diligently made by the enemy for all the students of divinity that were inclined to presbyterianism, and they also were executed.

The spirit of the covenanters was not, however, entirely broken. They established among themselves a general correspondence. The societies in each shire were connected by a particular correspondence of delegates, and these correspondences were again connected in a representative general meeting. This plan was highly expedient in their situation, as they had no properly organized church. It was a measure of expediency, dictated by the necessity of the times. The general meeting managed every thing of common concern to the societies. They claimed neither civil nor ecclesiastical power. They exercised no part of church discipline. They endeavoured, however, to procure a faithful ministry. They commissioned the laird of Earlston and Sir Robert Hamilton, two learned and godly men, to represent their case to the foreign churches. And these commission-

ets opened a door, by the blessing of Providence, through which they received ministerial aid. The Rev. Richard Cameron, who valiantly contended for the faith delivered to the saints, and for the violated liberties of his much injured country, and who fell at Airmoss in 1680, had been ordained in Rotterdam for the reformed presbyterian church. Mr James Renwick was ordained by the Classis of Groningen. He was a man of remarkable piety, and recommended himself exceedingly to those godly divines of the church of Holland, by his unwavering faithfulness.

He explained to them his principles, and bore an explicit testimony against the remaining corruptions of the Belgic church. He refused ordination at Embden, where it was first offered to him, because the ministry of that place had embraced the Cocceian errors.\*

Even at Groningen, he would on no account subscribe the constitution and catechism of the Dutch church. Sensible of the justness of his animadversions, and impressed with the solemnity and integrity which appeared in whatever he said, these godly ministers declared it was the Lord's cause, and although all the powers on earth should resent it, they would ordain to the holy ministry this eminently pious youth.

He subscribed, in the presence of the Classis, the confession and standards agreed upon by the assembly at Westminster, and he was ordained, with the imposition of hands, a minister of the gospel of Christ, for the reformed presbyterian church, now suffering in Scotland. For this remarkable condescension in the church of Holland, the Scottish cove-

\* John Cocceius was a very learned divine of the church of Holland, and professor of divinity in the university of Leyden. Men of genius are naturally disposed to be inventive. Originality, the idol to which all men are apt to bow, is the object to which great men direct their principal attention, unless they are restrained by christian humility. Cocceius aimed at originality, and he succeeded. It is, indeed, much easier for a man of genius to invent an erroneous system, than to discover and illustrate truth.

The Cocceians consider the historical part of the Old Testament as typical of the new dispensation. The ceremonial law they view as a punishment inflicted on the Jews for their transgressions, particularly for having worshipped the golden calf. They deny the morality of the fourth commandment.

nanters are obliged to the pious exertions of Sir Robert Hamilton, as the instrument employed by God to assist Mr Renwick, in convincing these pious divines of the superior purity of the covenanted church of Scotland. Professor Witsius, Professor Mark, and Mr Brakel, distinguished themselves as the friends of the covenanters. Upon Mr Renwick's return to his native country, his ministry was blessed, as the means of refreshing thousands, who waited upon it in the fields and mountains. The Societies had no access to public ordinances, except those administered by Mr Renwick, and Mr Alex. Shields, who had been licensed by presbyterian ministers in England, and one or two more who occasionally came over from Ireland. As Mr Renwick was the most faithful, he was the most exposed to danger. He was at last put to a decisive proof of his faithfulness. He continued unmoved in the hour of trial. He was condemned, and executed upon the 17th February, 1688, in the 26th year of his age, and 6th of his ministry. He is the last person who suffered death in Scotland, on account of religion; the last martyr to the covenanted reformation.

To the remnant of the persecuted church the gospel was preached, after Mr Renwick's death, by Mr Shields, the Rev. Thomas Linning, who had been ordained at Embden, and Mr William Boyd, who had been licensed at Groningen. These gentlemen maintained the reformation testimony without molestation, until the revolution.

*From an American Work.*

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### THE RIGHTS OF GOD.

“Render—unto God, the things that are God's.” MAT. xxii. 21.

(Continued from page 256.)

**I**T is evidently necessary, that in forming our ideas of a divine Providence, we should take into account that care which God exercises over these parts of creation, which to our eye may seem the least worthy of his notice. It argues the grossest ignorance of divinity to suppose that the Almighty

ty is acquainted with great matters, but not with those that are more small and insignificant. If God be of infinite perfection, such a supposition is absolutely impossible. And was it once believed to be true, no considerate mind could enjoy a moment's peace: the feeblest insect might soon deliver the message of death to the mightiest monarch. Who is it that has not heard what the worms did to vaunting Herod? Who is it that is ignorant how low the proud Pharaoh was brought by armies of frogs, lice, flies and locusts? Yes! there is as real a necessity that God should govern the meanest worm as the highest angel. Nor can any person reasonably conceive it beneath his dignity, who made these things, to rule them in subordination to the general good of his universal empire. It is the weakest thing imaginable, to suppose, that the seemingly small and contemptible parts of God's creation, are unworthy subjects of his government, because we know not their use. Why should we suppose it either possible or necessary, that we, in our assuming arrogance, should know all the uses to which infinite wisdom employs creatures of which perhaps we think so meanly, merely because we are not better informed concerning their history.

It is far from being improbable, that a turkey-buzzard, who employs itself in carrying away dead carrion out of the heat of the sun, and hiding it beneath the ground, is a more respectable member of the common family of creation, than either Julius Cæsar, Alexander the Great, or any hero of modern times, who can murder men by the thousand and pile up their rotting flesh upon heaps. The former useful labourer cleanses this earth of nuisances, and renders it thereby more comfortable and agreeable for the residence of man: but the latter make both its physical and moral stink insufferable. There is one lesson of great importance, which may be learned from God's attention to the meanest members of his family, and that is, humble condescension to the most poor and needy of our brethren, partaking of the same common nature with ourselves. When we see a clod of the earth raise his haughty and disdainful eyes above the vulgar throng, as if unworthy of a look from his self-important countenance, and compare



his conduct with that of the Most High God, feeding the ravens that cry to him for their food, we are cast down to the dust with admiration. Nor is this all the use that may be derived from God's care about these members of his family, that sit at the lower end of the table. It helps to raise the eyes of that trembling prodigal, man, to his Father's compassionate bosom. That, spotless seraphs should shine with unclouded splendor in their Father's house, is not the most wonderful thing in nature. No! It is much more wonderful to see the tabernacle of God with men on earth. A convinced sinner, just awakening from the slumber of his horrid estrangement, can hardly believe such a thing possible. He thinks himself too inconsiderable to become an object of God's special notice. But let this son of sorrows take a morning walk with God, through the lower departments of creation; let him behold with what infinite condescension divine benevolence calls forth the meanest, the feeblest of the family of brutal creation; with what ease he opens their mouth, and gives every one his morsel in due season; let the trembling prodigal dwell on this strange sight, until it warms his heart—then let him retire within, and tell his soul what his eyes have seen—and let him learn to hope that his needs are not beneath the care of Heaven. I have been the more particular on this part of the subject, because we are in most danger of overlooking it, in a general survey of God's administrations.

Though the ground is abundantly firm, on which a believer in God's providence stands, when he turns aside to see this *great sight*, yet it cannot be beheld with too much lowliness and reverence of mind. The difficulties which combine themselves with this subject, are perhaps among the most perplexing of any, to be found in the Christian system. When we bring our thoughts to a point, and strive to fasten them upon that precise mode in which Jehovah constantly puts forth his agency upon his creatures, according to their respective natures, we shall soon find the weakness of our own understandings, and their present insufficiency to pursue this inquiry to any great length. A twilight dimness covers the subject,

which renders our views extremely indistinct. What of all other things is most difficult to the church, is, to render a rational account to her own children, and to them that are without, of the influence which God is supposed to put forth in the production of sin.

The decrees of God in eternity, and their execution in time, when looked at through the medium of creature agency, seem very often to put on an extremely dark complexion. Many have laboured, in all ages of the Christian church, to set this matter in a conspicuous point of view to the eye of reason; and yet after all their pains, it is much to be feared that while we tabernacle in houses of clay, we shall never get up so high in the mount of intellectual improvement, as to be beyond darkness and doubting. This felicity is probably reserved for Immanuel's land; where death shall be swallowed up in victory, and faith be changed into open vision. We are not, however, hence to infer, that we are at liberty to consign our powers into a state of stupid inactivity, in respect to these deep things of God. Nothing is more distant from our duty. The works of God are great, and sought out of all that have pleasure therein; and how far the Lord may show his secrets, even in this life, to them that fear him, is hard to say.

It is probable if we knew more about the metaphysical properties of being, we should find many of our doubts on this, and sundry other perplexing questions, easily resolved; but this very imperfection of understanding is one of the things under which God intends we should be exercised for the present. We shall, therefore, find that when reason has exerted herself to the uttermost, in these researches, much will remain for faith to do, in guiding our thoughts to a holy and quiet termination on God, in midst the disorders in which all things visible are seemingly involved. The reasonings which we are capable of applying to these moral, spiritual, and mysterious points, do not usually bring along with them that conviction with which mathematical, or philosophical demonstrations are more commonly attended. The reason is not, that the one are employed about truths, and the other about false

or improbable conjectures. No. The reason is to be sought for in the state of the mind. That God governs all things in a most holy, wise, and powerful manner, is a proposition, though not more true, yet containing a great deal more truth, than the proposition which asserts, that two and two are equal to four; yet we perceive the truth contained in the latter, with the utmost ease, whereas the former, is sought after with much labour, and but darkly understood at the best. If we cannot therefore satisfy ourselves as to all doubts we ought to strengthen our faith, as Job, Jeremiah, and Asaph did, in the doctrine of the divine righteousness, which however obscured to our eye, must ever be most unspotted, in all the divine administrations.

It is not the action of sinning, so far as referable to the efficiency of our natural powers, that can occasion much doubt in this inquiry. There is nothing in our exercising our natural powers, according to that organization which God at first gave them, which renders it unfit for him to continue the operation of these fixed laws, by which strength is supplied to the rational creature, conform to the designs of its original constitution. There was nothing evil in the action of stoning Stephen, abstractly considered, more than in the action of stoning, at the commandment of God, the man who had broken the sabbath. The quarter on which we are most pressed, is, to account for the connection which the divine perfections have with the moral turpitude or disorder of sinful actions. And in respect to this immoral quality, actions may be considered either as to their *beginning*, their *progress*, or their *end*.

In respect to the commencement of such actions, God is concerned in them *permissively*, of which the scripture speaks, "*I gave them up to their own heart's lust; and they walked in their own counsels.*" And in Acts xiv. 16. we find a similar sentiment. "*God in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.*" We are not, however, to think that this permission is a mere negation of energy, on the part of God, whereby he withdraws himself from creature agency, to look on as an idle spectator. And yet we have much reason to

believe, that this is the idea which many people annex to God's permissions: in which case they evidently borrow their conceptions from what they see taking place among men. When a man cannot prevent an evil action, notwithstanding all his efforts, we often see him retire, and perhaps properly, from the scene of action, that he may not mingle his powers with the immorality of others, and thereby incur a share, at least, of their blame. But who is it that does not see that no such manner of action is competent to God? How can he who is essentially omnipresent withdraw from any part of space? How can he, by whom all things are upheld every moment and furnished with all their powers, leave the creature any moment to itself to act its own energies independent of its maker? No. The thing is improbable. We must therefore seek for some other idea to be annexed to the term *permission*, as applied to God. This permission is not to be understood simply of God's *not willing to hinder sin*, which is an idle negation; "*but of his positive and fixed volition, that he will not hinder sin.*"

God, oftentimes to punish men for sin, sometimes to try them, and sometimes to correct them, knowing the full extent of our powers, their bent, the positions in which we are placed, and the impressions to which in these situations we will become subject, *positively wills* that he will not put forth any intervening operation, that would turn our dispositions or actions out of their natural channel; and not only so, but he mingles also his providential agency with sin and sinners, *by presenting occasions*, thus the passing by of the Midianites, became subservient to the wickedness of Joseph's brethren; the wedge of gold, and the goodly garment, were occasions of exciting the inward avarice of Achan; the nakedness of Bethsheba inflamed the lust of David. In all these, it is easy to see, that there is no evil in the things presented. The holy angels, in their daily intercourse with mankind, behold such things as these without contracting any defilement. Nay, in their own proper nature, relations and complete connections, these things are calculated to produce the contrary effect, and only become occasions of evil, as they meet

with a state of mind prepared to convert them to such pernicious purposes.

Among multitudes of examples that might be given of the diverse effects, which one and the same cause may produce upon different hearts, according to the diversity of their subjective states, I shall present that of Phinehas. Thus stands the case—The wicked, the avaricious Balaam, having failed in cursing Israel, advised to entangle them, if possible, into the sins of whoredom and idolatry, which would answer more effectually the designs of Balak, than all the wizard's enchantments. The snare took. Israel ate of the sacrifices of Moab, bowed to their gods, and committed whoredom with their women, the example of one emboldened another. On this occasion, “*one of the children of Israel came, and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman, in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.*” This action might have been inflaming to the lust of many others, and no doubt it was. But it had not that effect on all. “*And when Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from amongst the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; and he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly: so the plague was stayed from the children of Israel.*” We see how differently Phinehas was affected with these entangling sights, owing to the state of his mind, from that in which others were affected, who were under the influence of contrary passions.—So, presenting so many signs and wonders before Pharaoh, ought to have softened his heart; yet God knew that the contrary would be the case, in the then temper of this wretch's mind. The evils that came upon him were not imputable to the objects with which he was presented, but to the evil affections with which he received them. In like manner, the Jews ought to have been deeply affected, and convinced by the miracles of Christ; but they were not, and what is more, God intended that they should be suffered to meet these mi-

acles under such an unbelieving state of mind, as would effectually seal their ruin.

Moreover, Jehovah mingles his providential agency with sin, by giving up men to the influence of *Satan's temptations*, together with the *workings of their own wretched lusts*, so that from the conjunct operation of these powerful causes, they are carried on to fill up a great part of the moral evil which is in the world. It is perhaps not competent to us to judge with precision, of all Satan's agency on the human mind; something, however, of it, may be learned from scripture and experience. An evil spirit from the Lord, is said to have troubled Saul. And a lying spirit is said to be put by the Lord, into the mouths of Ahab's prophets. And Satan is said to work, in the children of disobedience, as a powerful prince. In this business; sometimes Satan acts the *tempter*, when he leads into error, and God, often in such cases, does not prevent it from efficaciously fastening on the mind. Sometimes Satan acts the *accuser*, and God exposes men to his temptations, as in the cases of Job and Joshua. Sometimes Satan acts the *tormentor*, and God delivers men into his hand to be vexed.

But, of all the concern that God has with sin, none is more mysterious than that *internal operation*, which he puts forth on the human heart, by turning it whithersoever he pleases, according to the adorable counsels of his own will. It is, perhaps, most proper that we should not pursue this remark too far, as it leads into a region with which we are so little acquainted. Yet to me it seems not beyond the truth to suppose that this operation may be carried on, at least in part, by the internal proposal of objects, which however good, or innocent in themselves, are calculated to work on the corrupt heart, to the production of evil. So the brethren of Joseph thought that he was beloved of his parents, and favoured of God by dreams, which were facts, that had nothing of evil in themselves, but they had a very evil influence on these wickedly disposed minds, who were thereby driven to meditate murder.—Pharaoh, after the death of Joseph, thought how he might consult the safety of his kingdom: this



thought was from God, and had nothing wrong in it. But it fell into a bad mind, and was abused to the destruction of Israel. It came into the mind of Caiphas, that it was expedient that one should die for the people, but he abused it to accomplish the death of Christ. Again, God operates internally upon man when he causes objects to move him upon a certain quarter rather than any other, whence it comes, that man, naturally inclined to every kind of evil, is nevertheless carried out to some one rather than others, just as in forming a water course, the former of the canal, takes advantage of a general principle of fluidity in the water, to turn it in that direction which best answers his designs. Besides, when many ways of sinning present, God often shuts up all but one, and leaves it open for punishment or trial. Seeing, therefore, that he has so many and various methods of conducting, even the wicked hearts of ungodly men to fulfil his will, we, certainly with justice, ascribe an extensive agency to his providence, in all the motions of the rational creature, however lawless or immoral they may be, as to their immediate production, by their sinful authors.

In respect to the *progress of sin*, we may add to what has been now said, that God sets limits to it, as he does to the sea, saying, Hitherto shalt thou go and no farther, whereby it is restrained from overflowing its banks, as it certainly would otherwise do, to a much greater degree, both in intensity and duration, than we find is the case. This moderating effect God puts forth, sometimes *internally*, by illuminating the mind so as to perceive the turpitude of sin, with the magnitude and bitterness of consequent punishment, as also by restraining wicked desires from running after their objects to their full extent. Sometimes this restraint operates *externally*, by repressing the fury of Satan and the world, removing occasions of evil, calling off from sin by commands or threatenings, of all which we have striking examples in Laban, Esau, Balaam, Sennacherib, and many others. And happy it is for the world, and especially for godly men, that the present course of visible and invisible creation, is under such control; for bad as the world is, it would be a great deal worse, was

it not that *God reigns*. And as to the *termination of sinful acts*, God is deeply concerned, that by his ordination and direction, he may bend sin contrary to its own nature and the most malicious inclinations of the sinner, by the irresistible exertions of his wisdom and power, to the most glorious ends. "*Ye thought evil against me,*" says Joseph to his brethren, "*but God meant it for good.*"

Such powers, as these mentioned in the preceding discourse, are necessary to reside somewhere in the system of universal being; and it appears not where they can be more safely placed than in the hands of the Lord God Omnipotent. Every pious mind traces up its concerns until it lands them in Divinity, and then it rests satisfied.

(*To be Continued.*)



## OBEDIENCE TO THE LAWS OF GOD THE SURE DEFENCE OF NATIONS.

"*Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin, The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him he will forsake you.*" 2 CHRON. xv. 2.

(Continued from page 261.)

**I**N the farther prosecution of this subject, it should also be considered, that the established connexion between virtue and prosperity, vice and ruin, which has already been noticed, is much closer, and more powerful, in relation to communities than to individuals, and draws after it a *present retribution* as an unavoidable consequence. It is, indeed, the general tendency of virtue to produce happiness, and of vice to beget misery, in every individual who practises the one or the other. But in a vicious society, a virtuous man will suffer in many ways from his unavoidable connexion with wicked associates. In a virtuous society, on the contrary, a vicious man has many enjoyments, and derives many advantages, merely from the circumstance, that the mass of the commu-

nity are not like himself. They form, as it were, a barrier around him, and their goodness is the food on which his vices live and prey. But when the greater part of the individuals of a community come to possess this character, that is, when a nation *as such* becomes abandoned to vice, there is no longer any suitable tie by which it can be holden together, and every salutary source from which safety and happiness can proceed is dried up. Without religion there can be no obligation of an oath, no sufficient sanction to a promise, and consequently no rational and solid ground of confidence—no operative and universal motive to truth, fidelity, and integrity, either in the intercourse and transactions of individuals with each other, or in their engagements to the public. Without morality all regard to the happiness and claims of others, to public and private justice, to parental authority, to filial duty, to conjugal fidelity, to temperance, chastity, sympathy, charity and humanity, is wholly destroyed, or left to rest on the airy principle of honour, or the dangerous foundation of personal inclination. Man becomes a selfish sensual brute. And when the component parts of a nation are of this description it is impossible that they should remain united, except by the most powerful compulsion. Civil liberty cannot exist at all in such a community. Society must either be dissolved entirely, or it must assume a state and form which is a greater evil than dissolution itself.

On the other hand, where religious and moral principles, in their vigour and purity, pervade the great body of individuals in a state, every social tie is strengthened, every part of the community draws toward the good of the whole, society is easily governed, because it requires but little governing, civil liberty may be extensively enjoyed, and all the happiness of the social state will be fully realized. So intimately is religion and morality connected by a *natural bond*, or rather by the *divine constitution*, with the safety and prosperity of nations. It will be manifest to every one who pursues the clue here given, that just in *proportion* as the religious and moral system of a nation is *pure* in that proportion will it *naturally* tend to promote the public safety and happi-

ness; and consequently that the christian system, as the purest of all, is the best of all—the best of all, for communities, as well as for individuals—“*having the promise of the life which NOW IS, as well as of that which is to come.*”

But the conclusion which I am here particularly concerned to form, and I think it may now be formed with advantage, is—That nations do receive a retribution in the present world according to their several characters:—That this cannot be otherwise if they are ever treated *as nations*, and that the divine constitution unavoidably produces *this effect*.

On the whole, then, the doctrine which I proposed to demonstrate has been shown to be supported by facts, and to be sanctioned by the soundest principles of reason—It has been proved *to be true*; and *how*, and *why*, it is true, has been explained.

A few important deductions from what has been observed shall now conclude the discourse.

We may learn, from what has been said, how totally devoid of truth is that darling principle of modern unbelievers, that a nation may be as happy without religion as with it.

This is a mere atheistical hypothesis and speculation, not only unsupported by any experience, but in direct hostility, as we have seen, with the experience of all nations, in all ages of the world. It is one of the most daring, extravagant, and unaccountable chimeras, that ever entered the head even of a metaphysical infidel; and nothing but the most inveterate hatred to God and his laws could ever have given it birth. Yet it has been, and with many who are not destitute of influence, I fear it still is, a tenet for which they have a peculiar fondness. They endeavour to give it currency by professing to separate religion from morality, and to be advocates for discarding the former, and warm contenders for retaining the latter. But that morals can exist without religion, is as destitute of proof and probability, as the whole position is without this qualification. No nation has ever yet existed where this phenomenon of morals without religion has made its appearance; and there is no reason to believe that it is even possible from the very nature and structure of the human

mind. The very truth is, infidels first endeavour to exclude religion from the state, that then they may give the name of morality to any set of principles they may choose to adopt; and that thus, in the end, they may fully accomplish their wishes by getting rid of both. Be warned, my brethren, by what you have heard, that without religion and morality, harmoniously united, we are an undone people; without these our civil liberty and social happiness cannot possibly be preserved. Let us esteem these our principal and most essential *defence* at the present hour, and let us humbly implore and endeavour to obtain the favour of God, or all other means will be ineffectual. Let each of us be deeply convinced of this as a practical truth: And therefore I add,

That viewing the religious and moral state of our country in connexion with this subject, we may see how urgent is the call for humiliation, fasting and prayer.

If God deals with nations according to their relative light and advantages, and where he has given much, will always require the more—and such we have seen really to be the case—verily, my brethren, this is a truth of most solemn import to the people of the United Kingdom at this time. Our advantages, in point of religious and moral information, have been second to those of no people upon earth; and our circumstances, in many respects, for carrying this information into practice, are, I believe, superior to those which any other nation now enjoys. Has our improvement then, been, in any measure, answerable to our privileges? Is our moral and religious state, at present, such, in any degree, as our circumstances demand? Every serious and candid mind, penetrated with grief, will answer, No! It is a most melancholy fact, that we have greatly forgotten, and departed from the Lord God of our fathers. Of the arm that has so often and remarkably defended us in the hour of distress,—we have been unmindful. We have returned base ingratitude for the favours of heaven, which we have experienced as a nation. Those civil and religious privileges which God at an early period bestowed upon us, and which he has long continued to us, we have abused in the service of sin. There has certain-

ly been a loss, and not an increase of piety and morality, in our country of late. Infidelity does most awfully abound among all descriptions of people from the highest to the lowest. Profaneness of every description, most lamentably prevails. The ordinances of God's day and house are neglected, deserted, and despised. His word is openly ridiculed, and his Son, by some, treated as an impostor. A dissoluteness of manners and morals, like a deadly leprosy, is fast spreading itself among the people at large, and far beyond any former example.

In these circumstances, we are engaged in a war with the most powerful, the most active, the most insidious nation upon earth. A nation which has already proved a scourge to many others, and which appears to be permitted by God to effect its designs, for the express purpose of chastising this guilty age—this age of *infidel reason*. What is the language of this situation? It undoubtedly is—"God hath come forth against you for your iniquities—your conduct toward him is changed for the worse, tremble lest his toward you should change also. Turn unto him speedily, lest his anger consume you." Yes, my brethren, let our opinion be what it may of second causes, manifest it is, that the Deity hath a controversy with us.—For a long time past he hath given us intimation of his displeasure, but now he hath, as it were, set himself in array against us. Let us then truly humble ourselves before him. Let us "*repent in dust and ashes*" in his presence. Let us mourn our land defiling iniquities. Let us be humble, not merely in name, but in deed and in truth. Let us "*rend our heart and not our garments.*"—Let us, in very truth, plead with him, in secret and in public, "*to turn us from our sins and to turn his anger from us.*" Let us intreat for this, as sensible that we are pleading for our very existence. Let us pray that God would pour out his holy and blessed Spirit upon the people, to convince them effectually of sin; and to turn them effectually to himself. Let us pray that he would bless the rulers of our land, and make them examples of real religion and sound morals:—That he would dispose them all, instead of countenancing and encouraging vice and



infidelity by their practice and profession, to set themselves against it, as that which will destroy both them and those they govern, if it proceed much farther. Let us resolve in God's name and strength, to *act* as well as to pray. Let those who have power be conjured to use it for him from whom all power is derived, and to whom they must solemnly account for the manner in which they employ it. Let each of us, in our proper places and stations, be earnest, resolute and persevering, in promoting the work of reformation. Let us each reform *himself*, and endeavour to set an example, purer than heretofore, of true religion, and of the discharge of every moral, social, and relative duty. Believe it, my brethren, the serious hour is come. Reformation or severe chastisement is just before us. But if we will turn unto the Lord in the manner recommended, we have nothing to fear. God will be "*found of us*" if we "*shall seek him*."—This is the assurance of the text—It encourages repentance and reformation, by the kindest and most gracious promise. If we, in very deed, put our trust in him, and act, as those who do so, let the world rise in arms against us, still we shall be safe. As therefore we love our country, our souls or our God—as we regard the happiness of time or of eternity—let us be on the Lord's side that he may be on our's.

Finally—Let us be thankful for the past experience we have had of the divine mercies. We have not been without correction, yet light, indeed, hath been its strokes in comparison with our sins. Countless and peculiar favours are still continued to us—domestic happiness and enjoyment, health and comparative plenty—the means of knowledge and information—and above all, the precious gospel of the Redeemer, and the sweet and heavenly hope that it inspires. These mercies, preserved to us when we have so little deserved them, should swell our hearts with the humblest and liveliest gratitude. And let this gratitude be expressed, in leading us truly to our heavenly Father; and again I repeat it, we shall be safe in this world and happy in that which is to come.—  
Amen.

## ON RELIGIOUS FASTING.

*“Therefore also now, saith the Lord, Turn ye even unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.”*

JOEL ii. 12, 13.

**T**HE divine judgments, when they immediately affect, or imminently threaten our country or ourselves, are calculated to impress the mind with humility and with veneration of the power and justice of God. They present to our view in the strong colours traced by fear, the guilt by which we have merited the correction of heaven; and they constrain us by our sufferings to feel our weakness and dependence, which, in the elation of mind produced by prosperity, we are apt to forget. It is an impulse of nature, no less than a dictate of religion, when we are struck with affliction or are surrounded with danger, to have recourse by prayer to God who is the only refuge of the guilty and the weak. Repentance, supplication, submission, and a return to the spirit of duty and obedience, become a sinful and a suffering creature.

It is in itself proper, and has been customary in all ages, to accompany these pious and inward dispositions of the heart with such decent outward expressions of humility and penitence as are calculated, by affecting the senses, to assist devotion, and to strengthen its principle. Among these, fasting has been the most frequent, and is, perhaps, the most natural. We find it always resorted to, in the history of the Jewish nation, when they were actually suffering under great calamities, or were menaced with them by the denunciations of their prophets. It was when they were afflicted with a grievous famine, and at the same time were threatened with a dangerous war, that the prophet in the text called them *to fasting and weeping and mourning*.—During the Babylonish captivity, and even after their return to their own land, they observed, as a perpetual institution, the fasts of the fourth, the fifth, the seventh, and the tenth months, in memory of their

past sufferings, and of the sins by which they were incurred, in order that the recollection might for ever preserve them from falling into the same evils.

The vivacity of eastern sensibility, and the spirit of their religion, which consisted so much in outward rites and ceremonies, often led them to assume exterior marks of affliction, which would be excessive under the christian dispensation, and especially in a climate like ours distinguished by a much more cool and temperate genius—They covered themselves with sackcloth—They cast ashes on their heads—They rent their garments.

The christian church hath likewise her fast. “*The days come,*” saith Christ, speaking to the Jews of his disciples, “*in which the bridegroom shall be taken from them, after that shall they fast in those days.*” And the primitive christians frequently instituted fasts when their country was exposed to the calamities of war, of pestilence, or of famine, when the church was labouring under severe persecutions, or was menaced with them by her powerful enemies—when heresy or schism endangered her internal peace and order—or when general corruption of manners was likely to tarnish her purity and glory.

It will readily be admitted that the circumstances of the present time, and the general aspect of divine providence, not only towards these lands, but towards the whole christian world, are such as to call for this duty.—The savage wars of modern times, which in their sanguinary and exterminating spirit, so far exceed those of any former period, and which in their progress or their issue, may deeply involve the interests of religion and morality—and, above all, the growing degeneracy of our manners, and the progress of an open and licentious infidelity, call upon us in the language of the prophet, “*Now, therefore, saith the Lord, Turn ye even to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, and slow to anger, -and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil*”

The nature—the reasonableness—and the causes of fasting, will form the substance of this discourse.

I. The term implies an abstinence from our ordinary food. Under the ancient economy this was carried to a high degree of self-denial, and often to extreme austerity. When the government of Nineveh, at the denunciations of the prophet, proclaimed a fast, it was rigorously enjoined that all the people, and even the cattle should abstain both from food and from drink. “*It was published throughout Nineveh by a decree of the king and his nobles—let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed nor drink water. Let man and beast be covered with sack-cloth.*” The extreme danger that hung over them called for deep humility from that guilty nation. And could any circumstances be more calculated to accomplish this end, to affect the imagination, and impress the heart, than the blackness and mourning that covered all the land—than the vigorous abstinence that was enjoined—than the profound and universal silence that reigned, interrupted only by the prayers of a penitent people, or the cries of hunger uttered by the cattle in their empty stalls?

But, even under the Jewish institution, distinguished as it was by ceremony, the principal part of this duty consisted in the dispositions of the heart with which it was accompanied—in its humility—in its penitence, and in acts of piety and benevolence.

The prophet Isaiah, when he reproves the hypocrisy of the nation of Israel in discharging this duty, demands in the name of God—“*Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?*” And the prophet Joel in the text requires sincere repentance, as the only principle that can give efficacy to the duty. “*Turn ye even to me, saith the Lord, with fasting and with weeping, and with mourning—and rend your heart and not your garments.*”

The inward and holy dispositions of the soul, indeed, are of more price in the sight of God, than any rites that fatigue, or any austerities that only emaciate the body. "To what purpose," says St Jerom, "is that abstinence that subdues the flesh, if the soul is, at the same time, inflated with pride? What is the merit of growing pale by the austerity of our fasts, if the countenance discovers, by its dark and lowering features, that we are inwardly gnawed by rancour or envy? What virtue is there in abstaining from wine, if we are intoxicated with malice and rage? Abstinence and mortification are then only to be esteemed virtues when by them the heart is purified from its vices and its sins."\*

Our blessed Lord, when he introduced the spiritual dispensation of the gospel, abrogated, among other ceremonies of the law, the rigors with which the Jewish fasts were observed. He told his disciples indeed, that they must still fast when he should be taken from them, and they should be involved in those calamities by which he had destined, after his ascension, to try and to purify his church. "*But when ye fast,*" saith he "*be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance, for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but to thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*" Evidently our Saviour does not mean in this injunction to abrogate or to depreciate the duty, but only to require in it those graces of the heart from which it ought to flow, and which it is calculated to strengthen and increase.

If it is asked then, what degree of abstinence is required in a christian fast? It is sufficient to answer that *the Lord will have mercy and not sacrifice.* It ought to be measured, by a conscientious man, according to the habits of his health. That is the just degree that will best prepare us for the humble and penitent services of a religious fast—That is equally remote from the fulness and indulgence of our ordinary living, and from that inanition and faintness that, in some

\* Hieron ad Celantium.

feeble constitutions, would impede the exercises of a sincere and fervent devotion.

But it becomes a penitent christian to be chiefly employed in the recollection and confession of his sins—to bow in profound humility before the offended justice of God, to recognize its righteous inflictions, and to examine their causes and their end. And, as the end of every chastisement is to bring us to repentance and amendment of life, apprehending and relying on the mercy of God in Christ, it becomes him, with a heart penetrated with a sense of his sins, to form, in the presence of God, the most sincere and steadfast purposes of duty, submission, and new obedience. *“Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily; thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward.”*

II. The reasonableness of this duty is derived from various sources, which it is intended only cursorily to mention.

It is an expressive symbol of the penitence and affliction, that should fill our hearts, upon the recollection of our sins, that have drawn upon us the righteous judgments of God, or have gathered round us the dark and threatening appearances of his just displeasure. By forcibly affecting the senses, it is calculated to make us feel our wants, and our dependence upon God, and to convince us that there is no protection, for creatures so weak and so offending, but in his power and new covenant favour. The solemnity of such an extraordinary act of religion, tends to make the mind serious and collected, and disposes it to enter deeply into the examination of our own hearts, and of the causes for which it hath pleased God to afflict us or to threaten us with his judgments. The passions, that have been inflamed by indulging appetite, are allayed by denying it. The strength of sin is weakened when its nourishment is taken away. Devotion is enlivened by freeing the body from a load that sometimes oppresses its exercises.

The liveliness of a sensual imagination often checks the fervour, and impairs the purity of the worship of the heart—abstinence restrains it. Continual gratification tends to create a pride and elation of mind that is prone to forget its depen-



dent and accountable state—Abstinence mortifies it. Abstinence serves, therefore, to cherish those sentiments of purity, of spirituality, of self-denial, of profound humility, and sincere repentance which become the fast that God hath chosen. St Augustin expresses the excellence of this duty in the following language: “Fasting, saith he, purifies the soul, it elevates us above the grosser objects of sense, it subdues the flesh, and contributes to form a heart humble and contrite. It dissipates the darkness with which concupiscence covers the mind, it extinguishes the flame of impurity, and rekindles the fire of divine love. It moderates the desires, it mortifies the passions, and sets bounds to lust. By fasting, the people of Nineveh arrested, as it were, the just indignation of God—by the same duty, the children of Israel, humbling their souls before him, found deliverance from all the evils that afflicted them. It was by this holy exercise that Elias was rapt to heaven in a chariot of fire—that Moses was qualified to receive the law from God—and that even the Son of God prepared himself to preach the gospel. Not that he had any need of these abstemious duties, but that he might leave us so salutary and holy an example.”

The command of God to fast and pray, the promises he has made to his people in the faithful discharge of this duty, and the numerous examples of their gracious accomplishment in the history of Israel, are all encouragements to a sincere and faithful worshipper to hope for a merciful answer to his reasonable, his fervent, his penitential, his evangelical, and persevering prayers. The influence of this duty in humbling and sanctifying the heart, and in enlivening its devotions will probably not be denied. But we have reason also from the tenour of scripture, to believe, and, without destroying the obligations of human industry, and the necessary agency of natural causes, we may rationally admit that it has an influence likewise on the course of the world, and a powerful effect in procuring many other blessings besides those that are internal and spiritual only. “*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that*

*it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."*

Objections, indeed, which may mislead such as have not deeply and seriously examined the subject, have been raised against this doctrine, by the spirit of an infidel philosophy. A short review of these will contribute to confirm a truth that is connected, in its principles, with so many other duties of the christian life. All things, say a part of these philosophers, are governed by the laws of an irresistible *fatality*, or are left, without law, to the impulse of a capricious *chance*. If there be a God, say others, who has created, and who superintends the order of nature, this order must proceed in an unchangeable train of causes and effects, which cannot be moved by the supplications of mortals. Infinite wisdom must be as invariable in its ideas and plans as absolute and unintelligent *fate*. All devotion, according to them, is enthusiasm, and prayer is only the resource of weak minds who think, by their feeble breath, to change the eternal course of the universe. These are the objections.

With regard to the former, I shall only say, that the principles of fatality and chance are the lazy refuge of minds too indolent to think, or the gloomy suggestions of a deplorable atheism which can have few disciples in a country like this, whose morals are, as yet, not arrived at such an extremity of corruption. They do not merit a refutation. The objection drawn from the constancy of nature is better founded—Christians, no less than these philosophers, believe that the progress and dependence of causes and effects throughout the universe, are as invariable as the ideas of infinite wisdom, by which they were originally fixed: But, as the principle acknowledges a Deity who is the creator and ruler of the world, it does not militate against the efficacy of prayer. Could not he, whose intelligence contemplated at one view the whole chain of events from the beginning to the end of time, and whose power imparted to all natural causes their energies and connexions, so perfectly harmonize the physical and moral worlds, that the results of the one should always correspond

with those of the other, according to the system he designed to establish? The perfections of God lead us to expect, what the course of nature indicates, the existence of a moral government in the universe. "*Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.*" Can philosophy then deny to the christian, the hopes which he derives from the word and promises of God? May not God in his eternal prescience of the evangelical penitence and submission of his people, under the corrections of his providence, have so arranged the train of causes from the beginning, as, at the proper moment, to answer their prayers, and graciously reward their returning virtues, without disturbing the established order of nature?\*

Besides, if fasting and prayer contribute to the improvement of the heart, and the amendment of the life—and if virtue has an acknowledged influence on national and individual prosperity, are not these duties as much prescribed by a sound and honest reason, as by the laws of religion? May they not even be ranked among those natural causes of success and happiness, which God has established in the system of the world, and on which the objector presumes to deny their efficacy?

Will you, then, proud and ignorant pretender to reason! retort with a sneer on the pious man, who attributes all the evils which afflict him to the righteous providence of God, that they are only natural events? Is not *nature* under the direction of the supreme and moral Ruler of the universe? Will you cast a contemptuous look on the penitent and humble soul, who, in his affliction, supplicates the throne of grace, as if he were pursuing merely the visionary ideas of a weak enthusiasm? Will you rob him of the consolation of pouring his sorrows into the bosom of his heavenly Father? Will you tear from him the support of those hopes which he derives from the divine goodness and mercy? Will you tell

\* This conclusion is so fairly drawn, that infidelity cannot deny it, unless it will return back to that absurd philosophy that maintained the eternity of the world, and the inherent perverseness of matter, which could not be perfectly reduced to order, even by divine omnipotence or wisdom.

him to abandon his prayers, to renounce his religion, to expect relief only from the blind or accidental course of events? Oh! miserable philosophy! Are not all events under the control of a wise and gracious power? Do they not all compose one universal system of moral discipline, arranged among other purposes, with relation to the penitence and prayers of the pious?

(To be Continued.)

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## ON RELIGIOUS THANKSGIVING.

*“ Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.”* PSALM cvii. 21, 22.

THE inspired Psalmist appears to have been filled with unutterable emotions of gratitude to God, when he composed the sacred hymn from which these words are taken. He recounts numerous instances of the divine interposition and benignity manifested to men in the dispensations of providence and grace. His heart, warm with the subject and with a sense of the duty which this multiplied goodness so tenderly urges, repeatedly pours forth this natural and pious exclamation—*“ Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!”* After contemplating the peculiar obligations of those who had been delivered from great distress and danger he amplifies his common repetition or chorus by adding—*“ And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.”* Most applicable to Britain is the injunction!

Called, then, by the concurring voice of God's word and providence, to this duty of thanksgiving and praise, let it occupy our most serious and engaged attention. Let us consider,

Its reasonableness—some of the numerous and peculiar circumstances which demand it—and in what manner our sincere compliance with its dictates, may best be expressed and evinced.

I. Let us consider the reasonableness of offering the sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise to God. "*Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness—Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.*" Here, you observe, the inspired penman delivers, both a pathetic wish and a positive precept, in behalf of the duty we contemplate. The wish, I affirm, proceeds from one of the best sentiments which can influence the human heart, and the precept is founded on one of the plainest principles of propriety, which can be offered to the human understanding.

Gratitude to a benefactor, from whom we have received numerous, unmerited and invaluable favours, is a sentiment, in favour of which the suffrage of the world is unanimous. If there be any principle of morals so interwoven with our nature, as in no age or nation to be disputed or denied, it is this—that we ought not to return evil for good; and this will ultimately resolve itself into the position that gratitude is a duty. Gratitude, sincere and ardent, is the distinguishing characteristic of a generous and amiable mind, the want of it is the sure indication of a base and detestable spirit. Towards whom, then, I ask, ought this emotion to be directed in its greatest purity and fervor? Towards him, unquestionably, to whom we are most indebted—towards God our Creator and Redeemer, from whom we have received all that we enjoy.—Were man simply a dependant being, he would still owe this tribute to his Maker, for the gift of existence, and for all the pleasures to which it gives birth. But considering him as he is, not only dependant, but sinful—considering that he has ten thousand times forfeited every claim to the Divine favour, and yet that innumerable mercies crown his life, and that eternal happiness is proposed to his acceptance, his debt of gratitude must be seen to exceed all estimate. The most miserable circumstances of an external or temporal kind, in which any of the human race can be placed, do not dissolve their obligations to this duty. Their sufferings are still infinitely less than their demerits, and "*why should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins.*" He has still an infinite balance of unmerited kindness

to acknowledge: Nay, his afflictions themselves, if it be not his own fault, shall work together for his good. Hence says the Psalmist, "*I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall continually be in my mouth.*"

But in an especial manner is this a duty, when every circumstance conspires both to promote our present comfort and to favour our future happiness. When the beneficence of God is so made to abound towards us, as that our transgressions are not only, not requited by his judgments, but his various goodness is made to meet all our wants, and even to exceed our expectations; when we have scarcely any thing of which we can complain, and but little more in the present life that we ought to desire;—when we are *thus* singled out as the distinguished recipients of the bounty and smiles of Heaven, then indeed ought our hearts to overflow with humble thankfulness to our great Benefactor; then ought we in the liveliest and most ardent emotions of the soul, to "*praise the Lord for his goodness,*" and for his wonderful manifestations of grace to us his unworthy children. None can refuse to admit that these are sentiments peculiarly suitable to men in the situation we have considered, and that to be destitute of them, is to exhibit the human character sunk to the deepest grade of baseness and depravity. From these sentiments, the pious wish under consideration, evidently arose, and the fervour with which it was uttered and reiterated, is worthy of him whose high characteristic it is, that he was "*a man after God's own heart.*" To feel in this respect, as he felt, must be our highest excellence, and our most valuable distinction.

But to feel in silence, or as individuals, though we really, rightly and deeply feel, is not the whole of our duty. We have before us a precept to "*sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and to declare his works with rejoicing.*" This refers plainly to an external expression of the internal and grateful disposition of our hearts, and to our uniting with each other in rendering praise to God. The sacrifices of the ancient Jewish dispensation, to which the sacred writer alludes, were visible and social manifestations of reverence to the Deity, and



to “*declare his works with rejoicing,*” must intend a public and general exhibition of our sense of indebtedness to him. Distinctly then, the statement is this—*fervent gratitude* is the *inward* feeling, *public thanksgiving* is the *outward* expression of that feeling, and *both* are required of those who would suitably praise the Lord for his goodness.

I have said that the latter part of this proposition is founded on one of the plainest principles of propriety; because, if gratitude be so noble a quality, can any reason be assigned why it should never be exhibited? or why men should not unite in the exhibition of it? No, my brethren. A valid objection can never be found against public thanksgiving to the great Author of good, for blessings which he publicly and profusely showers down upon us. Yet objections have been offered against this by impious men, to whom all thoughts of God and of their obligations to him were painful and unwelcome. It has been said that our praise cannot be necessary or grateful to the Almighty; and in proof of the assertion, it has been alledged that it is no part of the character of a good man to delight in hearing himself extolled, and therefore that we cannot suppose that it is acceptable to him who is perfect goodness.

If there be something specious there is nothing solid in this remark. Should those who make it, extend it so far as to deny that we ought to cherish in our minds a sense of gratitude, it has received its answer in what has already been offered on that topic. Let me, however, further observe, in direct reply to the objection, that we do by no means suppose, that any disposition or action of his creatures is necessary to the essential happiness or glory of the Creator; for in these respects he is unchangeable and far exalted above all their praise. But still, considering man as a moral agent, and allowing, as we must allow, that the Deity is invariably pleased with virtue, it will inevitably follow that our gratitude must be grateful to *him*, because it is, as we have seen, a virtue of the highest order. The supreme Being, therefore, though he needs not our dispositions or service for the promotion of his own felicity, must, from the very goodness of his nature, necessarily

delight in seeing us possess this temper and act this part, which our character and state render so becoming and important to us.

The parallel between man and his Maker is directed immediately against the public giving of thanks. Let us examine how far it is really a parallel. A good man is imperfect, and therefore praise may elevate him unduly. God is perfect, and consequently incapable of this inconvenience. A good man is but the instrument of good and has nothing, not even the disposition to confer a benefit, which he did not receive. He realizes, therefore, that to him high applause is not justly due. But God is the original and infinite fountain of all goodness, and no praise can ever transcend or reach his worthiness. A good man in performing his best and most generous services, discharges only the obligations of duty, and frequently renders no more than in similar circumstances he would wish or need to have returned. But the favours of God flow from his own self-moved goodness, and are not only incapable of recompense, but often bestowed on those who had merited his severest displeasure.

In the respects now mentioned, there is no parallel between the two cases, and consequently to reason from one to the other is unfair and inconclusive. Is there, then, no point in which the cases are similar? There is only one, and that extremely abstract and general. It is this—that a good man, in common with his Maker, delights in seeing a moral being, who has received favours, act as he ought to act. And does not such a man desire that those, on whom he has conferred benefits, should make some manifestations of a grateful temper? Does not a tender and rightly disposed parent expect these from his children? Does he not rejoice when he receives them? And is he not grieved and offended when they are withheld? These inquiries must be answered in the affirmative. In like manner, then, must the Benefactor and Parent of all be pleased, when he beholds the pensioners of his bounty, and the offspring of his power and goodness, bringing their grateful acknowledgements to him; and his righteous displeasure must rest on those who refuse so reasonable a duty.

It appears, therefore, that a *due degree* of praise is expected both by God and man. Man should not covet a *high degree* of it, because it is neither his due nor safe for him to receive. God may require it in its *most exalted ascriptions*, because he is perfect, and because it is his rightful claim. Our reasoning then, from the creature to the Creator, is found, when fairly conducted, to inforce, and not to oppose, the giving of thanks to the omniscient Jehovah.

Or will it be said, after all, that it is only because man cannot discern the heart otherwise than by external expressions, that he desires them as the necessary evidence of a right disposition; but that God looketh immediately to the inmost soul, and therefore neither needs or desires them. There is fallacy, also, in this remark. It is a law of our constitution, that whatever we sensibly, deeply and habitually feel, we should be prone to express and with difficulty conceal. It invariably belongs to a strong and permanent affection of the mind, to seek for utterance. "*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*" Men, therefore, do actually look for the expression of gratitude, as something connected with its *existence* and suitable exercise; and to say that they would not do this, if they could scan the heart, is no more than to say, that if our capacity, nature and laws of action were different from what, in fact, they are, we should then regard them differently.

God views our nature as it really is, and every thing that is proper to it, every thing that is connected with, or favourable to the exercise of its powers in his service, he demands. He requires the heart in every transaction with himself; and I would not deny but inculcate the idea, that without this all exterior pomp and professions of reverence or thankfulness, are but solemn mockery and an abomination in his sight. But he requires the *lips* as well as the heart, because the lips help the heart. Words and actions often serve to augment and give energy to the ardours of the soul. They serve, also, to awaken others to a sense of duty, and to kindle in their bosom the warmth that we feel in our own.

Devout affections, like all others, are increased by sympa-

thy and communication. It is moreover an important part of gratitude itself, to let others know, when circumstances do not forbid it, who is our benefactor, and what he hath done for us, that they may esteem him as he deserves for his goodness. This is, and ought to be, a special and constraining motive with those who truly feel their indebtedness to the Father of mercies, to speak his praise before the world. They can scarcely forbear to cry out in the language of the Psalmist on numerous occasions—"Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men—Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul—Praise ye the name of the Lord; praise him, O ye servants of the Lord. Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing praises unto his name for it is pleasant—Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever—Oh bless our God ye people and make the voice of his praise to be heard; which holdeth our soul in life and suffereth not our feet to be moved—Praise ye him, all his angels, praise ye him, all his hosts; praise ye him, sun and moon; praise him, all ye stars of light—Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him for his mighty acts; praise him according to his excellent greatness—Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord."

*(To be Continued.)*

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## LETTER FROM CALVIN TO LUTHER,

EXPRESSIVE OF THE MUTUAL AFFECTION OF THE TWO VENERABLE FATHERS, AND OF THEIR SINCERE INTEREST IN THE GLORIOUS WORK OF REFORMATION.

*To the most excellent Pastor in Christ's Church,  
Doctor Martin Luther, my most honoured Father,*

HEALTH.

**H**AVING observed, that almost all our French, who have left the darkness of Popery for the true faith, have yet made no alteration in their Confessions, and thereby con-

tinue to pollute themselves with the sacrilegious idolatries of Popery, as if they never had any taste or knowledge of the true doctrine, I could not refrain from blaming such sloth and negligence in the sharp manner which I thought it so justly deserved; for what can I attribute to that faith which, lying buried in the mind, produces no confession? or to that religion which lies buried under the appearance of idolatry? But I do not propose to discuss this point now, having already treated that matter at large in two books, where you will more clearly see my opinion, if the reading of these books would not give you too much trouble. The reading of them has already had a good effect upon some here, who before were entirely regardless of this matter, and set them upon considering what was to be done. But, because it is a matter of great difficulty, regardless of our own interest, to expose our lives to danger, or to bear the imputation of having given offence to our brethren, or to quit our fortunes, and undergo a voluntary banishment from our native country and friends;—moved by these difficulties, many are hindered from entertaining any positive resolution, and from this backwardness they offer some, and those specious reasons; though it is very apparent that they lay themselves to find out specious pretences for this purpose; but as they acknowledge that they have many doubts, they wish to have your opinion upon this point; and, as they deservedly entertain the greatest reverence for you, your opinion will have a very great weight with them. They have therefore intreated the favour of me to send a particular messenger to you, who may bring back to us your answer to this point; and I, knowing how highly it concerns them to be assisted by your opinion, in order to remove these doubts under which they at present labour, and because I should have done this upon my own particular account had they not desired it, I could by no means refuse to comply with their request.

Now, therefore, my most honoured father, I beseech you by Jesus Christ, that you will not refuse to take this trouble upon you, as well for theirs as my sake; and first, that you read over the letter that goes to you in their name, and then,

that you will either read over my books, or, if that will take up too much time, that you will employ some other person to read them, who may lay the substance of them before you; and when that is done, that you will be so good as send to us your opinion by the bearer. I own that it grieves me, in the many and great affairs in which I know you are engaged, to give you this trouble; but from your acknowledged goodness and humanity, when you consider the necessity I am under, I flatter myself with the hopes of your pardon. I wish I could fly to you, that I might have the happiness an hour or two of your conversation; for I could wish not only to converse with you upon this, but upon some other subjects, which would, I am persuaded, redound greatly to my benefit. But what I am not allowed to enjoy in this world, I hope will soon happen in heaven.—Farewell, most excellent man, most eminent servant of our blessed Lord, and my most honoured father! May God continue to direct you to the end by his blessed Spirit, for the common benefit of his church!

Your own,

Feb. 12th 1545.

JOHN CALVIN.

*See Edinburgh Weekly Magazine, 1774.*

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### LINES FROM A YOUNG CHRISTIAN TO A DEIST.\*

*“ Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength,—that thou mightest still the enemy.”—* DAVID.

WHOE’ER thou art that on poetic wing,  
 With Robert Burns would’st fondly sing;  
 Alike thy verse, thy thoughts the same,  
 They scarce deserve the empty name.

\* To improve a leisure hour, these lines were written by a very young American lady, in reply to a deistical piece she had seen in a public newspaper; and sent, in private correspondence, to a near relation, in North Britain. The deist began his attack upon the bible, by asking, How a God could be just, who suffered whole nations to be destroyed, by the hands of those whom he favoured? and how he could favour a people, who were continually breaking his laws?—He then, in the most blasphemous manner, ridiculed our Saviour’s death, and the sacred mystery of the Trinity.—His poetry was an attempt at Burns’ stile.



Vile scoffer of a righteous God,  
 Do'st thou not fear his lifted rod?  
 Think'st thou, that he unheeding eyes,  
 Thy wicked, thy blasphemous lies?  
 Know, it was just, by his command,  
 To extirpate a heathen land.  
 Say, when, by mortals lawful doom,  
 The wicked meet an early tomb;  
 Say, is unjust that awful fate,  
 Which cuts their life's uncertain date?  
 If God's own nation acted wrong,  
 Has not their punishment been long?  
 A wretched, outcast, helpless race,  
 Shut from the great Redeemer's face.  
 That God, whom by thy impious pride,  
 Thou hast infamously deny'd;  
 He, who once came down from heaven,  
 A Saviour to us given;  
 Behold him on the cross resign'd!  
 View what th' Eternal pre-design'd!  
 And thou, ungrateful mortal man,  
 Presum'st a Deity to scan!  
 Because thou canst not understand,  
 Acknowledgest no heav'nly hand!  
 The sacred mystery divine,  
 To such an erring heart as thine,  
 Appears a foolish, worthless thought,  
 By some impostor idly wrought.  
 But Oh! may He who dwells on high,  
 Look down with mercy's pitying eye:  
 Oh! may he hear a wish sincere,  
 A short, a fervent, youthful pray'r;  
 And touch, with grace, thy flinty breast,  
 Ere, by the turf, thy tomb be prest.

March 29th 1805.

M. M. Y.

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THE  
CHRISTIAN SELECTOR.

No. IX.

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WEDNESDAY, SEP. 26. 1810.

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THE CONSTITUTION, CHARACTER, AND DUTIES,  
OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

A Sermon, lately preached at the Ordination of the  
*REV. GILBERT M'MASTER,*

IN THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, DUANESBURGH,

*BY ALEXANDER M'LEOD, A. M.*

PASTOR OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION IN  
THE CITY OF NEW-YORK.

*"I will give you Pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed  
you with knowledge and understanding."* JER. iii. 15.

**T**HE few pious people, who remained scattered through Palestine when Jeremiah was called to the prophetic office, were in great need of a public ministry. Like you, my brethren, who are to-day assembled, in order to receive a Pastor from your God, those, who, in the land of Israel, adhered to the covenant of their fathers, had been for years destitute of the solemn forms of public worship.

About fifty years before the time of this prophecy, Esarhad-don, the son of Sennacherib, and now king both of Assyria and Chaldea, that he might entirely subdue the efforts of the children of Israel to resist his despotic power, carried the ten tribes out of their country, and settled in their room, Idolaters

from some other provinces of his empire.\* Very few of the worshippers of the true God remained; and these were without a Priest, and without a Sacrifice, and without an Altar.

The prophet Jeremiah lived to see the Church in Judea involved in similar distress. Yes, he lived to suffer much persecution in his own person, from those ungodly rulers who had succeeded to the throne of the pious Josiah; he lived, to witness the judgment of God on Jerusalem, at the commencement of their seventy years captivity, and to write the book of Lamentations over the fallen glory of Zion. His heart was tender, his passions were strong; he placed Jerusalem above his chief joy, and over the ruins of the temple, no man mourned with a more sincere sorrow than this weeping prophet. Dark, indeed, was the page which his own experience occupied in the great volume of Time. But he was divinely instructed to look forward unto more pleasant, though distant objects. Cheered with the prospect, he wipes away the falling tear, and suppresses the sigh which was ready to burst from his affectionate heart, at beholding the calamities in which covenant transgression had involved the seed of Jacob; and he proclaims, according to the commandment, the future restoration of God's covenant people. The spirit by which Jeremiah was inspired, carried him into futurity, and showed to him the blessings of the Gospel. Types, and ceremonies, and shadows vanish; the ministration, which exceeds in glory, appears; Apostles, and Evangelists, and Pastors, and Teachers, minister to the church of God. He sees the fulfilment of the covenant of Abraham. He sees Christian congregations regularly organized. He beholds the dispersed witnesses rallying around their standard, and receiving with joy the blessings of a settled ministry. He listens with delight to the promise which you now hear from the Sanctuary, "*I will give you Pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.*"

God has pledged his veracity to provide a public ministry for the service of his church—" *And I will give you Pastors.*" He hath placed distinguishing marks on the ministry of which

\* 2 Kings xvii. Ezra iv 2—10.

he approves—“*Pastors according to mine heart.*” The sum of ministerial duty is the edification of the Church—“*Pastors, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.*”

You have now, brethren, the plan of my discourse before you; and as we are met to-day, to ordain a Bishop for this church, it will not, I trust, be considered as impertinent, to lay before you the constitution, character, and duties of the gospel ministry.

I. God is engaged by covenant, to provide a perpetual public ministry for his church.

The Divine Being, in all his works, acts worthily of his own infinite perfections. His government of the universe is characterized by perfect justice, and by perfect wisdom. But the church is in a peculiar sense his empire. It is the “*Kingdom of God.*” He hath desired it as his habitation. All his other works are made subordinate to it. Here, his power and his glory are manifested. Honour and majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. He combines with the splendour of his throne, a display of wisdom and of mercy. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. And he hath provided, that Christians, (from the nature of their faith, always eager for religious knowledge, but from their situation in this world almost perpetually occupied about secular affairs,) should be furnished with a *Ministry*, committed to the hands of men, whose time and talents should be exclusively devoted to the study and exposition of the Holy Scriptures, and the collateral duties of their sacred office—A ministry of divine institution—of perpetual duration—and secured by covenant.

1. A public stated ministry in the Christian Church, is a divine institution.

To the church of old, God communicated the revelation of his grace, by extraordinary characters. He “at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets.” Until the time of Moses they had no written revelation, nor such a visible organization as required an ordinary stated ministry to conduct the solemnities of religious

worship. It was in the days of Ezra that the reading of the law was instituted for the instruction of the Jews assembled in their Synagogues. Knowledge, by immediate inspiration, was not henceforth to be expected to continue among them. And, while they looked forward to a more complete organization of God's covenant people, after Messiah should appear to order his kingdom, they were habituated to those forms of public worship, in the synagogue, upon the model of which the Christian church, with some appropriate variation, was to have the public worship conducted after the exaltation of the blessed Saviour. The prophets, accordingly, (maintaining the unity of the Church under every dispensation,) predicted, that although immediate revelation should cease, the church should be no loser; but with a complete canon of Scripture, as the only rule of faith, God would provide for her a regular ministry, which should abundantly suffice in the room of the priesthood, which prefigured, in their offering of sacrifices, the Lord, our only New Testament Priest, of the prophets who were occasionally raised up to give increase of knowledge, and of the ministry of the synagogue which read and expounded the law. The Scriptures of the Old Testament, therefore, as well as those of the New, compel us to believe that the Christian ministry is an ordinance not of the wisdom of man, but of the goodness of God.

We desire not to deceive you, my brethren. We desire not to impose ourselves upon your credulity, but to minister unto you as helpers of your faith. We are, indeed, earthen vessels. We are feeble and imperfect, and mortal. But we possess a treasure of unsearchable riches. We magnify our office. It is *authorized* by God,—it is the *gift* of our exalted Saviour, for the church which he redeemed—it is *sanctified* by the Holy Spirit as the means of feeding the flock of God: But faith cometh by hearing. Hear ye, therefore, the word of God, and believe. Ministers are *appointed* by God. “*I have SET watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem—And no man taketh this honour unto himself; but he that is CALLED of God—All things are of God—who hath GIVEN to us the ministry*

of reconciliation—And God hath SET in the Church, apostles," &c.\*

Ministers are, given by the exalted Saviour to his Church. "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ"—When he ascended up on high, "he gave some apostles—and some pastors and teachers—for the work of the ministry."†

Ministers are set apart by the divine Spirit to feed the flock of God. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God."‡

This ordinance is not to be classed with those extraordinary manifestations of divine power which were intended to be of short duration, and being employed to introduce the Christian dispensation of grace into full operation, were necessarily limited to the earliest ages of the Church. Miracles have ceased, but the constitution of the gospel ministry is of permanent duration. This requires discussion. I solicit your attention both to the proposition and its proof.

2. It is the ordinance of God, that a public ministry should be continued in his church unto the end of the world.

Some divine institutions are of a temporary nature and use, and consequently of temporary duration. Statutes predicated upon circumstances which have ceased to exist, are no longer obligatory. To the church in the wilderness commandments were given, which ceased to be law, after Israel was settled in the land of promise. The ordinances which God had appointed relative to the Tabernacle, were superseded upon the building of the Temple.

The whole ceremonial part of the forms of worship divinely appointed for the Hebrew church, was restricted in its duration to the time of Christ. The ministry of John ceased when Jesus was publicly revealed as the messenger of the Covenant. And when our Saviour offered himself as a sacrifice, without spot unto God, the typical sacrifice ceased to be his ordinance; and the *Sacerdotal order* perished with it.

\* Isa. lxii. 6. Heb. v. 4. 2 Cor. v. 18. 1 Cor. xii. 28.

† 1 Cor. iy 1. Eph. iv. 11, 12.

‡ Acts xx. 28.



Christ Jesus is the *only Priest, the only Sacrifice, and the only Altar*, of the Christian church. Judicious Christians never use these terms in relation to ecclesiastical officers or worship, but in a figurative sense. The New Testament language and doctrine authorize no other use of them. *Hiereus*, is never applied to a Christian minister. And although the word Priest is a derivative from *Presbuteros*, the common name of all ecclesiastical rulers, seeing it has been appropriated by the translators of the Bible to *Hiereus*, it is a perversion of language to apply it otherwise than metaphorically to the Christian ministry—a perversion, however, which is the principal support of the high claims of both the papal and prelatical hierarchies.

Are we then to infer from the revocation of statutes designed for a temporary use, and from the abolition of the Jewish ceremonies and hierarchy, that the office of the ministry has ceased with the first ages of the Christian Church? By no means. The ministry of reconciliation is always useful—it corresponds with the state of the Church in the world—No intimation was ever given by God of its intended limitation to the first ages of the gospel—But its very constitution implies its destined perpetuity.

All the objects, which were at any time proposed to be answered, by the institution of the Gospel ministry, remain still to be answered by it; and the means, once divinely authorized, must be continued to be employed, until the end be completely accomplished. There is nothing peculiar to any one age in these objects—the communication of knowledge—the conversion of sinners—the edification of believers—the conviction of gainsayers—the defence of the gospel—the organization of churches—and the directing the public worship of the congregation. The office, of course, which was originally appointed to accomplish these purposes, must continue to the end of the world. “*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature—To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God—For the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come*

*in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man."*\*

This institution also corresponds with the state of the New Testament Church in the world.

Divine revelation is now completed, and committed to writing. Before revelation was committed to writing, a succession of prophets, who taught by immediate inspiration, was necessary, and was provided by the head of the Church. Before the Old Testament canon was completed, and prophecy had ceased under that dispensation, God provided as an appendage to the Mosaic economy, the synagogue services for reading and expounding the law; and he remarkably blessed this institution as the successful means of a general diffusion of knowledge, the preservation of morals, and the preventing of idolatry. Since the period in which the New Testament canon was completed, no new inspirations are expected, and consequently extraordinary ambassadors, such as Apostles and Prophets, are not adapted to the situation in which God hath placed Zion. And yet these sacred writings in which the will of heaven is revealed, require study and exposition, and a constant application for the instruction of the successive generations of men. The Scriptures are, it is true, in the description of the principal features of the system of redemption, so full, so plain, and so forcible, that every man may readily perceive and understand what be the first principles of the oracles of God. But the perfection of Christian knowledge, for the possession of which all are bound to strive is not of so easy attainment. This requires the aid of talents, and piety, and literature, and faithfulness, to be exclusively devoted to its service; and, of course, a peculiar order of men, who shall be disincumbered from the ordinary occupations of life, that they may give themselves wholly up to their ministry. The rapid increase of knowledge in all other departments of science, and the facility with which general information is diffused among men, require increasing attention to Christian literature. The philosophy of the world would soon overwhelm with superior talents and

\* Mark xvi. 15. Acts xxvi. 18. Eph iv. 12, 13.

acquisitions, the professed disciples of our Lord, had he not made provision for a standing ministry, whose exertions be consecrated to the instruction of the man of God. The depths of divine wisdom contained in the Scriptures will afford to the most vigorous intellect, and the most unremitting industry, occasion for constant exertion and a plentiful reward. And the Lord's day calls upon every minister, for an exhibition of the results of his pious labours, in conducting the business of that public school of instruction to which the youth and the aged, the learned and the ignorant, the weak and the strong, the saint and the sinner, are required to come on the first day of each returning week, to learn repentance and obedience, and to present their public devotion to the author of their lives and their mercies.

No intimation has been given to us that the Redeemer intended to limit the appointment of a public ministry to the first ages of the church. There is nothing contained in the nature or circumstances of the appointment from which such limitation can be justly inferred; nor is it any where throughout the New Testament expressly revealed that the ministry should become extinct before the end of the world. Divine ordinances, which do not contain a limitation to any specified time, in the nature or circumstances of the appointment, and which are not expressly limited by the authority which enjoins them, must be considered as of permanent obligation. This is not, however, a matter of mere inference.

The constitution of the gospel ministry, necessarily implies its destined perpetuity.

The extent of the commission given by the Saviour—the work appointed by him to be performed—and the promise of protection, all proceed upon this principle, that the church should never upon earth be destitute of a public ministry.

1. The *Commission* extends to all the earth, “*Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations;*” and to the earth at all times and in all generations, “*Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.\** 2. The *work* to be performed is not completed until the end of the world, “*Till we all come*

\* Mat. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 15.

*in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”\** 3. The promise of support is co-extensive with the duration of the office; and as the promise extends to the end of the world, so must also the ministry to which it is made, “*And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world*”†

An ordinance of heaven, of permanent usefulness and durability, certainly demands from the saints every possible exertion for its support and preservation. And every part of the church of God, having an interest in this appointment, is bound to exert itself for procuring a regular stated ministry. Christians have ample encouragement for such exertions.

3. God hath *covenanted* with his church to supply her congregations with a public ministry—“*And I will give you Pastors.*”

All divine administrations proceed upon the footing of a covenant establishment between God and man. The whole display of mercy, made in divine revelation, proceeds from the *everlasting covenant* which is between the Father and his only Son Jesus Christ, as the head of the election of grace. Saving grace is a covenant blessing, and all the means of grace are reduced into a covenant form. The existence of *saints* on earth, implies the existence of a people *really* in covenant with God; and the existence of *apparent* saints as necessarily implies that of a *visible covenant people*. This is the visible Church Catholic. Not the publication of the gospel at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost—not the personal ministry of the Saviour—not the baptism of John—not the covenants of Sinai or Circumcision, laid the foundation of this society. The covenant of grace secures in Christ a redeemed church, and the revelation of that covenant secures a body of people, visible in the world, and professedly in covenant with God, until all the elect be collected into heaven. Then, and not till then, shall we arrive at certainty, that the constituent members of the church visible are precisely the same with those of the invisible church elected in Christ

\* Eph. iv. 13.

† Mat. xxviii. 20.

Jesus, and called. We are however assured, my brethren, that since the revelation of the first promise, and the profession of faith made by the first pair, a church shall be continued in the world, in covenant with God—a people shall be visibly distinguished by their professed submission to the revelation of his grace, until the end of the world. To this people God has pledged his word, his word of truth, to bestow upon them the means of knowledge, to preserve among them his ordinances. For this people, under the Christian dispensation, he has engaged to provide a public ministry.

1. Promises, made upon the footing of a permanent relation between God and his church, which have respect to a benefit of a permanent nature, are to be understood as securing to the church that benefit indefinitely throughout every period of time. And although the promise should be expressed in language more appropriate to one period than another, this does not hinder the application of the benefit promised in any other period. The Old Testament phraseology will not deprive the New Testament church of her hope in the blessings which are promised of God. *“For the people shall dwell in Zion—And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers—I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace.”\** These promises are perfectly applicable to the Christian church.

2. Many promises delivered by the prophets were designed to refer immediately to the New Testament church; and were so applied by the apostles of our Lord. Some of these refer to the Christian Ministry. *Therefore my people shall know my name—How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace—Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice: with the voice together shall they sing:—All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace.†*

\* Isa. xxx. 20, 21. & lxii 6.

† Isa. lii 6, 7, 10. & Rom. x. 14, 15.

3. The Redeemer, in whom the promises are made, and in whom they are accomplished, has solemnly engaged never to leave his church entirely destitute of a public ministry. He walks amidst the golden candlesticks. He holds the stars in his right hand. He gives power to his witnesses. He commits to his ministers the keys of the kingdom of heaven. He hath engaged that the gates of hell shall never prevail against his church, and that he shall accompany his ministers until time itself shall terminate, and eternity be unfolded.

Never shall the Catholic church—the visible kingdom of God, be dissolved, or her officers annihilated. And although rising congregations be sometimes, as you have been, destitute of a fixed ministry; although there is no security against deaths and temporary vacancies; yet there is infallible ground of faith, that God will fulfil his covenant to those who wait upon him in the way of his commandments. To-day he fulfils his promise to you—*And I will gather the remnant of my flock—and will bring them again to their folds—and I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them, saith the Lord.\**

(To be Continued.)

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## THE RIGHTS OF GOD.

“Render—unto God, the things that are God’s.” MAT. xxii. 21.

(Continued from page 297.)

**H**AVING shortly described some of these first principles of universal and unlimited right, which are only competent to God, and which seem to exercise the faith, patience, and hope of the saints, we shall close this discourse with a few deductions from the whole.

1. It would seem to follow from the premises that ignorance is not such a very harmless thing as some represent it to be. If mankind are under the most indispensable obligations to render to God the things that are God’s, it does not appear how they can ever comply with their duty unless they know

\* Jer. xxiii 3, 4.



it. How therefore it comes to be so positively asserted, that it is no matter what a man believes, is utterly incomprehensible. There is some reason to doubt, that many of those feelings upon which a great value is set, if weighed in the balance of truth, would be found wanting. If a man takes up an utterly mistaken apprehension about some of God's rights, and forms a practical system of thoughts and affections thereupon, it would seem to follow that when the system is found erroneous the affections dependent upon it must cease. For instance, if a man considers it absolutely necessary that God should save all men and devils at last from misery, in order to vindicate divine justice, goodness, and mercy from an everlasting odium; then it would seem, that if this opinion should prove false, and that it is no way necessary to such an end that every individual creature should be finally saved from ruin, and rendered happy in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity, it may be something doubtful whether the former imaginary love, founded upon mistaken ideas, may not turn to eternal hatred. Indeed it is not easy to see, how falsehood can be a proper medium, through which to represent any of God's attributes, or the duties due him from his creatures. It will not therefore, to thinking men, appear an improper employment for the most serious hours of retirement, to examine the rights of God, by which all his administrations among his moral subjects are to be guided for ever. Nor will it perhaps be found any great breach of charity to assert that those who remain ignorant, and inattentive to the great elementary principles of God's government, after which we have been inquiring, are very unfit for sustaining with dignity or usefulness, these moral connexions for which their moral nature was originally designed, and unto which they are generally called by their situations, in domestic, religious or civil society. Let us mind Paul's advice, who says, *Let your loins be girded with the girdle of truth.*

2. We may gather pretty certainly, from what has appeared in these inquiries, what the reason is, why men are so averse to study the rights of God. These rights are in a state of constant warfare with the disorderly passions of mankind,

and abridge their unlawful pleasures, within much narrower limits than agree with their libertine education and pursuits. They therefore wilfully remain ignorant of truths, which can only serve to interrupt their sensual enjoyments, or at least render their possession disquieting to an awakened conscience. Whatever vain dreamers may think to the contrary, mankind come into this world in a state unfriendly to all such studies; nor does age ripen their faculties into a more tractable form: on the contrary, as they advance in life and become more and more acquainted with the variety of sensual springs from which their thirst may be supplied, they become more irreclaimable, and desperately averse to any intercourse with God, which might bring them to a sense of their dependance upon him, and of the account which they must shortly render to him, for all the deeds done in the body. Our voluntary ignorance of God's claims will not set them aside, or screen us from that wrath, which will be poured out on them, "*that know not God, nor obey the gospel of his Son.*" He complained that *his people Israel were destroyed for lack of knowledge*; he also says, *that they were a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them.* So much are the rights of God out of sight, that the man who would presume to mention them, as worthy of any notice in the social intercourses of mankind, would be considered as a babler, or a setter forth of strange gods. It has, however, been made appear, I expect, beyond the power of contradiction, that God's rights are supreme; that they claim the highest place from man, whether in his solitary or social capacity; all, therefore, who either chuse to be ignorant, or maliciously stifle the light, which from the volume of creation, providence, and supernatural revelation, pours forth so plentifully on this subject, would do well to remember that God is neither ignorant nor insensible, of such wrongs. He said to the Jews of old, *Will a man rob God?* This is an awful question. Neglecting its sacred import, ruined that devoted nation. And what it has done in the Christian world, is already known and will be so more fully, by the time that God has finished the judgment of men and devils.

3. From the foregoing remarks, we may be enabled to detect an imposture, which seems to be practised on the world, with but too much success. That visible things are at present in a state of unusual commotion, is well known; the causes are also known. An accumulation of usurpations have been growing upon the human race for many ages, and almost in every habitable part of the earth. In no places have these oppressions become more unsufferable than in countries professing some regard to Christianity. Of this, the church of Christ was early apprized, by her head himself, and his apostles. It was clearly foreseen that pride, avarice, and despotism, would shroud themselves under the wings of our most amiable religion, the more artfully to enslave and pillage the unthinking part of mankind. The history of every nation in Christendom, bears ample testimony to this antichristian plunder and insult. Though God was no doubt righteous in suffering men and nations, who neither knew how to estimate justly the protection of God, their own rights, nor the encroachments of fellow mortals to be thus treated. Yet he is no less just in listening to the groans of outraged humanity, and searching out the blood of his murdered servants, who were always sure to drink deepest of the waters of Marah. The long expected time of judgment for these unnumbered wrongs, seems to be at length arrived. Glory to God for the news. But the nations are angry; yet who would believe, that these beasts of prey, would have the front to mingle their insufferable robberies with the rights of Jehovah, and attempt to make of it a common cause with that supreme God, and that blessed Jesus, whom they have outraged without intermission, for thousands of years? Or though we should suppose such effrontery no more than might be expected, from faces that never knew what it was to blush, would it be supposed that any virtuous citizen of Zion, or inhabitant of the world, could be longer duped with such intolerable insult? Yet strange as it may be to tell it, all this is true—and now near the close of the 18th century, there are thousands, yea millions of these overgrown plunderers, under whom the earth has long groaned, who raise a lamentable cry, because

they are likely to be hunted down and taken in the net of divine vengeance, and made to account, both to God and man, for the wanton manner in which they have sported with all things, divine and human. And there are people foolish enough to listen without indignation to these hardened murderers, while they make their defence, and accuse the dispensations of God, that have most justly found them out, enriched with the spoils of outraged humanity.

If ever indignation was justly indulged among mortals, it seems to claim its place, when we behold, these common enemies of God and man, long since divested of every thing God-like or humane, of every thing that could procure protection from God, or respect from good men, rally round religion and social order, as if these divine gifts of heaven had been under their keeping and care, from the earliest ages until now!!! This, perhaps, exceeds any thing to be found in the records of impudence. No! sordid dastardly crew! religion turns her indignant face from you with infinite disdain. Your putrid breath pollutes her holy sanctuary. She abhors the help of your hands; yet reeking with murder and sacrilege. She recognizes the face of a Judas in your treacherous kisses. Miserable would be the fate of this heavenly virgin, if placed under your vile protection. No! cowardly, avaricious hypocrites! she knows you ever since the days of Balaam the son of Besor. She remembers you since the time she saw you at school with Simon Magus. Many of you pretend to be the ministers of Jesus, and the defender of his honour on earth: but religion loathes your pretended friendship. If you were capable of wishing her honour; you could not serve it better, than by absconding from her presence. She loses, in the sight of reasonable men, every moment she is seen in your company. Can you suppose religion and social order would afford you a shelter, covered with the spoil of ages, which your despotism has wrung from the miserable inhabitants of every clime, during the time when there was none to wipe away the tears of the oppressed! No, they laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear comes. They rejoice that the day of God's vengeance hastens, which already

begins to burn all such bramble from the earth. They know you would never have fled to their wings for protection, could you have obtained it from the Mammon of unrighteousness, which you have faithfully served. They bid you, get to the gods whom you and your fathers have so long followed, to shield you from the great day of God Almighty, which at length has found you out. You the friends of order!!! Your order perish with you; and let all the true friends of order, of God's order, and Christ's order, and the church's order, say Amen. Be it known to you once for all, that the veil of your hypocrisy is rent from top to bottom, and has clearly discovered the turpitude of your cause; and the saints of God have not a tear to shed over your calamity. They are so far from thinking you necessary to the support of religion, that they know you must be taken out of the way, and your pride and ambition trampled in the dust, to make way for the triumphs of Jehovah's rights, and these of his Son and church—Amen.

4. Impartiality obliges me to apply the preceding doctrine against a class of men, who in modern times attempt to set the rights of God and man at variance. Whilst religion discards from her train the bloody robbers of mankind, who begin to flee before the wrath of God and the Lamb, and who seem incapable of holding much longer their usurped power over the human race, under the mock pretence of meek and unaffected piety, her sister liberty, whose name should be ever venerable, seems to hide her face in the dust, when she beholds what a shabby race of infidels follow her, in this day of her glorious triumph. Alas! that ever her honour and dignity should have been debased by these dregs of human nature. Satan could not have more effectually affronted her glorious cause, than by smuggling into her camp such inglorious defenders, who endeavour to withdraw her from the society of religion, But with generous disdain, she despises their aid on such terms. The twin sisters refuse to be separated. Genuine liberty can with no propriety, commit herself to their care, who have trampled under foot the Son of God, and put him to open shame. No! Though the ransomed of the Lord love

liberty most tenderly, as one of the most precious gifts of Heaven, yet they are not disposed to barter their share in the everlasting covenant, to obtain it. They see through the arch designs of Satan, in this day, when his kingdom being full of darkness and consternation, begins to tremble to its centre. Whilst they lament bitterly, that ever the sacred cause of liberty should be disgraced with the support of raging infidels; they nevertheless rejoice to behold the infinite wisdom of God, so illustriously displayed in bringing arrows out of his quiver, who has long been the enemy of our race, whereby his kingdom in this world, shall be finally overthrown. Though one syllable of apology should never be uttered in favour of infidelity, yet it is not without admiration, that we behold the righteous judgment of God, suffering *it* to bring matters to their present eventful issue!

The nations of the world have for ages, been so far from presenting true social order, civil justice, and peaceable security for human nature and its rights, that we see a set of the vilest of our race, goading the outraged victims of their despotism to madness. And we see these madmen, in the paroxism of their rage, break their massy chains, and with the utmost fury rend their unrelenting murderers in pieces. While we lament the hard fate of our family, and execrate the causes which have brought on their melancholy moral diseases, we can hardly wonder at the effects which these causes have produced. What else in the present state of human nature, could have been expected, but that these victims of brutality, having escaped from their hopeless dungeon, would commit many excesses. But while the church should beware of mingling in their madness, it can hardly be expected, that on the other hand, she would interpose her influence, to save the Bable of tyranny and superstition, from tumbling to its everlasting habitation in the blackness of darkness. No! no! The Lamb's wife has no concern with such devoted works of darkness, unless triumphantly to follow their funeral procession, chanting loud the song of Moses and the Lamb. In the name of wisdom, let even infidelity, if Heaven will have it so, tear in pieces the charm of hypocrisy,



superstition, and domineering pride, rather than that they should longer remain a scourge either to the church, or to the world; and so hinder the triumphs of religion, or the glory of its Author. When the besom of infidelity has swept these abominations from the earth, itself will be cast into the fire.

5. This text and doctrine seem to drop a serious caution to all good men now on earth, whose destiny has reserved them to behold the wonders of providential administration, which pass over this visible stage in such rapid succession. Never perhaps was there a time, when they were more loudly called upon to study the rights of God. This study will enable all who make due progress therein, to tear the mask from the hypocritical despot on the one hand, who only keeps company with religion to give him an unsuspected appearance, when the hue and cry is raised after him, as a robber of God and man; and on the other hand, this study will keep its votaries out of the road of mad raging infidels whom no bands can bind. The inquisitive will also hereby be taught to think of present appearances with due solemnity and composure. They will not think the worse of religion because the basest of men affect her company and acquaintance, nor will they think the worse of fair liberty, the amiable benefactress of humanity, because many enemies of Jesus, and his spotless cause, have hailed her on her march, with their affectionate hosannahs. Good christians have sufficient reason to hope, that in a short time, that furious storm with which all things on earth seem to be more or less affected, will be changed into a calm. The joint triumphs, of enlightened reason, and true religion, must soon become glorious. One thing that highly gratifies the friends of revelation, is, that they clearly see these struggles which liberty makes, when now come almost to the birth, can never be successful without the helping hand of religion. That liberty and equality, which infidels ignorantly worship, the scripture and its friends declare unto men. It is only so far, as the gospel of Jesus leavens individuals and communities, that ever they can clearly discern, or long maintain their just

rights. This is a truth, of which men, and nations through the whole earth, will one day, and that not long hence, be fully persuaded.

It gives the friends of religion and liberty no pain to hear modern reformers declaim as long as they please, against hypocrisy, superstition and priestcraft, provided these terms are justly understood. No christian is armed in their defence. No christian finds either his own feelings, or his Maker's rights, suffer by the destruction of such monsters. But the heirs of light have too much good sense to suffer the rights of God, of Christ, and of the church, together with all the hopes of glory beyond time, to be buried in one common grave, with tyranny and priestcraft. No, no, such tricks are too clumsy to be practised on them; who have tasted that the Lord is gracious. The saints of the Most High, know well that fighting against designing priests and usurping tyrants, and fighting against God and his Christ, are very different things. The former is just and commendable: the latter is most abominably blasphemous and wicked.

Whilst, perhaps, it may be looked upon as a piece of adorable wisdom in God, to commit a large share of agency in the execution of his wrath on the man of sin and his supporters, into the hands of men, whose unrelenting hearts render them fit for such services, it is nevertheless much to be lamented, that Satan's scheme of dividing the interests of liberty and religion, has been in many instances shockingly successful, in tearing asunder from each other, both in opinion and exertion, men whose mutual co-operation is much needed, and might before this time, have left despotism uttering its last melancholy groan. True and well informed lovers of religion and liberty, who look on both as precious gifts of heaven, are ashamed to count kindred with many, whom otherwise they esteem, when they see them so awfully left to themselves, as to lend their aid to the system of destruction on which God is evidently pouring out the vials of his consuming wrath. They are inclined to drop a sympathetic tear over the deception of many well disposed people, who in these times of confusion, to hide their religion from the fury of madmen,

from bedlam, rush with it into a fabric on fire, which already totters to its foundation, and threatens every moment to bury all near it, in its ruins. On the other hand many who love liberty with a most enthusiastic affection, keep at a greater distance from the movements of the present moment, than they could otherwise wish, on account of the severe wounds their feelings often receive from the horrid indignities offered to the Son of God, by those who are employed in pulling corruption from its stinking kennel. An extensive knowledge of the rights of God, seems the most likely guardian of the human mind, against every extreme; men will thereby be prevented from dashing religion and liberty against each other to the ruin of both. Wise and good men will be taught to keep equally at a distance from all such, who would either snatch from them their just birth-right in time, or their glorious hopes beyond it.

6. If it be so, as I think we have made it appear, that the eternal arrangements of God are of a nature such, as must necessarily transcend the limits of created understanding, beyond any possible degree of comparison, with what modesty and humility, ought we then to look into these things? our most minute and painful researches after the divine councils, are daily baffled and left in such evident embarrassment and uncertainty, as extorts from us a confession of human weakness, whether we will or not. Let us not in such moments, when human imbecility draws aside the veil of our pride and vain glory, and shows our nakedness and poverty, pretend to sit as judges, on the divine councils and administrations. Let us, on the contrary, utter all our expostulations with our eyes immoveably fixed on the unspotted justice of God. So did the pious the afflicted Jeremiah. *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee, yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments; wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are they happy that deal treacherously?* By following such an example we shall be enabled to lay such restraints on our disordered passions as, under divine conduct, will keep us from dashing ourselves against the bosses of God's buckler.

*Lastly.* From what has already appeared, it may safely be

concluded, that the Divine providence, which involves in its exercise, the whole powers and glory of Divinity, must ever act as the guardian of divine rights, and the avenger of divine wrongs. A comfortable consideration to all who are on heaven's side, in this day of conflict between good and evil! Let it fare with the world as it will, it will be well with the righteous. All things however painful to the flesh, or offensive to the eye of reason are moving, as fast as possible, in a direction most favourable to their most valuable and everlasting interests, who love God and wait for his appearance. They ought therefore in gratitude to their best friend, never to indulge a single murmur, at the past dispensations of Providence, or an unbelieving apprehension about these that are to come. Let us rather turn the whole force of our powers to more rational and delightful achievements.

If we conscientiously study a due regard and an inflexible adherence to the rights of God, we have little to fear from any power that can oppose us. We may depend that he will indulge us in this present life with as great degrees of outward prosperity, as our advantage and his glory can admit of. When, therefore, we are tenderly treated, we should learn most humbly to admire the agency of God, from whom every good gift descends; still, however, remembering that he seldom suffers the stream of visible and sensual good to flow long in one direction, especially to his church. When he is pleased to bring her to the waters of Marah, let her consider it is the doing of the Lord, however wondrous in her eyes. With cheerfulness let her children recognize his unalienable right to rule over them, a right which to their unspeakable comfort, can never be abused. To all that are called according to God's purpose, every thing must in due time work together for good.

We should and will, therefore, so far as genuine piety prevails in our hearts, fall down with the most lowly admiration, when we consider how much happier we are under the direction of a good, a reconciled God, even in midst the most severe fatherly chastisement, than we could propose to be, on the supposition of running all the risks of that eternity.

which the Atheist contemplates, covered with the most impenetrable gloom. His own principles afford him little comfort, even were they true. Let us, therefore, study friendship with God, a secret regard to his rights, and those of his Son. The eventful moment being arrived, when the curtain must drop which at present conceals the world of spirits from our view; let that moment find us at our post, waiting to render an account of our stewardship, as we know not whether we shall be called upon, at mid-night, cock-crow, or in the morning. Amen! so come Lord Jesus.

J—S M—Y.

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## ON RELIGIOUS FASTING.

*“Therefore also now, saith the Lord, Turn ye even unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.”*

JOEL ii. 12, 13.

(Continued from page 311.)

**H**AVING, with the greatest simplicity, explained the nature and reasonableness of religious fasting, both for the instruction of the serious believer, and for the conviction of pretenders to a profane philosophy, I proceed,

III. To point out and illustrate some causes which call to the duty.

When we attempt to enumerate these causes, it is more difficult to arrange them, than to find abundant materials in our sins, in the inflictions of Heaven, and in the circumstances of danger that still surround us, for humiliation and repentance. They are such, however, as ought to mingle our praises with our tears, because God has afflicted us more lightly than we deserved. Often, he has only shaken his rod, as it were, over our heads, and has suspended the stroke, waiting for our duty and submission. His thunders, if I may use that language, have rolled only at a distance, that our evangelical

repentance might disperse the gathering storm, before it was collected to break upon us. In some instances he has touched us in our persons, in our families, in our fields, in our commerce, and in our country; but, hitherto, it has been with a gentle hand. He has for a moment, surprised us with the view of his power, and his justice; and again, in a moment, he has returned to the exercise of that *mercy* in which he *delighteth*, that the mingled emotions of love and fear, might attach us, as with a double cord, to his service.

Shall I mention, in the first place, those diseases of uncommon contagion and mortality which have frequently afflicted different parts of the world? Can we have forgotten the calamity which lately ravaged cities—filled every house with lamentation and mourning—covered every face with paleness and consternation, and spread its terrors to the extremities of some countries?\* Have we forgotten the anguish which *we* often felt, both through sympathy with the distressed, and through apprehension for ourselves? Heaven, indeed, in its mysterious mercy, has hitherto spared us, while it poured the cup of affliction into the bosom of others. Into some of our own houses also, the arrows of death have been shot; and the badges of mourning which we often see before us, call to our mind a husband, or a wife, a parent, or a child, a brother, or a sister, recently torn from our affectionate embrace. These chastisements, or these warnings, speak to us with a divine voice. They are gracious admonitions of the justice of God, which, if we refuse to hear, he may fix the arrow next in our own breasts. Let us, therefore, by unfeigned, evangelical repentance and humiliation, implore his mercy to avert his threatened judgments, or to remove those actual griefs, which each of us may experience in his own private lot. *The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return, and repent, and leave a blessing behind him?*

In the next place, has not God, in order to show us how weak we are in his hands, and to annihilate us, as it were, before the majesty of his justice, sometimes chosen the most

\* The Yellow fever in the principal cities of North America, &c.



feeble of all instruments to chastise an ungrateful people? In some countries, an insect, almost invisible, has cut off large fields, and mocked the hopes of the husbandman.\* How often has this feeble army mowed them as bare as if they had been consumed by fire from Heaven? It is true, with us, the poor have still had bread to eat. The indulgence of an offended God has not yet afflicted us with the miseries of famine, to any great extent. He has gently corrected us for that criminal ingratitude with which we abused his bounty, and forgot the giver of all our good. But he has, at the same time, taught us what we may justly fear, when he comes in righteousness to *force* a repentance which neither the evidences of his love, nor the milder corrections of his providence, could *draw* from a thoughtless generation devoted to their pleasures.

What the silly insect may spare, the drought, the rain, the mildew, or the wind, may destroy. See in the animated and strong description of the prophet Joel, how dreadful a scourge the most contemptible reptiles, united with a defect of the dews of heaven, may be made to a guilty land. "That which the palmer worm hath left hath the locust eaten—and that which the locust hath left hath the canker-worm eaten—and that which the canker-worm hath left, hath the caterpillar eaten. The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new vine is dried up; the oil languisheth. Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen! Howl, O ye vine-dressers! for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished. Is not the meat cut off before our eyes? Yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God? How do the beasts groan! The herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; the flocks of sheep are made desolate. O Lord! To thee will I cry; for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field."

What an affecting picture of complicated misery and distress!

\* An insect generally known by the name of the *Hessian Fly*, has sometimes committed great ravages in some of the American states, and has produced a real and distressing scarcity of the fruits of the earth.

When the justice of divine providence commands it, the feeblest of all creatures may be made to lay waste a whole kingdom, and carry desolation into every house. Man and beast perish by thousands, in dumb and silent anguish, or amidst the cries of a frightful despair which may reach heaven indeed, but which human sympathy can only weep over and pity.

The prophet called that sinful but afflicted people to fast, and to *cry to the Lord*, that he might remove the scourge of that desolating famine under which they groaned. Happy shall we be if we can anticipate the evil—if, by sincere repentance, by faith in the Redeemer, we can arrest it in the beginning—and if he, instead of cutting off the produce of our fields, will continue to give us, along with grateful hearts to improve the mercy, both food to eat, and raiment to put on.

We have also frequent calls to exercises of the penitential kind, from the state of our manufacture and commerce. On these, a variety of external circumstances render us peculiarly dependant for our temporal subsistence. Circumstances, no less variegated and numerous, render our comfortable enjoyment of these extremely precarious and uncertain. Frequently all is stagnant, languishing, and seemingly on the point of ruin. Chiefly dependant on these resources, the situation of our country is often hard in the extreme, and its prospects gloomy and disheartening. These considerations constantly press upon us a humiliating sense of the fluctuating means of our necessary support; and how quickly the righteous Lord, against whom, in our boasted affluence, we wantonly rebel, may furnish us with the hopeless lamentation, “*Alas! alas!—for in one hour so great riches is come to nought.*”

It calls too, in the most pointed, public and extensive manner, to the solemn duty of religious fasting, humiliation and prayer; that, while one class of civil politicians, with a fascinating show of sanctity, have prevailed so far to incorporate national interests with the falling interests of the devoted Antichrist, and to render the various systems of religion subservient to their own ambition; another class, shocked at the hypocritical imposition, but themselves alike ambitious, have

succeeded equally far, to separate from civil rights every thing that has the appearance of religion. Professing to separate *religion* from *morality*—to be advocates for discarding the former, and warm contenders for retaining the latter, they endeavour to establish the favourite principle of modern infidels, that civil society may be as happy without religion as with it. Alas! christians, shall we thus attempt to rob God on the one hand or on the other, and so bring a curse on our country? Alas! that mistaken notions of civil and religious liberty, have thus reduced the world to its present awful predicament. For your establishment in the present truth, however, be admonished, my brethren, to keep first principles carefully in view. Attentively study the nature of God, the nature of man, and their relation to each other. To direct your inquiries and decisions, the Holy Scriptures are amply sufficient. These teach what we are to believe concerning God, and the duty he requires of us—what we are to believe concerning ourselves, and the duty we owe unto one another, in every relation. Let us wisely consider our own situation, the nature of divine revelation, what is necessary for the proper application of the one to the other, and conduct ourselves accordingly. We can never preserve our rights, even in this world, upon any other principles than those which revealed religion alone can inspire. Without religion and morality, harmoniously united, we are an undone people;—without these, our civil liberty and social happiness cannot possibly be preserved. Let us, therefore, humbly bewail a prevalent inattention to God's law, as the grand source of all our individual and social sins and miseries. “*It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law.*”

Another cause that calls us to humiliation and repentance, is the war that has so long afflicted us, and rages in the different parts of the world with which we are politically connected.

War is, perhaps, the most cruel and destructive of all plagues. Heavier impositions oppress the people to support its enormous expences—greater distress marks the track of hostile armies—and greater numbers perish by the sword than

by all other calamities. We look with horror on the ravages of the pestilence. But, what are these to the heaps of slain, the mangled bodies, the groaning hospitals, the conflagrations, the pillage, the brutal violation of chastity, the widows, the orphans, the nameless miseries that follow in the train of war? How often have our brethren, for a series of years bygone, experienced all its accumulated evils from a ferocious enemy! How many may at this moment, be perishing under the murderous hatchet! How many at this moment, may have their souls pierced by the terrifying yells of savages thirsting for blood, with a horror worse than the death which, the next moment, awaits them! How many may be dragged to cruel and hopeless captivity! How many infants may be dashed to pieces against the next rock or the next tree! How many matrons and virgins may be piercing the dismal silence of the wilderness with their unavailing shrieks! How many men may be expiring under all those dreadful tortures which savage cruelty and ingenuity know so well how to increase and protract! Are these evils nothing to us, because we are placed at a distance from the scenes? No, *they* are our countrymen; and every calamity which falls upon *them*, must affect *us* by our sympathy, as well as by our political union with the sufferers. Wherever the stroke of divine providence falls, it is intended for the chastisement of the nation. If we are insensible and impenitent under this correction, may he not bring the affliction home to ourselves?

You see the world torn from its foundations by a spirit of revolution. Convulsed, as with an universal earthquake, all its thrones totter—all its nations are dashed against one another—the blood of its inhabitants flows in rivers. It seems as if heaven, having destined some new and astonishing order of things to take place, were about to sweep the present generation from the earth with the besom of its wrath, as it did the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness, that a new race might arise better fitted to fulfil its mysterious purposes. Can we, can any, remain wholly unaffected in the catastrophe of the contending nations! Nay, by meddling with strife, not belonging unto us, we have placed

ourselves in a situation of imminent danger. But it is only by evangelical repentance and reformation, that we can certainly hope to avert the awful calamities, with which a just and holy God may afflict an impenitent and sinful nation. For this purpose, let me say to you, in the language of the king of Nineveh to his people, "*Cry mightily unto God, and turn you every one from his evil way. Who can tell if God will turn—from his fierce anger that we perish not?*"

Shall I add under this head, to the evils which we have to deprecate, or to deplore, the flames of discord and sedition lighted up by faction, discontent, or popular ambition working upon ignorance. An insurrection that lately wore a dangerous appearance has, indeed, been happily quelled. But, while we offer our thanks to God for the restoration of the public tranquility, this event serves to strengthen the reason of the duty under consideration. Deeply as we lament an establishment inimical to presbyterianism, with horror we contemplate a change on the ruins of christianity. It is to be sincerely deplored, that the country contains so many men, who can wantonly trifle with the blessings of peace and order; and who, for the wretched purposes of party, are willing to throw the whole nation into the wildest tumult and confusion. This serves to demonstrate how easily a righteous God may punish an impenitent and ungrateful people by the calamities of civil discord. "*He hath bent his bow, and made it ready.*"

Various interests, manners, ideas, jealousies, suspicions, and rivalships, naturally spring up in an extended empire: yea, marked parties already exist. A certain *fever* and *delirium* of *liberty*—perhaps, from the aspect it has frequently put on, I might call it by a harsher name, as it is at war with all moral decency and subordination, has invaded part of the people. We are a mass of inflammable materials pressed together, for the present, by the force of external danger, which confines the fire that is already working within. If once this pressure be removed, or we are placed beyond the apprehensions of foreign violence and injustice, is there not reason to fear, that, without the peculiar guardianship and care of a gracious providence, turbulent spirits violently agitating the whole mass,

the flame will take vent, and the imprisoned volcano broken loose, will rend asunder the sides of the mountain which contains it, or, with infinite fury, tear and disgorge its own entrails! Merciful God! save us from this calamity! Thou art our only sure resource! It is only by respect to thy law, as the basis of the public virtue and morals, that we can reasonably hope to escape these dreadful effects of thy just displeasure! Let us begin, my brethren, the course of reformation by the confession of our sins, and by sincere repentance, that *God may delight to dwell among us*, restore and preserve to us that happy union, established by our pious ancestors, and that inestimable peace at home which will be the crown and perfection of all our other blessings.

(To be Continued.)

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## ON RELIGIOUS THANKSGIVING.

*“Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.”* PSALM cvii. 21, 22.

(Continued from page 317.)

**M**Y christian brethren, I appeal to your own experience—When favoured with strong and lively perceptions of the divine excellence—when melted with a sense of the goodness, mercy and condescension of your God, do you not long that others should perceive and admire it? Can you forbear to commend it? Do you not feel yourselves constrained to engage others to “*taste and see that the Lord is good*” and to join with you, that you may “*magnify and exalt his name together?*” Nay, I appeal to the common sense of all.

Imagine a collection of individuals, each with his mind engrossed and his heart expanded with emotions of gratitude to a common benefactor, yet each concealing his sense of the favour, and burying in silence the praise which is ready to break from his lips—Can you conceive of any thing more unnatu-



ral, monstrous and absurd? No. To affirm that such an event *may* be expected, is to discover an utter ignorance of human nature: to say that it *ought*, is to manifest a hatred of its best tendencies. The truth is, that man is a social being, and delights in social acts. He ought, therefore, and if rightly disposed, he will, unite in social praise to him who hath made him what he is—to him who hath endued him with this capacity.—That thanksgiving to the Creator, should be the only thing in which men should not employ their social powers, is a thought, which the soul of pious sensibility will ever abhor, and which no sophistry can ever render plausible. On no account is the gift of speech so much to be esteemed as on this—The propriety, therefore, of the precept “*to sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving,*” results immediately from our nature, and from a regard to our own benefit in the discharge of an important duty.

If it be inquired then, to what *extent* men ought to unite in this duty; the answer is, in all that extent, certainly, in which they receive favours that are *special* and in which union is easy. Special mercies bestowed on a family, on a congregation, on a city, on a state, and on a nation, may ever with great propriety be made the subject of social thanksgiving: and if it were possible that the whole earth should unite in one concerted jubilee of praise to God for his *common* goodness, who could say that it would not be the sublimest spectacle that ever our world exhibited! Let us consider the duty as it relates to a nation. In this capacity we ought certainly to perform it, for in this capacity we may in a peculiar manner receive favours or frowns from him who ruleth over all. At his command empires rise and fall. He setteth up and pulleth down at his pleasure. He prospers or blasts a nation according to his sovereign will. In all respects we depend upon him as absolutely in this relation as in that of individuals. Shall we never, then, as a community, acknowledge our dependance and give him thanks for the distinguishing favours which he may have conferred on us? Is it not fit, is it not important, that in every relation which he hath instituted, which he sustains, and which he crowns with his kindness,

we should confess his sovereignty, acknowledge his power, and praise his goodness? Yes, my brethren. We have a *national character* to support in our carriage and demeanour toward Almighty God, a character which he observes, and according to which he will treat us. The history of the whole world is a confirmation of this truth. The history of the nation which was governed by the royal Psalmist illustrates it in a most striking manner: and it requires no gift of prophecy to foresee and foretell, that if we are not thankful to God as a *people*, he will withdraw his unnoticed benefits, and teach us by adversity, to inquire after him whom in our prosperity we had forgotten.

But if a nation unite in public thanksgiving its public functionaries may designate the time. To this, again, the malignant hatred of infidelity, to all that bears the appearance of piety, has stated an objection. The magistrate, it cries, ought not to interfere in matters of *religion*. In matters of *conscience* we allow that he ought not; but if we acknowledge a God at all, it is the magistrate's duty to lead the people to adore him. Say that, in a divided unsettled state of the church, he recommends a day for this purpose, leaves every one to that mode of worship, which he thinks most Scriptural—is any man's conscience wounded by this? It is nonsense to affirm it. To what does the act of the magistrate in this concern amount? only to this—availing himself of the eminence on which he is placed, he gives the signal for a *willing people* to prostrate at once before the eternal throne, and to unite their praise to him from whom they derive their all. I repeat it therefore, for it is a fact which you ought to mark and remember, that it is chiefly from those who hate all religion, who hate the very thought that there is a God, that you will hear this objection most frequently urged. Never did men cherish a more sacred and jealous regard to human rights, never did men better understand them, never did men treat them more tenderly or less infringe them, than that illustrious band of patriots; under whose exertion the Lord effected the reformation of these lands. Great, however, was their concern and activity about religion. Ah my country! then

didst thou, in very-deed, feel thy dependance on God—He wrought deliverance for thee—and wilt thou now forget him!

My brethren, I speak thus! and have gone so deeply into this subject, and educed the duty I recommend step by step from its foundation principles, because the day in which we live is “*a day of blasphemy and rebuke*,” in which the boldest attempts are made to subvert the whole fabric of morality and religion;\*—because I count it among the national sins of these lands, that there have not been more frequent acknowledgements of the providence and favours of heaven; and because I do most sincerely rejoice when we are called to this service—It is assuredly a most “*reasonable service*,” a service to which we, of all the people on earth, are most loudly and tenderly called. This will fully appear, when we consider

II. Some of the numerous and peculiar circumstances which demand it, at this time.

These circumstances, you will remember, are all to be considered as “*the wonderful works of God*.”—the works of his providence who “*doth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth*.” Second causes, or suitable means and instruments, have no doubt been concerned in these works. But the most high God hath been the original cause and author of all. He has given direction to every favourable circumstance, he has formed and brought forth and tempered every instrument, which has been employed to preserve our country and render it prosperous. These instruments let us highly esteem, and in the proper season, give them the praise which is their due. But let me remind you that *this* is not the place for such a business. To blazon

\* How lamentably this has been the case in France is known to all. In England a publication has appeared and attracted much notice, the professed object of which is, to show that all social worship is irrational and unscriptural. In some countries, the progress of licentiousness in principle is demonstrated by the public taste demanding one addition after another of the book entitled “*the Age of Reason*”—a book in which the most contemptible ignorance, the grossest falsehood, the most vulgar buffoonery, the most unblushing impudence, and the most daring profaneness are united and make up its contents.

or to blacken the characters of men, to commend or to censure the systems of party politicians, is far beneath the object to which I would now direct your attention. We would adore the God of heaven; and miserably, indeed, do we forget our work; if, instead of fixing our thoughts and affections on him, we suffer them to be engrossed by worms of the dust. As far as human characters or actions form *the gift* for which we ought to be thankful, or the *scourge* which we ought to deprecate, we must, in this view, glance a thought upon them. But to make them the full and direct and principal object of our contemplations, is to put them in the place of that great and glorious Being whose works and worship we should regard. I do, therefore, beseech you to raise and fix your attention on the ever blessed God, and let it be occupied in considering every favour I shall mention as flowing immediately from his hand.

He hath mercifully distinguished us by our religious privileges. These ought to stand foremost in every enumeration of the divine favours, because they are the greatest of all. The glorious gospel of Jesus Christ contains the plan of that "*work*" of salvation which is the most "*wonderful*" of any that the Deity hath ever exhibited to mortal view, and into which even "*the Angels desire to look.*" This precious gospel the inhabitants of these lands enjoy, with every advantage for receiving benefit from it. Great, indeed, is the blessing to be delivered from Pagan darkness, and to have "*the lively oracles of inspiration as a light to our feet and a lamp to our path,*" in any degree. But the kind providence of God hath given them to us with circumstances which greatly enhance their value and augment our obligations. Cast your eyes over the nations of the earth. How many do you observe who, while they know of the gospel, are deprived of some of its most inestimable advantages and benefits? They either cannot read it or are not permitted to examine it for themselves. They are the prey of the most gloomy superstition and of the most perverted and abominable priesthood. We are a people among whom this treasure of divine grace is dispensed with equal regard to all who desire to receive it?

This is a blessing the value of which we can scarcely estimate unless we had been deprived of it; it is a blessing for which millions sigh in vain, and for which our sincerest praise ought to ascend to the "*giver of every good and perfect gift.*" Especially are we bound to this, when we recollect not only that we, have the gospel in its purity and free from embarrassments, but that its instructions and consolations are afforded to us in the richest abundance. The voice of divine mercy is continually sounding in our ears and pleading with our hearts. Truly it is to us "*line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept.*" Every mean of information, persuasion or reproof, every institution and ordinance of religion, presses itself on our attention and regard. He who remains ignorant must guard himself against instruction. He who perishes must force his way to destruction over the strongest barriers and the most powerful opposition of sacred truth—These then are favours for which our hearts ought to swell with gratitude, and our lips to be employed in the liveliest praises to God who hath bestowed them on us.

Our thanks are also due for the blessings of civil liberty. For notwithstanding some reasons of just complaint, on this quarter, a great variety of such blessings we still enjoy, in a grateful degree. These I might particularly mention, and considering them aright, you would confess, that if ever the Almighty arm was made bare and visible in the protection of a nation, it was for our defence and salvation. But we cannot at present enter so wide a field. Compare these, however, for a moment, with what has happened to almost all the world beside. Think of the actual state of mankind in general, in regard to their political and civil rights. By far the greater part are held in a state of the most oppressive bondage. Like the beasts of the field they live and labour only for their task-masters. The heart of benevolence bleeds while it contemplates their situation. Yet when roused to a sense of their injuries and the redress of their wrongs, what misery and carnage of the human race do they, in their turn, unavoidably produce? and how unnecessarily and awfully

are these calamities sometimes increased, by wicked and designing men taking advantage of the popular indignation, and turning it to their own purposes of revenge or interest? How often does the enthusiasm of liberty produce tumults and disorders which encroach on the property and safety of individuals and prevent the public happiness? How frequently does it drive a community, tired with incessant agitations and contentions, to seek an ignoble tranquillity under the yoke of a new master? Considering our own situation, as a nation, and comparing it with that of others, we ought to acknowledge that the finger of God has marked out our way, and that his providence has guided us in the path of safety and felicity. Verily the God of nations hath in many respects most highly distinguished us, and to him should our cordial thanks be rendered.

It deserves our grateful remembrance that the blessing of internal peace has hitherto been preserved to us, in a good measure, while so many of the nations of the earth have been involved in both foreign and domestic war. Who can turn his thoughts on the continent of Europe—travel in imagination over her bloody plains; behold myriads of men lying dead on the fields of battle; see these battles succeed each other in quick and awful succession; recollect into how many living bosoms each of them must convey the keenest distress,—murdering “all the charities of husband, father, son and brother;” view cities wrapt in flames; survey large regions of country depopulated or filled with all the miseries with which war, like an enraged demon let loose from hell, forever marks his footsteps—Who, I say, can think of these things and not burn with gratitude to Heaven that we have been preserved from sharing in such horrors! Who, in contrast with what you have just contemplated, can look through this comparatively happy land, and see its busy inhabitants pursuing, without interruption, alarm or apprehension, all the beneficial employments of human life; lying down and rising up in quietness and safety; urging forward their various business with alacrity and success; tasting all the sweets of domestic enjoyment, “*each under his vine and under his fig-tree*”



*while there it nothing to hurt or to destroy.*”—Who can view this pleasing contrast and not wonder that any should wish to destroy it—wish to involve us in intestine broils and bloodshed! Yet such a wish appears to have been formed; and imminent was the danger, at a certain period, that it would be realized. Yea, a dangerous insurrection actually made its appearance, but was instantly suppressed. The revolutionary moment was, indeed, incalculably trying! The torrent of popular opinion flows with too much rapidity to admit of deliberate reasoning. Courted by one political party, suspected by another, and threatened by a third, some, who had long stood the firm advocates of true religion and moral order, were carried off, by this torrent, before they had time to consider the consequences. In calmer moments, however, they saw their mistake, and soon regained their former station. To heaven, therefore, let our warmest aspirations of praise arise for this fortunate escape, this happy and important deliverance. Mercy has been mingled with judgment, and has rendered the correction short and partial. “*Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord*” hath pitied and spared us. He hath set before us an example of correction, but he has forbore a general chastisement, and sought by kindness to lead us to himself. To him let us go with penitence and with praise—“*Bless the Lord, O our soul, and all that is within us bless his holy name.*”

The smiles of providence on our agriculture, commerce, manufactures and arts, invite us to give thanks to him from whom we have received them. Notwithstanding some unfavourable indications at times, the earth continues to yield us her increase in such abundance that “*the poor of our land have bread to eat.*” Yea, there has been, in general, food in profusion both for man and beast.

Under the influence, likewise, of many providential circumstances, favourable to such an effect, not only the agriculture, but the commerce, manufactures and arts of our country, are in a progressive and flourishing state. They have repeatedly received as it were life from the dead. A few years since all was stagnant and languishing. Commerce

declined and seemed on the point of expiring. For labour there was little demand, and for the fruits of industry no adequate return. The situation of those who were obliged to depend for subsistence on these resources was hard in the extreme, and their prospects were still more gloomy and disheartening. But now there is, generally, both a pressing demand and a generous recompence for every effort of enterprise, and for every product of labour or of art. Over all ranks of the community prosperity seems to be casting her smile. Seldom, if ever before, has the husbandman reaped such wealth from his harvest, or the mechanic derived such profit from his manufacture, or the merchant received such gains from his trade, or the ingenious such a reward for their skill.

The advantages of education and useful instruction are, also, more generally diffused than heretofore, and a spirit seems to have gone forth which promises to impart them effectually to those who, through want or carelessness, have not hitherto felt their influence. That we should have the ability and the inclination to extend the principles of knowledge and virtue to the poor, and those who would otherwise remain the prey of ignorance and of vice, deserves to be reckoned among the choicest blessings which can rest on our country. Never can society incur trouble and expence in promoting its own interest more properly, than in taking care that all classes of its members have their minds enlightened by information, and formed to habits of honesty, industry, and a reverence for virtue. It is the high honour of several cities and towns that establishments for these invaluable purposes have been formed and generously supported. Other places appear to be now starting in the pursuit of the same objects; and others still, it is hoped, will follow their example.

These then, are a few of the numerous and peculiar circumstances, which call the inhabitants of the United Kingdom "to praise the Lord for his goodness;" remembering that it is he who, by his kind and overruling providence, hath so remarkably prospered and distinguished them as a nation.

(To be Continued.)

## POPIISH SUPERSTITION.

—“ *In all things ye are too superstitious.—We ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device.*”

PAUL.

**T**HE mysteries, as they were called, or representations of the divine Being, the crucifixion, &c. were formerly very common in the church of Rome. They served as the amusement and instruction of the people; and so attractive were these gross exhibitions in the dark ages, that they formed one of the principal ornaments of the reception which was given to princes when they entered towns.

The following curious account of the representation of the crucifixion, on a Good-Friday, is given by Mr Whitfield.

“ In the church belonging to the convent of St De Beato, at Lisbon, we had not,” says Mr W. “ waited long, before the curtain was drawn up: immediately, upon a high scaffold, hung in the front with black baize, and behind with silk purple damask laced with gold, was exhibited to our view an image of the Lord Jesus at full length, crowned with thorns, and nailed on a cross, between two figures of like dimensions, representing the two thieves. At a little distance on the right hand, was placed an image of the Virgin Mary in plain long ruffles, and a kind of widow-weeds. The veil was purple silk, and she had a wire glory round her head. At the foot of the cross lay, in a mournful pensive posture, a living man, dressed in woman’s clothes, who personated Mary Magdalen; and not far off stood a young man, in imitation of the beloved disciple. He was dressed in a loose green silk vesture, and bob-wig. His eyes were fixed on the cross, and his two hands a little extended. On each side, near the front of the stage, stood two sentinels in buff, with formidable caps and long beards; and directly in the front stood another yet more formidable, with a large target in his hand: we may suppose him to be the Roman centurion. To complete the scene, from behind the purple hangings came out about twenty little purple-vested winged boys, two by two, each bearing

a lighted wax-taper in his hand, and a crimson and gold cap on his head. At their entrance upon the stage, they gently bowed their heads to the spectators, then kneeled and made obeisance, first to the image on the cross, and then to that of the Virgin Mary. When risen, they bowed to each other, and then took their respective places over against one another, on steps assigned for them on the front of the stage. Opposite to this, at a few yards distance, stood a black friar in a pulpit hung in mourning. For a while he paused; and then, breaking silence, gradually lifted up his voice till it was extended to a pretty high pitch, though, I think, scarce high enough for so large an auditory. After he had proceeded in his course about a quarter of an hour, a confused noise was heard near the front great door; and, turning my head, I saw four long-bearded men, two of whom carried a ladder on their shoulders; and after them followed two more with large gilt dishes in their hands, full of linen, spices, &c.: these, as I imagined, were the representatives of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. On a signal given from the pulpit, they advanced towards the steps of the scaffold; but, upon their first attempting to mount it, at the watchful centurion's nod, the observant soldiers made a pass at them, and presented the points of their javelins directly to their breasts. They are repulsed. Upon this, a letter from Pilate is produced: the centurion reads it, shakes his head, and (with looks that bespoke a forced compliance) beckons the sentinels to withdraw their arms. Leave being thus obtained, they ascend, and, having paid their homage by kneeling first to the image on the cross, and then to the Virgin Mary, they retired to the back of the stage. Still the preacher continued declaiming, or rather, as was said, explaining the mournful scene. Magdalen persists in wringing her hands, and variously expressing her personated sorrow; whilst John (seemingly regardless of all besides) stood gazing on the crucified figure. By this time it was near three o'clock, and therefore proper for the scene to begin to close. The ladders are ascended; the superscription and crown of thorns taken off; long white rollers put round the arms of the image; and then the nails

knocked out which fastened the hands and feet. Here Mary Magdalen looks most languishing, and John, if possible, stands more thunderstruck than before. The orator lifts up his voice, and almost all the hearers expressed concern, by weeping, beating their breasts, and smiting their cheeks. At length, the body is gently let down; Magdalen eyes it, and gradually rising, receives the feet into her wide-spread handkerchief: whilst John (who hitherto had stood motionless, like a statue), as the body came nearer the ground, with an eagerness that bespoke the intense affection of a sympathising friend, runs toward the cross, seizes the upper part of it into his clasping arms, and with his disguised fellow mourner, helps to bear it away. Great preparations were made for its interment. It was wrapped in linen and spices, &c. and, being laid upon a bier richly hung, was afterwards carried round the church-yard in grand procession. The image of the Virgin Mary was chief mourner; and John and Magdalen, with a whole troop of friars with wax-tapers in their hands, followed after. Determined to see the whole, I waited its return, and, in about a quarter of an hour, the corpse was brought in, and deposited in an open sepulchre prepared for the purpose; but not before a priest, accompanied by several of the same order, in splendid vestments, had perfumed it with incense, sung to, and kneeled before it. John and Magdalen attended the obsequies; but the image of the Virgin Mary was carried away, and placed upon the front of the stage, in order to be kissed, adored, and worshipped by the people. This I saw them do with the utmost eagerness and reverence. And thus ended this Good-Friday's tragi-comical, superstitious, idolatrous droll:—Surely, thought I, (whilst attending on such a scene of mock devotion), if ever, now is the Lord Jesus crucified afresh: and I could then, and even now, think of no other plea for the poor beguiled devotees, than that which suffering Innocence himself put up for his enemies, when actually hanging upon the cross, viz. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*"

*See Christ. Mag. Sep. 1810.*

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WEDNESDAY, Oct. 31, 1810.

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THE CONSTITUTION, CHARACTER, AND DUTIES,  
OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

*“I will give you Pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.”* JER. iii. 15.

(Continued from page 331.)

II. **G**OD hath set distinguishing marks upon the ministry, of which he approves—*“Pastors according to mine heart.”*

Had the Christian church in its visible form been so distinct from the world, that every person who is not a sincere disciple, did profess himself a despiser of religion, there would be no difficulty in ascertaining precisely its members. But a wise providence orders it otherwise. “The tares grow up with the wheat until the harvest.” A complete separation would not correspond with the economy of this state of imperfection. Even the sacred office of the ministry has been invaded by unsanctified men. “The Priests teach for hire, and the Prophets divine for money.” The head of the church hath left for his followers a caution to beware of a false ministry. “And many false prophets shall rise and deceive many—if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect—Some preach Christ of envy—speaking lies in hypocrisy—There shall be false teachers among you.” We can-



not, therefore, doubt that there exists a ministry, professing to be Christian, of which God does not approve, which is not his ordinance, which will not profit the people, which is, in short, an evil against which all Christians ought to be upon their guard. This subject, my brethren, is of too much importance to be lightly esteemed. You are called upon "to prove all things." You are bound to "try the spirits." You are bound to judge for yourselves according to truth, and to reject those who have run unsent. You are bound to receive as the messengers of peace, and to support as the ordinance of Christ, the ministers of the church of God. "*Thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.*" They do not act in a friendly manner to the cause of religion, who attempt to stifle inquiry into the character of the Christian ministry. Those who love the gates of Zion, those whose souls are anxious to be fed by Pastors according to God's heart, cannot easily be prevented from inquiring, How shall the ministry which is of divine appointment be ascertained? How shall *you* be able to test *our* several pretensions and claims? This is not to be done, by merely hearing a Preacher, and judging his eloquence, his earnestness, or his doctrine. A man may preach truth, and yet do it deceitfully, partially, and without authority. Neither is the fact to be ascertained by the number, or rank, or power of those by whom a ministry may be recommended. "Follow not a multitude to do evil—The wisdom of this world is foolishness—And all the world wondered after the beast." Nor is it to be ascertained, by the multitude of reputed conversions which accompany a person's ministry, whether or not he has the authority of Messiah. Many faithful ministers have had little visible success. The Redeemer himself stretched out his hands to disobedient and gainsaying people. And multitudes may appear much affected where there is really no gracious change of heart. They may *appear* sincere and zealous, in giving glory to God, and in singing Hosannahs, while as yet they are ready, under a change of external circumstances, to cry out with all their hearts, "Not this man, but Barrabas." The distinguishing marks which God hath

set upon the ministry which he approves, are, a *lawful call* to the office, and a *life corresponding* with its sacred functions.

1. The Pastor according to God's heart, has received a regular call to the ministry.

It is a general proposition of divine inspiration, That no ecclesiastical office is to be undertaken without a call from God. The head of the church was himself subjected to this law. And as there was no exception admitted in his favour, it is vain to expect it in favour of any other. *And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron—So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son—called of God an High Priest.\** By a divine call to any work or office is meant, not merely that it comes to pass in the providence of God that a person is engaged in such work or office, but that he is employed by divine authority therein. The call of God to ecclesiastical office, is *inward*, when there is a divine influence experienced upon the mind, inclining and commanding the person to devote himself to the service of the Church. It is *outward*, when accompanied with external evidence for the satisfaction of the church. It is *extraordinary*, when a person is employed immediately by the Divine Being, without the intervention of such human agencies as are regulated by stated laws. It is *ordinary*, when authority is conferred agreeably to such external order as God hath appointed to be observed as the standing ordinance of his empire. The *inward call* may satisfy a man's own mind; but others must, in order to receive him, have some external evidence. If this were not the case, there would be no end of imposture. No man is to be recognised as an ambassador of Christ without an outward call. The *extraordinary call*, is always accompanied with infallible evidence. The seal of miracles gives evidence of the authenticity of the commission, and is sufficient to remove all suspicion of fraud. To this evidence the Redeemer hath taught us by his own example to appeal. *The works that I do—they bear witness of me.†* But miracles are ceased. It is only therefore for the *ordinary out-*

\* Heb. v 4, 5, 10.

† John x. 25.

ward call we are to look in examining the pretensions of ecclesiastical officers—And this consists in ordination by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. You will readily perceive, therefore, my brethren, that I consider such ordination as the first mark of the ministry which God approves. In defence of this sentiment, I propose to show—that ordination is the ministerial call—that ordination is by the imposition of hands—that the laying on of hands belongs exclusively to the Presbytery.

1. Ordination constitutes the call of God to the ministry of reconciliation in the Gospel church.

Ordination is the authoritative designation of a person to office in the church of Christ, by those who have power according to the will of God to transmit the ministerial authority. According to the constitution of the Christian church, certain offices are created by the divine Redeemer, and this constitution cannot be put into operation unless persons are appointed to fill these offices. An extraordinary call from God is not now to be expected; these offices must therefore be filled up in one of two ways: Either every one who chooses may assume an office without ceremony and without qualifications, or some person or persons must have power, from the head of the church, to judge of the qualifications of candidates, and to reject them, or invest them with the office. The first of these ways is so evidently disorderly and absurd, that you will not require arguments to prove that it is not the order of the house of God. And the last implies all that I now contend for, that ordination constitutes the Minister. Under the Old Testament, none was admitted to any ordinary office in the church without inauguration. The Priests and the Levites were by divine appointment publicly introduced into their ministerial offices, and the rulers of the Synagogue were never admitted without ordination. The head of the church was ordained of God an High Priest; and he ordained his apostles. Without ordination even Deacons could not be admitted to exercise power over the temporalities of the church.\* Every where, in short, those who exercised the

\* Lev. viii. Numb. viii John xx. 21. Acts vi. 16. & xiv. 23.

ministry were ordained by competent authority. And it would have been the height of absurdity to give specific directions about the qualifications of Elders and Bishops, and about their ordination, had every one possessed a right to assume the office at pleasure—had there been no ordaining power appointed in the church.\* The conclusion is therefore irresistible—He who is not ordained, is not the ambassador of Jesus Christ. No plea of qualifications for teaching, no plea of necessity, can justify a violation of the law of Christ by intrusion into the Gospel ministry. Nothing short of immediate inspiration, of a special revelation from Heaven, can supply the want of ordination to a minister of the Gospel.

“*How shall they preach except they be sent?*”†

2. Ordination to the holy ministry is to be performed by imposition of hands.

Upon this subject, my brethren, much variety of opinion has existed among those who profess the Christian religion. Some have supposed that *laying on of hands* was used only in extraordinary cases, and consequently ought not to be practised in ordinations. Others have considered it as a sacrament. It has been also represented as a significant ceremony, as a solemn farce, as a relict of popery, as a piece of clerical imposition. The early reformers of the church from popery, both in Scotland and in other countries, were not all exactly of the same sentiments about this ordinance. Although the great body of them considered ordination by imposition of hands as a divine institution, others insisted that it was not essential to the validity of ordination to lay on hands. In Scotland, the reformers admitted the practice; but in the 4th chapter of the first book of Discipline, it is judged not to be an essential part of ordination. It is certain that, in that country, dissenters from the popish establishment existed in organized churches for 70 years before this; and, probably, from a much earlier period; but I have not been able to ascertain, whether in any instance ministers had been actually ordained without the laying on of hands, either before or after the first book of discipline had been compiled. Indeed, the

\* 1 Tim. iii. 1—7. Tit. i. 5—9.

† Rom. x. 15.

sentiment expressed in the 4th chapter, in reference to this subject, did not long prevail, if ever it had received a general adoption. This book of discipline was drawn up by a few ministers, and subscribed by a part of the nobility who embraced the reformation in the year 1561. In less than two years thereafter, a general assembly was constituted, which gave directions for having it revised. Various causes, which distracted the church, prevented another system of policy from being completed for several years. And in the mean time the order of the church was regulated without any fixed standard by express acts of assembly. In the year 1578 was adopted the second book of discipline, which requires ordination by imposition of hands.

I shall not take it upon me, my brethren, to condemn the sentiments of such as say that ministers *can* transmit office-power to an approved candidate, by setting him apart in the name of the head of the church to the work of the ministry, without laying on hands; but I shall endeavour to prove, that imposition of hands at ordinations is a scriptural appointment—is the ordinance of God.

The Jews, among whom the Christian ministry was first constituted, were perfectly familiar with the practice of ordination to ecclesiastical office by the laying on of hands. They required no laboured explanations upon this subject. Every one knew that the ministers of the synagogue were uniformly ordained in this manner. The Jewish rabbis, in proof of the antiquity of the practice, refer us to the time of Moses,\* and urge, that all power originating from God, and exercised among them, is in this manner permanently transmitted. The learned Lightfoot was led into a mistake, by an inaccurate view of a passage in Maimonides, about the practice of the Jews, in the time of Christ, in ordaining their doctors. This mistake is corrected by the very learned Vitringa, who demonstrates that all ordinations were by the laying on of hands, and exhibits abundant evidence that the church in this respect followed the practice of the synagogue.† This fact will serve to throw light on those passages of the New Testa-

\* Deut. xxxiv. 9.

† Vitringa de Syn. Vet. Lib. 3. Cap. 15.

ment which relate to this part of ecclesiastical order. I shall now submit some of these texts to your consideration.

(1.) 1 Tim. v. 22. *Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins.* The whole of the argument from the 17th verse respects the ministers of religion. Honour is due to them—they are entitled to a decent maintenance—they are not to be accused upon slight grounds—When they offend, discipline must be administered upon them with faithfulness and impartiality.—And in order to prevent the curse of a vicious ministry, orders are given that none be rashly ordained to this holy office; for those who, from negligence, admit base men to the ministry, are partakers of their sins. The meaning of the phrase, “*lay hands suddenly on no man,*” is, therefore, perfectly obvious—Let none be ordained to the gospel ministry who is not known to possess due qualifications. That this text refers to ordination is evident, because, 1. The whole argument of which it is a part refers to ministers. 2. This direction refers to what was the well known method of ordination to office. 3. Because the communication of miraculous gifts by imposition of hands, could not have been a subject of ordinary rules. It would be absurd to exhort the prophets, “*Teach not error, while you are speaking by inspiration.*” But if this text refers at all to ordination, it establishes the doctrine of the imposition of hands; for otherwise the whole work of ordination would not have been included in the direction, “*lay on hands.*”

(2.) I shall quote 1 Tim. iv. 14. *Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.* The apostle is in this chapter describing the duty of a “*good minister of Jesus Christ.*” See verse 6. And he urges Timothy to exercise aright his own ministry. Verses 12—16. The gift, therefore, (*charisma*) in the 14. must be understood of the office-power conferred upon him. This is expressly said to have been conferred upon him with imposition of hands.

(3.) You will perceive another proof of this doctrine, and of the importance in which it was held in the estimation of the primitive church, in Heb. vi. 2. *Of the doctrine of bap-*



tisms, and of LAYING ON OF HANDS, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. This text, however, in order to be understood, must be considered in connexion with the argument of which it is a part. The Hebrews are reproved for their slow progress in Christian knowledge, chap. v. 11—14. The apostle exhorts them to behave as men of discernment, and in chap. vi. 1. to go on unto the perfection of Christian knowledge, *leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ* so firmly established as articles of faith, that they should not hereafter be under the necessity of returning to lay a second time their *foundation*. Far from encouraging indifference to any part of the Christian system, he exhorts every one to diligence in procuring information upon every subject. The convenient distinction between essentials and circumstantials, which has since been so industriously and, alas! so effectually employed in cooling the zeal, and in flattering the indolence of Christians, was as yet unknown. The apostles thought, that whatever was worthy of God to reveal, was certainly worthy of man to receive and understand. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews makes, indeed, a distinction between elementary doctrines and those which are necessary to the perfection of the system; but among the *first principles of the oracles of God*, and along with *repentance, faith, the resurrection, and the judgment*, he enumerates also the sacrament of baptism and the Christian ministry. This is unquestionably the meaning of the text under examination. The doctrine of the "*laying on of hands*," is one of the *principles of the doctrine of Christ*, a fundamental doctrine in the perfect edifice of Christian knowledge. It cannot at all apply, in this case, to the act by which the gift of miracles was conveyed. The Hebrew converts would not readily so understand an expression which they were in the habit of using themselves, in their synagogues, as synonymous with ordination. Miracles were of temporary use; the ministry is permanent. Without their continuance, the church is complete in doctrine and orders; but without a ministry, she cannot even exist in her organized visible form. And if the ministry be at all

referred to in the text, it follows that regular ordination is by the laying on of hands.

(4.) I shall examine one other passage of the New Testament in corroboration of this doctrine. Acts. xiii. 2. 3. *The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And, when they had fasted and prayed, and LAID THEIR HANDS ON THEM, they sent them away.* From this it appears that the ministry at Antioch were divinely directed to *set apart* Barnabas and Saul, two of their number, to a certain work to which God had called them; and that these two ministers were accordingly set apart by their brethren to that work, by the imposition of hands. Upon this work, it also appears from verse 4, they immediately set out. After an absence of three years, they returned to Antioch, "*from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.*"\* Upon their return, they declare to the church that the work had been accomplished, unto which they had been especially called of God, and solemnly set apart by them. They gave to their brethren an account of that work—Christian churches have been organized among the heathen.—"*He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.*"† This solemn transaction was not an *ordination* to the ministry; but a *call* to employ the ministry, which they had already for many years possessed, in a *special mission*, to form churches among the Gentiles, who were hitherto sunk in idolatry.

Perhaps it may be objected, by those who consider this transaction as an ordination to the apostleship, why all this solemnity about a mission which was already authorized in the general commission given to the apostles, "Go ye into all the world?" If no new powers were here given, wherefore these revelations, prayers, fasts, and this imposition of hands? Had not multitudes of the Gentiles been already converted in Cesaria, in Arabia, and in Antioch? And if this exposition be true, what relation has this transaction to the doctrine of ordination by the laying on of hands? A simple statement of facts will, I trust, remove all these objections, and satisfacto-

\* Acts xiv 26.

† Acts xiv. 27.

rily show that this argument is not irrelevant to the case in hand.

Josep was a native of Cyprus, and a Levite by descent. In his native island he possessed an estate which he sold, for the service of the church, laying the price at the apostles' feet. He devoted his talents also to the public service; and for his pathetic eloquence, received from the apostles, within a year after the ascension of our Lord, the name Barnabas, the Son of consolation.\* In the year 42, and the 9th of his ministry, this good man, full of the Holy Ghost, was sent from Jerusalem to preach at Antioch in Syria. In this city his ministry was remarkably successful. He stood in need of ministerial aid; and having visited Tarsus, he prevailed upon Saul to accompany him to Antioch, where they laboured with great success for a twelve-month. It was at the close of the year 44 that they were both called to that *special mission*, to which they were *set apart by imposition of hands*.

Saul, afterwards called Paul, was a native of Tarsus, a city of Cilicia. While "*breathing out slaughter*" against the disciples of our Lord, he was miraculously converted on the road to Damascus, in the year 35. Being called to the ministry and endowed with the Holy Ghost, he preached in the synagogue of Damascus; and going from thence into Arabia, he preached the Gospel to the Jews in that place for two years. In the discharge of the duties of the office, to which he had received, from God, an extraordinary call, he journeyed from place to place, until the year 44, when he was sent from Antioch along with Barnabas, to present to the Presbytery of Jerusalem, the collection made by the Christians in Syria. This was on the 9th year of his ministry. While he was in Jerusalem, he entered upon a certain occasion into the temple, fell into a trance, was caught up into the third heavens, saw the Lord, and received from him immediate directions and supernatural endowments to qualify him for the work of Apostle to the Gentiles. After his return to Antioch along with Barnabas, they were publicly *set apart to their mission*.

\* Acts iv. 36. *huios paraklêseôs*. The Son of exhortation, or Comfort. The preacher who touched and rejoiced the heart.

Every thing was now ready for admitting the Gentiles into the bosom of the church of God, without subjecting them to the law of Moses. Nothing of this kind had hitherto taken place. The gospel was confined to the city of Jerusalem for the first year after the ascension of our Saviour. The persecution, however, in which Stephen suffered martyrdom, scattered the preachers of the gospel, except the apostles themselves, abroad through Palestine and the adjacent provinces, in which the Jews had formed settlements. These preachers taught the same doctrine and order which had been followed by the church at Jerusalem; and multitudes of the Jews every where embraced the faith. For eight years, the gospel was preached exclusively to the descendants of Abraham.\* It was in the year 41 that the Gentiles were first admitted into the church. And these first fruits were, previously, proselytes to the Jewish religion.† Cornelius was a devout man, before he heard the gospel; and yet it occasioned much astonishment and much controversy among the disciples, that even he and those who believed along with him, and along with him received the Holy Ghost, had been admitted by the apostle Peter to the privileges of the church. During the three ensuing years, however, the proselytes of the gate, in great numbers, joined the disciples of Christ, and at Antioch they first became distinguished by the name Christian. For these eleven years, the Jews and the proselyted Gentiles were nevertheless the only converts. They constituted the different Christian churches which had hitherto been organized. The idolatrous Gentiles had not yet been invited to repentance. For this work a *special mission* is with awful solemnity now provided.

(To be Continued.)

\* Acts xi. 19.

† Acts x. —. & xi. 20.

## ON RELIGIOUS FASTING.

*“Therefore also now, saith the Lord, Turn ye even unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.”*  
 JOEL ii. 12, 13.

(Continued from page 349.)

**A**NOTHER cause of fasting and humiliation, is the prevalence of immorality and vice, and especially of the principles of a bold and licentious infidelity.

Jeremiah pronounces from God this alarming oracle to the nation of Israel, *“I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, saith the Lord.”* And the prophet Amos—*“you only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities.”* This is the righteous rule by which he directs the operations of his providence towards all nations, and particularly towards those who have enjoyed and abused singular blessings, or singular means of knowledge and of grace. If mercies, or privileges can aggravate offence, how criminal must be the people of these lands, if they forget the God who has often made bare his holy arm in their behalf—who has often humbled before them the pride and insolence of their enemies—and who has established them in a state of public security, of individual happiness, and of general plenty, which scarcely any other nation on earth enjoys? How much more criminal must they be if they despise the gospel of Christ, which they once had the peculiar felicity to receive in its purity and simplicity, untainted by the corruptions, and unshackled by the restraints of civil, or ecclesiastical despotism?—Yet, if we review our manners and our principles, how much reason do we find in them for repentance?—

Is not God blasphemed by the common and irreverent use of his holy name, and still more by those impious execrations that are employed to vent the rage and fury of the passions? Are not his Sabbaths profaned by applying them, not to his

worship, but to our own business and amusement? How are his temples forsaken that were once crowded with such religious respect? How are his ordinances contemned by multitudes who only have recourse to them as a last, but alas! a mistaken refuge, in extreme affliction? Where are the families that acknowledge him, although he has threatened to *pour out his wrath on the families that call not on his name*? Pagans offered their incense, and poured their daily libations to their household gods, while christians, to their shame, neglect to adore that God in whom they live and move, and have their being; who surrounds their habitations with peace and security, and crowns their domestic lot with innumerable comforts. These sins are of the greater importance, and deserve the more to be called to mind for our humiliation, because a principle of religion and duty to God, lies at the foundation of all sincere and genuine morality, both public and private. When his fear is despised, and his worship is abandoned, vice and licentiousness of manners speedily ensue, that bring down the judgments of Heaven on a land. Let every friend of his country piously cherish the principles of christianity, and encourage its institutions. Moral order can be established securely by nothing else but the principles of true religion; and if it be once driven from this anchor, by the storms of irreligion and licentiousness, it will quickly be overwhelmed, by the waves of popular fury and violence.

Christianity, indeed, is diffusing itself in name, but its original purity and lustre are greatly tarnished. The spirit of the world prevails over the exertions of piety. Human inventions encumber divine worship; carnal views influence church discipline; her government is modified to subserve the designs of men. Heresy and strife awfully divide in judgment and affection the professed disciples of Jesus. Alas! the Reformed Presbyterian Church is parted into factions; whilst, amid the stickling noise of party peculiarities, the more important doctrines of the gospel are neglected, and a general declension in spiritual liveliness, brotherly love, and regularity of conduct, characterizes the whole. All are brethren in



iniquity. The anger of the Lord is visibly gone forth against us. "*I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.*"

When we descend to those sins that affect solely ourselves, or our fellow-men, it is difficult to know where to close the catalogue, and almost impossible to draw in too high colours the picture of our guilt. How many examples have we to deplore of idleness, the parent of a thousand other vices? Of hard and cruel selfishness, insensible to the claims of human nature, and regardless of the rights and feelings of others? How many examples of injustice, of falsehood, of fraud! What intemperance! What loose and criminal pleasures! What malice! What envy! What slander! Yea, what religious, what political slander, that, in order to serve the purposes of ambition or of party, seems willing to impose upon itself no restraints of truth or of decency! It dignifies itself with the pretences of *faithfulness, patriotism, and the love of the people*, and, under these respectable masks, which vice and knavery are often most forward to assume, believes it may overthrow truth, character, and social order, with impunity. But, were I to enumerate all our vices in detail, I should fatigue your patience and waste the time. I should be obliged to develope all the criminal principles and stratagems of the human heart, and to retrace the whole of that guilty history that is daily acted on the theatre of the world.

Without confining our view to these open and flagrant crimes, let every christian seriously re-examine his own heart. Is it not as true now, as it has been in every age, that *because iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold*? Has not the general impiety and corruption spread its infection to us? Instead of awakening our repentance, and re-animating our zeal, as it ought, has it not gone far to extinguish in our hearts that sacred and ardent flame *of love to God and man*, that is the vivifying principle of every christian duty? How little concern do we see to edify the world, and to adorn *the profession of God our Saviour* by a pious and holy example? What an unfavourable prospect arises to the church from our growing remissness in training the rising generation in the

knowledge and the fear of God? Do we not, in one word, observe among the professors of the gospel a coldness of spirit, and a degeneracy of manners, dishonourable to Christ, and infinitely reproachful to the christian name? Let each of us look into himself, he will there find a picture of the general corruption. Ah! blessed Lord! thou hast been *wounded in the house of thy friends*, therefore thine enemies insult thy cross!—Christians, awake from this criminal and shameful lethargy of soul! Be penetrated with a lively grief for the unworthy requital you have made, and the dishonours you have done to the riches of divine grace and love by which you are saved! With you then, let the public reformation begin, *that others also seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in heaven!*

Added to all our other sins, have we not to deplore in this pretended *age of reason*,\* the progress of a bold and licentious infidelity that is at war with all reason, morals, and religion—whose god is nature, whose apostles are profligates, whose faith is the innocence of criminal pleasures, and whose law of duty is the impulse of passion? An age of reason! It is an age of luxury, of dissipation, of relaxed morals, of superficial inquiry. Its vices have made it desirous of tearing away the restraints of religion. Pained by the light of divine truth, it has endeavoured to replunge itself into the darkness

\* There is evidently a reference in this expression to a pamphlet that has appeared under the same title. But as that pamphlet is chiefly remarkable for ignorance and audacity, it would not have deserved this notice, if it had not become a kind of cant to boast of the superior illumination of the present above every preceding age. But there is a reference chiefly to certain atheistical opinions which not long since agitated and disgraced the French convention, and have been re-echoed by some weak people in Britain who adopt their infidelity like certain fashions, merely because *it is supposed to be French*. As that spirit, however, which was likely to do so much injury to the affairs of France, has received a check, perhaps, our own countrymen may begin to think there is *less reason in it*. If any reader should remark that the principles of infidelity are only *declaimed* against in the discourse; it is sufficient to reply that this was not the place to *reason* upon them. Our public sins are recounted for our humiliation. It is to be supposed that christians acknowledge them to be sins. And therefore to produce the designed effect, their *enormity* only requires to be painted.

of ancient paganism. It has hated the rigid law of revealed duty, it has feared the destiny of sin in a future world, and in order to rid itself of the objects of its hatred and its fears, it has been willing to extinguish the blessed hopes of immortality—It has written on the repositories of the dead, as its best consolation, “*Death is an eternal sleep*”—Or, it has suffered a delirious imagination to wander with the philosophers of antiquity, through an uncertain limbus of souls where there are no bounds to conjecture, and to error. An age of reason! It is not an enlightened reason, but a corrupted heart, that has refused to be guided by the lights of the gospel.

Blessed Jesus! Thy gracious and heavenly mission has been rejected by blinded mortals, who have no guide to certainty and truth but thee! Thy divine nature, and thy supreme dominion have been insulted by worms of the dust, who have dared to rise in rebellion against thee!—Thy sole and meritorious atonement has been denied by miserable sinners, who have no hope in eternity but thee!—My brethren! Shall not God punish by his righteous judgments, if he cannot bring to repentance, a *guilty age* which has impiously endeavoured to drag the *Sun of Righteousness* from his sphere—which has insulted his glory, and blasphemed the astonishing stoops of his mercy? Every sincere believer in Jesus Christ must be deeply penetrated with these dishonours done to his Redeemer’s name. And he will find, in these daring impieties, in the general voice that surrounds him, and in his own heart, the subjects of profound repentance and contrition before God. Arrest, O Lord! the growing profanity of the age! When will the iniquities of men come to an end, and the reign of truth and righteousness be extended from the rising to the setting sun!

What, then, my brethren, is our present duty? Is it not to humble our souls before God under his corrections? Is it not to make confession of our sins, and to turn from them with all our heart to the living and true God? Let us fervently address our prayers to the throne of his grace, that he would give unto the church pastors according to his heart—

that he would reform, protect, and bless our country—that he would endue with that wisdom which is from above, our legislators, our magistrates, and our judges—that he would promote the means of general knowledge, and extend the influence of true religion as the surest basis of the public weal—that he would teach us with sobriety, temperance, and thankfulness of heart, to enjoy the blessings of his providence; assured that, if we do not glorify him in the use of his mercies, he will glorify himself in the execution of his judgments. Let us, finally, implore from his mercy that he would spare the blood of our brethren, wantonly shed in ambitious wars—that he would allay the convulsions that agitate the christian world—and that he, who has all events, and the hearts of all men in his hands, would bring from the bosom of that chaos, a new creation of liberty and peace, and true religion over the whole earth—Amen.

S—L S. S—H.

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## ON RELIGIOUS THANKSGIVING.

*“Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.”* PSALM cvii. 21, 22.

(Continued from page 357.)

**T**HE resonableness of thanksgiving and praise to God— with some of the numerous and peculiar circumstances which demand it at this time, have already been considered. Let us now inquire,

III. In what manner our sincere compliance with this duty may best be expressed and conceived—It will be by unfeigned repentance for our sins; by truly and unitedly lifting our souls to God in the acts of thankful devotion and cherishing a sense of our entire dependance on him as a people; and by a grateful use and improvement of the favours conferred upon us.

If we would truly feel and express our gratitude to God we must truly repent of our sins.

Some, perhaps, may wonder that on an occasion appropriated to praise I should inculcate penitence. I might not have done it, my brethren, if I had only proposed to show how we might make *professions* of thankfulness, but having engaged to speak of the *sincere* expressions of it, I am compelled to mention penitence, because no sincere acknowledgments of the divine goodness can ever be made without it. Take a familiar illustration of this point.

Imagine that you had a benefactor to whom you were most deeply indebted, and who was continually loading you with benefits; imagine that while this was taking place you should indulge in every thing that you knew to be most disagreeable to him—violate all that he held most sacred, and league with his inveterate enemies in deadly hostility against him; imagine that you should, nevertheless, make warm professions of your gratitude to him and declare that you had a heart-felt sense of his kindness. Who can hear such a representation without exclaiming—“The wretch who should act thus would be guilty of the most detestable falsehood and the basest hypocrisy.” Who, if he had the opportunity, would not say to such a man—“Show your gratitude by your actions or cease to declare it in words. Your pretensions are all false and hollow. Had you one remnant of a grateful temper you could not thus basely treat him to whom you owe so much. Did you feel as you ought, your conduct would be the reverse of all that it is.”

Shall I say, beware how you thus judge? No, for this judgment is just. But in passing it you pass sentence on every impenitent sinner who professes to be truly thankful to Heaven. I called the statement an illustration, but it is rather a strict description of the case. God is our greatest benefactor. “*Sin is a transgression of his law,*” and his “*very soul abhors it.*” The commission of it is an attempt to subvert his government of the universe. It is to join with his enemies in opposing the will and authority of the Most High, and explicitly to say, “*We would not have thee to reign over*

us." This is the language of every act of disobedience to the divine law, and those who unrestrainedly indulge in disobedience adopt this language, in its highest tone of impiety.

Some, I am aware, are ignorant, and more are unmindful, of this solemn truth. Let the crime and absurdity of such, receive all the allowance which can arise from their circumstances, but still it will be true, that till they know the crime and avoid the absurdity, they will never offer any sacrifice acceptable to God. Till true repentance, and its inseparable concomitant, thorough reformation, take place in their hearts and lives, all their professions of gratitude will only number them among those of whom it is said—“ *This people draw near to me with their mouths, and with their lips they honour me, but their heart is far from me.*”

But, my brethren, whether penitent or impenitent in our general character, we are, one and all, sinners before God. We continually offend against him and come short of his glory. Let us, therefore, be melted into genuine sorrow under a view of our offences against him from whom we have received such unspeakable benefits, that thus we may go to his throne with that disposition which is essential to gratitude and to acceptance. Remember the awful interrogatory of the word of life—“ *Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*” With all urgency ought I to inculcate this duty of repentance, when it is one to which the goodness of God directly leads us—into which it is specially calculated to dissolve us. Yes, my brethren, this is the most essential ingredient of genuine thankfulness. There is no proof which we can give that we are truly sensible of our obligations to God equal to this—that we avoid every thing which we know to be offensive to him. The most unequivocal evidence that we are really touched and influenced by a sense of unspeakable indebtedness, must arise from our being seen to renounce and sacrifice whatever is displeasing or contrary to the known will of our benefactor: and this he will receive as the most acceptable testimonial of our gratitude. Let us then, “ *turn every one from his iniquities;*” and let us



pray, that from this day a general reformation may take place throughout our land, as the natural and necessary sign that we are impressed, as a nation, with the apprehension of divine and distinguishing goodness, and make the return which it demands.

But in another view is penitence connected with suitable praise. It is necessary to give us a right apprehension of the *extent* of our obligations, and to teach us to set that *relative* value on the favours we receive, which is just and necessary. He who truly estimates his character as a sinner, which is the case with every real penitent, will see that he has deserved nothing but everlasting misery at the hand of God. He will therefore be so far from viewing any thing he hath ever received, or can ever enjoy, as a matter of *merit*, that he will accept and consider it as an instance of forfeited favour and the fruit of the freest and richest grace. It is plain that this will give him the highest and most affecting views of the Divine goodness in every instance in which it is manifested, and make him feel in the most sensible manner the weight of every benefit. It will also teach him to consider the Saviour as "*God's unspeakable gift*,"—the first and greatest of all, both in itself and as being the medium of every other. Through the merits of the Saviour he will perceive that sin is pardoned and all the blessings of eternal life secured to the believer, and for him, therefore, he will be *supremely* thankful. He will likewise see that all temporal benefits are the purchase and fruit of his Saviour's work, and he will receive and enjoy them as flowing from this source. Thus will he estimate the Divine favours in that *manner, order and degree*, in which they are estimated by God himself, and which must of course be most pleasing in his sight.

We ought, at this time, in the most *direct* manner, truly to lift up our souls to God, in the acts of social thanksgiving, and to cherish and promote a sense of our entire dependance on him as a people.

Having shown, in its proper place, the reasonableness of this duty, having enumerated the special circumstances that call us to it, having mingled throughout the discourse many

admonitions and exhortations to discharge it, and having just explained the temper and views on which it ought to be founded; little, it would seem, remains to be added here. With propriety, however, I may add a description of the manner in which the duty of public religious thanksgiving will be contemplated and treated by those who regard it aright.

If thus you regard it, you view it with sincere pleasure, as a duty in which a grateful and happy people may bring their offering of worship and praise, through the Mediator, to almighty God, and give him the thanks which are due unto his name. You enter upon it, rejoicing in his mercy, and your hearts rise to him in grateful aspirations of praise. You call to mind, in private, and you are truly affected with those favours which you have heard recited. You bow down before him, and with fervent and affectionate devotion you acknowledge his goodness to you and to your country. You bear it in mind, as you come to the solemnity, that you are coming to offer your social homage to the God of nations.— You are elevated with the thought that you are to do it in concert with many thousands of your fellow Christians, who, like a band of grateful children, shall at once approach the footstool of their heavenly Father, and present to him their united thanks. In the prayers and praise which are offered, your souls ascend on the wings of devout affection, and carry their thank offerings to the mercy seat on high. As I recounted the favours of Heaven to our country you said, truly *this* and *this* was a singular and wonderful expression of the Divine mercy and regard; and much oftener than I admonished it did you, in the ejaculations of your minds, praise the Lord for his goodness. At this moment you are viewing and feeling obligations which you are sensible I have not expressed, and which exceed expression. In this way you will perform the duty, if you be rightly disposed and affected. How much of this actually takes place in your hearts is known only to God and to yourselves. But oh! if he whose presence pervades our souls, shall behold these sentiments and emotions filling the minds of the millions of people who inhabit

these lands, it will indeed be incense before him, and this will be in truth a time of thanksgiving in his sight.

Yet this is not all. From this day forth we must preserve a lively recollection and realizing sense of our entire dependance, as a nation, on the great Governor of the universe. We must, each in his place, endeavour to cherish and widely to disseminate this important sentiment. In discharging my own part of this duty, I think it behoves me to proclaim, to those who rule over us, that they are peculiarly bound to instil, as deeply as possible, into the popular mind, a persuasion of the universal government of God, and of the accountableness of all to him. No fanciful theories or political refinements will ever furnish a substitute for this sentiment, or demonstrate that it is useless. Not only reason but the unvarying experience of all ages and nations has established it as an incontestible truth, that it is this sentiment, alone, which can supply the unavoidable deficiency and limited reach of human laws. Let men be wholly free from the belief and apprehension of their accountableness to an all seeing and impartial Judge, and they are prepared to violate every law which opposes their passions and interests, and the penalty of which they can hope to escape—Let this be the prevailing and popular creed, and all the ingenuity of man cannot prevent the perpetration of crimes, nor govern the community in which it has obtained an ascendancy.

Magistrates and legislators of Great Britain and Ireland! be sensible of this fact. Inculcate reverence to God, obedience to his laws, the superintendance of his providence, and amenableness to his bar. Inculcate these sentiments by your example, and by framing and executing laws for the discountenance of vice. Recognize these truths by days of religious solemnity. Show especially that they are truths which govern in your own minds and which you dare not violate. Your maxims, morals and manners, form those of the people at large, and you will find, too late, that they are incapable of government, if these foundations of it be taken away or rendered unsound. Believe it, also, that the frowns of Heaven will ever rest on a nation *openly* impious and profane.

The Judge of all recompenses *nations in this world*, because it is here alone that this relation exists, and because it is necessary to the purposes of his moral government—necessary to show that “*verily there is a God who reigneth in the earth.*” He therefore treats them *now* according to their *visible* character. In the *world to come* he will recompense *individuals*, whom his impartial justice will reward according to their *real* character. He will strip the disguise from the veiled hypocrite and cover him with everlasting confusion. He will adequately punish the impious and daring offender, who has wrought out the ruin of thousands as well as of himself. He will crown with eternal and unfading honours that integrity and love of virtue which is really seated in the heart; and “*those who have turned many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.*”

Receive these truths from the lips of one who reverences your office and wishes your welfare, but who, when ministering in the service of the blessed Jesus, ought to imitate his example and declare truths to you as freely as to the meanest of those you govern, remembering that without distinction “*we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ.*” Let these truths then be regarded, that this day may introduce an æra of real and acceptable thanksgiving to our God.

Finally. An important part of the expression of our gratitude, will consist in the right use and suitable improvement of the favours conferred on us. Already have you been reminded that it is by actions more than by words that our real apprehensions of things are declared; that all our professions of thankfulness for any of the favours of heaven will be false, if we are seen to abuse them; that a just sense of the obligations we are under to one who has richly endued us with his bounty, will ever induce us to consider the purposes which he intended to promote, and the manner of using his gifts which we know will be most pleasing to him. Let me now remind you, further, that it is by this that the *generosity* of gratitude is principally and peculiarly evinced. By this the beneficiary manifests that he regards the pleasure of his patron as well as his own gratification, and abhors to seek the latter

in any way inconsistent with the former; or rather that in no such way can he be gratified at all. Ask then, how the many and special favours which have been recounted may be used by the people of these lands, so as most to please the divine and sovereign Author of them?—Ask what is their rational, and proper, and pious use? and you will see, for yourselves, how the manifestation of gratitude which we here contemplate must be made.

It will be by taking care not to abuse our religious liberty to the neglect of all the duties which we owe to God;—but by showing, on the contrary, that we are rendered by it more truly and practically pious than any other people;—and, by “*remembering from whence we have fallen, to do our first works.*”

It will be by a conscientious discharge of all relative duties;—by suppressing in ourselves and in others all unreasonable surmises, jealousies, murmurs and complaints;—by rendering due obedience to all who are set over us—“*honour to whom honour, tribute to whom tribute, fear to whom fear;*”—by cherishing public spirit and the love of real liberty, truly desiring to promote the general welfare and striving with each other who shall be the best member of society;—by our legislators taking care to enact laws which are equal and just, and our magistrates to execute them with fidelity and discretion:

It will be by rightly valuing and endeavouring to preserve and improve our civil and religious privileges;—by maintaining inviolably the principles of good faith and strict justice in all our connexions and intercourse with other nations;—by an equitable and kindly deportment toward those with whom we have peace, and seeking it sincerely and honourably with those with whom we are at war:

It will be by activity, industry, frugality and economy in our several stations and callings, and a cheerful contentment with our lot;—by honesty, integrity, and fairness in all our dealings and transactions with each other, doing to others as we would wish that they should do to us;—by punctuality in the discharge of all contracts and obligations, “*owing no man any thing but to love one another.*”

It will be by adorning the various relations of domestic life by faithfulness, tenderness, watchfulness and care;—by showing mercy to the poor, compassion to the friendless, and hospitality and kindness to the stranger:

It will be by shunning all oppression;—by endeavouring honestly and conscientiously to extirpate slavery, of every kind, from our country, in such a manner as shall be most advantageous to all concerned:

It will be by remembering our brethren in captivity and bonds, and doing every thing lawful and suitable for their relief:

It will be by avoiding avarice on the one hand and prodigality on the other;—by abstaining from luxury, dissipation, and criminal pleasures—“*using the world as not abusing it;*”—by countenancing sobriety, moral order, and decency, and encouraging enterprize, learning, and the useful arts:

It will be, especially, by the establishment of schools to which all may have free access, and by which the rising generation may be prepared for serving both God and their generation—

Oh my country! if the eye which looks on all should see thy children faithfully doing these things, it would behold the most acceptable sacrifice of praise which men can offer unto God. These things, therefore, let us do, and we shall be happy as individuals, and happy as a nation, happy in time, and happy throughout eternity. Amen.

A—L G—N.

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## CALVINISM.

*As a very respectable body of Christians are avowed Calvinists, it is presumed a short abstract of their distinguishing principles will be generally acceptable.*

**C**ALVINISTS are those who embrace the sentiments of Calvin, the celebrated reformer of the Christian church from Romish superstition and doctrinal errors.



John Calvin was born at Nogen, a famous city of France, in the year 1509. He first studied the civil law, and was afterwards made professor of divinity at Geneva, in the year 1536. His genius, learning, eloquence, and piety, rendered him respectable even in the eyes of his enemies.

The name of Calvinists seems to have been given at first to those who embraced not merely the doctrine, but the church government and discipline established at Geneva, and to distinguish them from the Lutherans. But since the meeting of the Synod of Dort, the name has been chiefly applied to those who embrace Calvin's leading views of the gospel, to distinguish them from the Arminians.\*

The leading principles taught by Calvin were the same as those of Augustine. The main doctrines by which those who are called after his name are distinguished from the Arminians, are reduced to five articles; and which, from their being the principal points discussed at the Synod of Dort, have since been denominated *the five points*. These are predestination, particular redemption, total depravity, effectual calling, and the certain perseverance of the saints.

1. They maintain that God has chosen a certain number of the fallen race of Adam in Christ, before the foundation of the world, unto eternal glory, according to his immutable purpose, and of his free grace and love, without the least fore-

\* The Synod of Dort was summoned by authority of the States-general, the provinces of Holand, Utrecht, and Overysseel excepted, and held at that place in 1618. The most eminent divines of the United Provinces, and deputies from the church of England, Scotland, Switzerland, Bremen, Hussia, and the Palatinate, assembled on this occasion, in order to decide the controversy between the Calvinists and Arminians. The Synod had hardly commenced its deliberations before a dispute on the mode of proceeding drove the Arminian party from the Assembly. The Arminians insisted upon beginning with a refutation of the Calvinistic doctrines; especially that of reprobation; whilst the Synod determined, that, as the remonstrants were accused of departing from the reformed faith, they ought first to justify themselves by Scriptural proof of their own opinions. All means to persuade the Arminians to submit to this procedure having failed, they were banished the Synod for their refusal. The Synod, however, proceeded in their examination of the Arminian tenets, condemned their opinions, and excommunicated their persons; whether justly or unjustly, this is not the place to determine.

sight of faith, good works or any condition performed by the creature; and that the rest of mankind he was pleased to pass by, and ordain to dishonour and wrath, for their sins, to the praise of his vindictive justice.

In proof of this they alledge, among many other scripture passages, the following: "According as he hath *chosen* us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.—For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So, then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God, that sheweth mercy. Thou wilt say, then, Why doth he yet find fault; for who hath resisted his will? Nay, but O! man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour, and another to dishonour?—Hath God cast away his people whom he *foreknew*? Wot ye not what the scripture sayeth of Elias? Even so at this present time, also, there is a remnant according to the *election of grace*. And if by grace, then it is no more of works. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the *election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded*.—Whom he did *predestinate*, them he also *called*.—We give thanks to God always for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning *chosen you to salvation*, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.—As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Eph. i. 4. Rom. ix. xi. 1, 6. viii. 29, 30. 2 Thess. ii. 13. Acts xiii. 48. They think also that the greater part of these passages, being found in the epistolary writings, after the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, who was promised to guide the apostles into all truth, is an argument in favour of the doctrine.

They do not consider predestination, however, as affecting the agency or accountableness of creatures, or as being to them any rule of conduct. On the contrary, they suppose them to act as freely, and to be as much the proper subjects

of calls, warnings, exhortations, promises, and threatenings, as if no decree existed. The connexion in which the doctrine is introduced by the divines at Dort, is to account for one sinner's believing and being saved rather than another; and such, the Calvinists say, is the connexion which it occupies in the scriptures.

With respect to the conditional predestination admitted by the Arminians, they say that an election upon faith or good works foreseen, is not that of the scriptures; for that election is there made the *cause* of faith and holiness, and cannot, for this reason, be the *effect* of them. With regard to predestination to *death*, they say, if the question be, Wherefore did God decree to punish those who are punished? The answer is, On account of their sins. But if it be, Wherefore did he decree to punish them rather than others? there is no other reason to be assigned, but that *so it seemed good in his sight*. Eph. i. 3, 4. John vi. 37. Rom. viii. 29, 30. Acts xiii. 48. 1 Pet. i. 1. Rom. ix. 15, 16. xi. 5, 6.

2. They maintain that though the death of Christ be a most perfect sacrifice, and satisfaction for sins, of infinite value, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world; and though on this ground the gospel is to be preached to all mankind indiscriminately; yet it was the will of God that Christ, by the blood of the cross, should efficaciously redeem all those, and those only, who were from eternity elected to salvation, and given to him by the Father.

Calvin does not appear to have written on this subject as a controversy, but his comments on scripture agree with the above statement. The following positions are contained in the resolutions of the Synod of Dort, under this head of doctrine.—

“The death of the Son of God is the only and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sins, of infinite value and price, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world.—The promise of the gospel is, that whosoever believeth on Christ crucified shall not perish, but have everlasting life; which promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought promiscuously and indiscriminately to be

published and proposed to all people and individuals, to whom God in his good pleasure sends the gospel.—Whereas, many who are called by the gospel do not repent nor believe in Christ, but perish in unbelief; this proceeds not from any defect or insufficiency in the sacrifice of Christ offered on the cross, but from their own fault.—As many as truly believe, and are saved by the death of Christ from their sins, and from destruction, have to ascribe it to the mere favour of God, which he owes to no one, given them in Christ from eternity.—For it was the most free counsel, and gracious *will* and *intention* of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of his Son should exert itself in all the elect, to give unto them only, justifying faith, and by it to conduct them infallibly to salvation; that is, it was the will of God that Christ, by the blood of his cross, whereby he confirmed the new covenant, should efficaciously redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and those only, who were from eternity elected to salvation, and given to him by the Father.”

These positions they appear to have considered as not only a declaration of the truth, but an answer to the arguments of the Remonstrants.

In proof of the doctrine, they alledge, among others, the following scripture passages: “Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to *as many as thou hast given him*.—The good shepherd giveth his life *for the sheep*.—I lay down my life for the sheep.—He died not for that nation only, but that *he might gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad*.—He gave himself for us, *that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*.—He loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, and present it to himself, &c.—And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy; for thou wast slain, and hast *redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*.” John xvii. 2. x. 11, 15. xi. 52. Titus ii. 14. Eph. v. 25, 27. Rev. v. 9.

3. They maintain that mankind are totally depraved, in

consequence of the fall of the first man, who, being their public head, his sin involved the corruption of all his posterity; and which corruption extends over the whole soul, renders it unable to turn to God, or to do any thing truly good, and exposes it to his righteous displeasure, both in this world and that which is to come.

The explanation of original sin, as given by Calvin, is as follows: "Original sin seems to be the inheritable descending perverseness and corruption of our nature, poured abroad into all the parts of the soul, which first maketh us deserving of God's wrath, and then also bringeth forth these works in us, called, in scripture, *the works of the flesh*. These two things are distinctly to be noted, that is, that, being thus in all parts of our nature corrupted and perverted, we are now, even for such corruption only, holden worthy of damnation, and stand convicted before God, to whom nothing is acceptable but righteousness, innocence, and purity. And yet we are not bound in respect of another's fault, for when it is said that by the sin of Adam we are made subject to the judgment of God, Rom. v. 18, it is not so to be taken; as if we, innocent and undeserving, did bear the blame of his fault; but as, in consequence of his offence, we are ultimately clothed with the curse, therefore it is said that he hath bound us. Nevertheless from him not the punishment only came upon us, but also the infection distilled from him abideth in us, to which the punishment is justly due."

The resolutions of the divines at Dort on this head contain the following positions. "Such as man was after the fall, such children did he beget—corruption by the righteous judgment of God being derived from Adam to his posterity—not by imitation, but by the propagation of a vicious nature. Wherefore all men are conceived in sin, and are born the children of wrath, unfit for every good connected with salvation; prone to evil, dead in sins, and the servants of sin; and without the Holy Spirit regenerating them, they neither will nor can return to God, amend their depraved natures, nor dispose themselves for its amendment."

In proof of this doctrine, the Calvinists alledge, among

other scripture passages, the following: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.—By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.—I was born in sin, and shapen in iniquity.—God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of his heart was only evil continually.—God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God.—Every one of them is gone back; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doth good, no not one.—And you hath he quickened who were *dead in trespasses and sins*. Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world—among whom also *we all* had our conversation in times past, in *the lust of our flesh*, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were *by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*" Rom. v. 12—19. Psal. li. 5. Gen. vi. 5. Psal. liii. 2, 3. Rom. iii. 9—18. Eph. ii. 1—3.

4. They maintain that all whom God hath predestinated unto life, he is pleased, in his appointed time, effectually to call, by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ.

They admit that the Holy Spirit, as calling men by the ministry of the gospel, may be resisted; and that where this is the case, "the fault is not in the gospel, nor in Christ offered by the gospel, nor in God calling by the gospel, and also conferring various gifts upon them; but in the called themselves." They contend, however, that "when men come at the divine call, and are converted, it is not to be ascribed to themselves, as though by their own free will they made themselves to differ, but merely to him who delivers them from the power of darkness, and translates them into the kingdom of his dear Son, and whose regenerating influence is certain and efficacious."

In proof of this doctrine the Calvinists alledge, among others, the following scripture passages: "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also



glorified.—That ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.—Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his *workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.*—God, that *commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, &c.*—I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh.” Rom. viii. 29. Eph. i. 19, 20. ii. 9, 10. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

5. Lastly: They maintain that those whom God has effectually called, and sanctified by his Spirit, shall never finally fall from a state of grace. They admit that true believers may fall partially, and would fall totally and finally but for the mercy and faithfulness of God, who keepeth the feet of his saints; also, that he who bestoweth the grace of perseverance, bestoweth it by means of reading and hearing the word, meditation, exhortations, threatenings, and promises; but that none of these things imply the possibility of a believer's falling from a state of justification.

In proof of this doctrine they alledge the following, among other scripture passages:—“I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me.—He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.—The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.—This is the Father's will, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing.—This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.—Whoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.—They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.—Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both

now and ever, amen." Jer. xxxii. 40. Mark xvi. 16. John iv. 14. vi. 40. xvii. 3. 1 John iii. 9. ii. 19. Jude 24, 25.

Such were the doctrines of the old Calvinists, and such in substance are those of the present times. In this, however, as in every other denomination, there are considerable shades of difference.

Some think Calvin, though right in the main, yet carried things too far; these are commonly known by the name of *Moderate Calvinists*. Others think he did not go far enough; and these are known by the name of *High Calvinists*.

It is proper to add, that the Calvinistic system includes in it the doctrine of three co-ordinate persons in the Godhead, in one nature, and of two natures in Jesus Christ, forming one person. Justification by faith alone, or justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, forms also an essential part of this system. They suppose that on the one hand our sins are imputed to Christ, and on the other that we are justified by the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us; that is, Christ, the innocent, was treated by God as if he were guilty, that we, the guilty, might, out of regard to what he did and suffered, be treated as if we were innocent and righteous.

Calvinism originally subsisted in its greatest purity in the city of Geneva; from which place it was first propagated into Germany, France, the United Provinces, and Britain. In France it was abolished by the edict of Nantz, in 1635. It has been the prevailing religion in the United Provinces ever since 1571. The theological system of Calvin was adopted and made the public rule of faith in England under the reign of Edward VI. The Church of Scotland also was modelled by John Knox, agreeably to the doctrines, rites, and form of ecclesiastical government established at Geneva. In England, Calvinism had been on the decline from the time of queen Elizabeth until about sixty years ago, when it was again revived, and has been on the increase ever since. The major part of the clergy, indeed, are not Calvinists, though the articles of the Church of England are Calvinistical. It deserves to be remarked, however, that Calvinism is preached in a considerable number of the churches in London; in nearly all

the dissenting meetings of the Presbyterians, Baptists, and Independents; and in all the Chapels of Whitfield, Lady Huntingdon, and others of that class. In Scotland it continues also to exist as the established religion; and within these few years it has much revived in that country.

Calvin considered every church as a separate and independent body, invested with the power of legislation for itself. He proposed that it should be governed by Presbyteries and Synods, composed of clergy and laity, without bishops, or any clerical subordination; and maintained that the province of the civil magistrate extended only to its protection and outward accommodation. He acknowledged a real though spiritual presence of Christ in the eucharist; and he confined the privilege of communion to pious and regenerate believers. These sentiments, however, are not imbibed by all who are called Calvinists.

*See Buck's Theo. Dict.; Calvin's Inst.; Toplady's Works, &c.*

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## ATTENDANCE ON PRIVATE SOCIAL PRAYER SOLICITED.

*Address by a Corresponding Society to some of its Constituents.\**

CHRISTIAN BRETHERN,

**P**PRIVATE Society for prayer, praise, and religious conference, is an ordinance excellently well calculated to promote the glory of God and the good of his people. It should be conscientiously attended by all who would support the Christian character, and realize to themselves the peculiar advantages of sincere fearers of the Lord. The duty becomes especially incumbent, and advantageous, in times remarkable for sin and danger. “*Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that*

\* A regular Corresponding Society is one mutually constituted by delegation from the several other Societies of a certain district. Such societies, properly conducted, have been of various utility. This one was erected solely for the purpose of religious exercises.

*feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."* This ordinance, indeed, may be, and often is, much abused. Strong and affecting, however, must be their reasons who are constrained to discontinue their attendance upon an institution authorized by scripture.

By religious profession, in its purest form, we are brethren. This intimate and endearing relation is constituted upon the most purely excellent principles. To realize these to mutual advantage, personal association is requisite. Brotherly love, unity, sympathy, and mutual assistance, are at once the duty, ornament, and strength of the brotherhood. These are required by the highest authority, and urged by the most sweetly persuasive motives. How pleasant and refreshful the brotherhood, when its duties are duly attended!—*"Like precious ointment on the head—as the dew of Hermon—the dew that descends upon the mountains of Zion."*—How distressing, the contrast, when the brotherly covenant is disregarded, and its duties neglected! *"I am become a stranger to my brethren—an alien to my mother's children."*—*"The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts."*—*"For this our heart is faint, for these things our eyes are dim."*

As professed fearers of the Lord, you were wont to meet and speak with us, in this our *Religious Correspondence*. You, with others, have, for some time past, forsaken our society. As professed children of the same family, suffer us, with the intimacy of brethren, to ask of you a reason of your conduct. Are these sufficiently strong to justify your neglect of a manifest duty, in itself, so acceptable to God? Is your conduct such, as you can with holy assurance seek the divine blessing upon, before the throne of grace, and for which you confidently look forward and expect the gracious commendation of, *"Well done, good and faithful servants,"* in the great day of accounts and equitable retribution? Whatever were your reasons, brethren, for leaving us, it was unreasonable and unbrotherly in you not to state them prior to your going away.

The subject is solemnly interesting and important. Our

conduct with regard to it requires deep and impartial searchings of heart. Perhaps you think you got no good by your attendance. You are not sure of this; and, it may be, others got great good by it. If your attendance was a mean of promoting the glory of God and the good of others, the end was in part gained: it was not a vain thing for you to keep God's ordinance. If these ends were promoted by your attendance, beware of entertaining the idea that yourselves got no good. God has graciously connected his own glory and the good of his people with due attendance upon the ordinances of his grace. If, after impartial examination of your conduct, in the sight of God, you find that you have dutifully acquitted yourselves in this respect, you may believe that your reward is with the Lord. "*He is not unfaithful to forget your work and labour of love.*" What you know not now you may know and advantageously feel hereafter. Limit not the Holy One of Israel. Real advantage is not always immediately felt in the way of duty. God may sovereignly, for his own glory, and our greater advantage, reserve his blessing to some hereafter; when we shall be obliged to say, "*He hath done all things well:*" truly God was in yonder place, yonder ordinance, and we, then, knew it not. The people of God, even in the plentiful enjoyment of, and dutiful attendance upon, his purely dispensed ordinances, do not always immediately enjoy the sensible manifestations of his gladdening presence, enabling them to the vigorous exertion of direct acts of faith upon the promises graciously made to their conscientious discharge of duty. In an unfriendly season, and inhospitable soil, the precious seed may lie long under ground, before it spring up. "*Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.*" If so much patience is exercised in temporal things, how much more reasonable is its exercise in things spiritual and eternal; in as much as the latter are infinitely more precious and sure than the former. Temporal blessings are only conditionally promised; but eternal blessings freely and unconditionally. "*Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*"

Under peculiarly afflictive dispensations of Providence, the utility of private social prayer, praise, and religious conference, is more strikingly evident, and these exercises more strongly urged than at other times. Our Corresponding Association for these duties, had, for a number of years, been neglected. The period at which it was, by mutual consent, lately revived, was singularly alarming, relative to the state of this country, and the peculiar situation of our Church, as connected therewith. An invasion was threatened by a most powerful and inveterate foreign enemy. To oppose him, we were about to be called to an active military association, inconsistent with our ecclesiastical union for the help of the Lord against the mighty. We foresaw no human evasion for us. Part of the laudable exercise, for which our Correspondence was then erected, is well expressed in the words of the pious Jehoshaphat; "*We have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee.*" Many societies, among the different religious denominations in Britain, were erected at that time for somewhat similar exercises. Who knows how far God may have honoured his own ordinance of social prayer, in hitherto averting the threatened stroke? We remain yet escaped. We are still the spared—the living monuments of divine mercy. Our tranquillity is still lengthened out. We have hitherto had great reason to sing of mercy in the midst of threatened, richly deserved, and partly inflicted judgments. But whatever cause of thankfulness we have for the divine forbearance, there is, however, no cause to relax the exercises for which our Correspondence was lately formed. The call to these exercises is still louder and louder. Society at large has not been reformed by the Lord's out-stretched hand of judgment: the sword is still drawn against us: the standard is still erected: we still hear the sound of the trumpet and the alarm of war: our foes are increased since our first alarm; and if they are permitted to effect their declared intention, we will yet, in our own land, see the battle of the warrior, with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood. With the rest of our countrymen, we are still in a state of requisition for military association. The ex-



ternal circumstances under which our Church at present exists, may yet bear harder upon her, than any with which the Lord has proved her since the Revolution 1688.

Christian brethren, We entreat your return. Why should your seats be empty? Why should a Society be lacking in our Religious Correspondence? It is only a little while since its re-erection. You were then forward in the business. The propriety of its revival was at that time strikingly conspicuous. Its continuance is yet as much so. You cannot possibly, dear brethren, be willing that the Society should again be so soon dissolved, through your negligence. Such a disposition would be unbecoming the Christian character. We hope better things of you. Prayer is at all times a duty, and ought to be conscientiously attended in all its divinely instituted forms. It is now peculiarly incumbent. We trust you will find your time, not lost, but redeemed, in social prayer with your Christian brethren. If you dutifully attend to it, it will certainly afford you refreshful and pleasant reflection at a future day. Have not some, to the honour of God, credit of his ordinance, and their own advantage, set up and anointed their pillars of remembrance in *Religious Fellowship Societies*? It is not unlikely that trying times await us. The signs of the present times are most uncommonly expressive, and complicated beyond all conjecture. What the decree is about to bring forth we know not. Perhaps we may yet, in travelling through this howling wilderness, toward the place concerning which the Lord hath said, "*I will give it you,*" derive great advantage from reflection on the better days of other times. God may yet find us in some solitary disconsolate situation, far from society, and make himself known to us by this very memorial, "*I am the God of Beth-el, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me.*" Whatever God has in future reserve for us is known only to himself. "*Secret things belong to God, the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children.*" He has declared his disapprobation of those who account it a vain thing to serve the Lord and keep his ordinances; and

that he has in reserve a great reward for such as keep his commandments.

Dear brethren, we would not be understood as insinuating your irregular attendance upon the *Religious Fellowships* to which you respectively belong. No, by no means; but we wishfully entreat and anticipate the mutual benefit and pleasure of the return of your joint counsel in *this* court of God's house also. May our souls again at the head of *Israel's sweet-streaming fountain*, be poured out within us, in prayer with and for one another. May our hearts and tongues again, in unison with your's, under the quickening influence of the *same Spirit*, reverberate the high praises of *Israel's One Lord*. Every consideration strongly urges the duty and present expediency of social prayer upon you; and, humbly conscious of our own deficiency, were it of any avail, we would also mingle our feeble voice with the impressive words of inspiration; Brethren, "*Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.*"

Feb. 1805.

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## THE CAVILLER REPROVED.

*An Anecdote.*

**A** CERTAIN man went to a Dervise, [Turkish priest] and proposed three questions. 1. Why do they say that God is omnipresent? I do not see him in any place: show me where he is. 2. Why is man punished for crimes, since whatever he does proceeds from God? Man has no free will, for he cannot do any thing contrary to the will of God; and if he had power, he would do every thing for his own good. 3. How can God punish Satan in hell fire, since he is formed of that element? and what impression can fire make on itself?

The Dervise took up a large clod of earth, and struck him on the head with it. The man went to the Cadi, and said,

“ I proposed three questions to such a Dervise, who flung such a clod of earth at me as has made my head ache.” The Cadi, having sent for the Dervise, asked—“ Why did you throw a clod of earth at his head instead of answering his questions?” The Dervise replied—“ The clod of earth was an answer to his speech : he says he has a pain in his head ; let him show me where it is, and I will make God visible to him. And why does he exhibit a complaint to you against me ? whatever I did was the act of God : I did not strike him without the will of God ; and what power do I possess ? And as he is compounded of earth, how can he suffer pain from that element ?” The man was confounded, and the Cadi highly pleased with the Dervise’s answer.

*See Buck’s Anecdotes.*

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### PLEASING INCIDENT.

THE following incident deserves to be universally known. It is stated in the Christian Observer as a fact which may be depended upon.

When the arrival of the cart which carried the first sacred load of the Scriptures to Wales, in 1806, sent by the British and Foreign Bible Society, was announced, the Welsh peasants went out in crowds to meet it; welcomed it as the Israelites did the ark of old; drew it into the town; and eagerly bore off every copy as rapidly as they could be dispersed. The *young people* were to be seen consuming the whole night in reading it. *Labourers* carried it with them *to the field*, that they might enjoy it during the intervals of their labour, and lose no opportunity of becoming acquainted with its sacred truths.

Consider this, ye that despise or neglect the Bible; ye that have it, but seldom open it, even when the hours of labour are ended, or when ye do, slumber over it, as a record in which ye have little or no interest, or, after a hasty glance, throw it aside in weariness or disgust.

*See Chris. Mag Sep 1810.*

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THE  
CHRISTIAN SELECTOR.

NO. XI.

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WEDNESDAY, Nov. 28. 1810.

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THE CONSTITUTION, CHARACTER, AND DUTIES,  
OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

*“ I will give you Pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.”* JER. iii. 15.

(Continued from page 371.)

**A**LTHOUGH the apostolic commission, “ *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations,*” authorizes the preaching of the gospel to all men, there exists even to this day, a powerful discouragement to missions among the heathen. Their habits of thought and of life, are entirely different from those which we cultivate; and we cannot reason with them from Scriptures which they have not received as a rule of faith. In that day, it appears to have been the universal opinion, that the promises peculiarly respected the seed of Jacob. It required a vision to convince the apostle Peter that it was lawful to evangelize even the devout Gentiles. Much more must it have been necessary, to provide special instruction about opening the door of faith to the pagans. And after the conversion of the heathen, a question would immediately occur, how are they to be formed into regular assemblies or churches? In organizing congregations among the believing Jews and proselyte Gentiles, there was little difficulty.

These had already been in the habit of submitting to the direction of a divine revelation, they had been habituated to the exercises of public worship. They had been accustomed to the discipline and government of the Synagogue. The method of ordination by the laying on of hands, was perfectly familiar to them. It was entirely otherwise with the idolatrous Heathen. It was therefore necessary that the first mission to them should be so conducted as to establish a model upon which all ordinations among them should be performed. Being totally unacquainted with a ministry of divine appointment, and with the forms of ordination to that office, nevertheless, it pleased God to provide that they should speedily upon their conversion, be organized into churches, have elders ordained among them, and the ordinances of God steadily administered. So important was to be the influence of this event, "opening the door of faith to the Heathen," upon the future character, and history of the church of God, that the first mission is conducted as if it had been itself the beginning of the gospel dispensation; as if all that preceded it had only been preparations for *breaking off the natural branches, that the Gentiles might be grafted into the good olive tree, that the casting away of the Jews might be the reconciling of the world.*

In Antioch, a heathen city abounding with Gentile proselytes converted into the Christian faith, Barnabas and Saul, both born on Gentile ground, receive their mission to the Heathen, with circumstances of extraordinary solemnity. The Holy Ghost *called* them—Their brethren in the ministry were commanded by a voice from heaven to *set them apart*—They were set apart with fasting and prayer, and *laying on of hands*—And being recommended to the grace of God, they departed on their mission. They considered this as the divinely appointed *model* for setting apart, to the pastoral office in the Churches which they were about to organize, candidates duly qualified for the ministry of reconciliation. That Paul and Barnabas understood it so is manifest. They practised upon it. During three years, they travelled among the nations, reducing them into the faith of Christ, ordaining

elders in every Church, and with prayer and fasting recommending them unto the Lord in whom they had believed, and thus organized the first Churches of the Gentiles, without drilling them through the synagogue, or subjecting them to the law of Moses.

This argument, therefore, my brethren, while it corroborates our "doctrine of the laying on of hands," also exhibits the mode of Presbyterian ordination. And you will now be prepared to examine the evidence which I shall lay before you.

3. That ministers are ordained to office, by the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery—That Presbyterian ordination is God's call to the ministry.

It is not my intention, to deny the propriety of permitting candidates for the ministry to make a public trial of their gifts, to deny the right which a Christian congregation has to elect its own pastor, or to deny the duty of constituting a fixed relation between a minister and a particular charge. No, by no means. It is a very prudent practice, which admits young men who have been preparing themselves for the service of God in the gospel of his Son, to make public trial of their talents before different congregations, as well as before ministers and presbyteries. The students of the law were admitted to teach publicly in the Jewish synagogues before ordination. It was upon this principle, that Paul had every where easy access into the Jewish synagogues, and was allowed by the rulers to preach publicly to the congregation. This is not a dividing the Christian ministry. No part of it is committed to probationers. They are upon trial, and when they have made a sufficient public trial of their gifts, they ought either to be ordained to the ministry, or remanded to private life.

Every Christian congregation has a right to choose its ecclesiastical officers. This is congenial to the maxims of natural equity, and to the spirit of the gospel. It is necessary to the edification and the comfort of the Church, to the dignity and purity of the ministry. It was the practice both of the synagogue and the primitive church. Care should of



course be always taken to obtain in some decent and orderly manner the sense of a congregation, respecting candidates; their voice, in fact, should be heard, in calling to the ministry among them, the person who is appointed thereunto. And yet the call of the congregation, is no part of ordination. It communicates no power. It only invites to the exercise of the power, otherwise communicated, in a certain part of the church of God. It is necessary to a regular Episcopacy. A vague ministry, is undoubtedly indecent and improper. Every congregation should have its pastor. This is the scriptural bishop—the minister, who has a fixed charge of which he has taken the oversight. None is owned by God's word as a bishop, except he who has an appropriate charge. The apostles were not bishops, although they were all presbyters. They had no fixed congregations, although they were ecclesiastical rulers. The pastoral connexion, the episcopate, ought not to be rashly violated. It is constituted by the Holy Ghost.\* But while I admit all this, my brethren, I still contend, that presbyterian ordination alone, constitutes the ordinary ministerial call.

(1.) The ministry of the synagogue was uniformly constituted in this manner. A number of those, who were themselves ordained, did set apart others to the same work, and confer upon them equal power with themselves by imposition of hands. Upon this model the churches, consisting of Jewish and proselyte Gentile converts, were organized with their respective pastors.

(2.) In the 12th year from the erection of the Christian church, when the Gentiles were to be converted, and entirely preserved from the bondage of the Jewish ceremonies, lest it should be thought that presbyterian ordination by imposition of hands was one of these abolished ceremonies, there was a very solemn transaction at Antioch, in which a divinely appointed model of it was exhibited, in the mission which God employed in creating the Gentile churches. And that there should be no kind of pretence hereafter for dispensing with this practice, as of synagogue origin, the Holy Ghost ordered the

\* Acts xx. 28.

presbytery of Antioch not to dispense with it, in that mission which laid the foundation of the Christian church among the Heathen nations, even in the case of those who had for years before exercised their ministry among the Jews. Accordingly Paul and Barnabas introduced the practice on that very mission,\* and established it upon a basis entirely independent of Jewish tradition.

(3.) Three years after this mission was completed, Timothy received presbyterian ordination in one of those newly constituted Gentile churches. He was ordained *by Paul, by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.*†

In the year 47, Paul preached at Derbe for the first time, and on his second visit, which took place three years thereafter, he met Timothy in that place. This youth was in high esteem among all the churches of Lycaonia. In the course of this journey, and within the same year, we find him assisting in the public ministry of the gospel at Thessalonica. He must therefore have been ordained before they departed from Lystra. Paul was now on his journey, carrying the decree passed at Jerusalem, respecting the law of Moses, to the Gentile churches. None of the apostles accompanied him. Even Barnabas was no longer his fellow-labourer. From him he had parted at Antioch, in consequence of a dispute about John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas. The presbytery which laid hands on Timothy, therefore, was either that of Lystra, or one met for the purpose, and composed of Paul and Silas, (and perhaps Titus,) who accompanied Paul from Jerusalem on this journey.

(4.) I shall quote in proof of presbyterian ordination, the apostolic commission, as illustrated by apostolic example. This commission stands upon record in Matt. xxviii. 19. 20. *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you: And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

In these words the head of the church confers ministerial

\* Acts xiv 23.

† 1 Tim iv. 14. & 2 Tim. i. 6.

power upon the Apostles. And it is perfectly evident, 1. that to the ministry alone, office power is committed: 2. that this power is transferable unto the end of the world: 3. that equal power is committed to all the Apostles: and, 4. that this power is in its *fullest extent* transferable. We here, therefore, behold a ministry constituted by the head of the church, complete in all its parts, subsisting in perfect equality, and possessing the right of transferring their whole power into the hands of others, *unto the end of the world*. Every ordained minister must accordingly possess complete ministerial authority. He can not be a minister without possessing the whole power delivered into the hands of each of the Apostles, except in those cases in which Apostles acted under an immediate inspiration of God. And inspiration, whether in Apostles or others, universally, entitles to the exercise of authority superior to the ordinary ministry. The reason is obvious: All are bound to obey God. It is equally obvious, that if any individual Apostle had the power of ordination, every other Apostle had similar power; and every ordained minister may by his own power ordain another to the ministry. This reasoning is, I confess, insufficient to establish the necessity of ordination, being performed by a presbytery—by a plurality of ordained ministers: but it completely establishes these two propositions: 1. Ordination is to be performed by ministers only: 2. All ministers have, in ordinations, equal power. It leaves nothing relative to my argument, undetermined, except this question; Whether is ordination to be performed by one minister, or by several ministers united? And, if it does not decisively establish Presbyterianism, it certainly destroys the claims of Independency and the Prelacy. But we do not rest here. The practice of the Apostles, recorded with approbation in the canon of Scripture, will determine whether a Christian minister is to be ordained to office by an individual Presbyter or by a Presbytery. And if, upon investigation, it should appear that *one* can ordain, nothing can justly be inferred favourable to the Prelacy. Nor can it be denied, that prudence and decency require the union of both counsel and action in admitting a candidate to the holy ministry. Minis-

terial parity would still remain a matter of divine right, and Presbyterian ordination would be acknowledged, a prudential measure, in perfect conformity to God's ordinance. But I contend for more than this. I assert without fear of contradiction, that the Scriptures record *many instances* of Presbyterian ordination, and *no instance* in which an individual did ordain. In the Jewish synagogue, ministers were uniformly ordained by a plurality of ordained officers. Timothy was ordained by a Presbytery. Paul and Barnabas, not separately, but jointly, ordained Elders in all the churches which they had planted. And there is not a passage in the whole New Testament from which it can be justly inferred that one minister ever did ordain another. It has indeed been inferred from two texts of Scripture, that an individual *may* ordain; but the inference is false. This will appear upon examination.

1 Tim. v. 22. "*Lay hands suddenly on no man.*" The argument of our opponents from this text, is as follows: It is a specimen of their mode of reasoning. "Timothy is directed not to ordain any man rashly, therefore he must have had the power of ordination committed to him, individually." To state this argument, is a sufficient reply to it. If an elder brother hath recommended it to me to be cautious in admitting candidates to the ministry, am I therefore to claim prelati- cal authority? Or rather, is it not the duty of every minister, as much as it was that of Timothy, to lay hands suddenly on no man? The other text referred to, is Tit. i. 5. "*For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee.*" The argument from this text is considered by the friends of the hierarchy as conclusive in favour of their system. It is this: "Titus was left in Crete in order to supply what was defective in its ecclesiastical organization by ordaining Presbyters, he must have therefore possessed the right to ordain in his individual capacity." Need I add, my brethren, that the premises do not warrant the conclusion? It is indeed certain, that Paul left Titus in Crete, that he might ordain elders. And it is probable that Titus did ordain. But it is also equally probable, that as Paul

ordained Timothy, so did Titus ordain ministers in Crete, by *the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery*. And it is most certain that no proof to the contrary can be produced. The common language of the church is, that the minister, appointed by the Presbytery to be their organ in the ordaining prayer, does ordain the candidate. This phraseology never conveys the idea that he was alone in the sacred work; and this will be presently exemplified in your sight, when, agreeably to appointment, I shall ordain among you this candidate, by prayer, and the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.\*

\* The defenders of Prelacy are very unfortunate when they refer to Scripture for proof. They are much more at home among the Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries. This text gives a blow to their pretensions, of which they do not appear to be aware. It proves, 1. that the organization of the Church in Crete was incomplete when Titus was left there; 2. that, in order to render it complete, several elders must be ordained in every city, in every congregation. Every Church in the apostolic age had several elders. This was essential to its organization. Acts xiv. 23. But modern Episcopalians require no more than one Presbyter to each Church. And yet they talk (modestly enough to be sure,) of their most excellent Church, of its Apostolic origin and order. I hear your claims, and observe your zeal, said a shrewd Farmer to a zealous Episcopalian of Utica, but where is your religion? We had little of that to show, added the respectable Episcopalian, who told me the story.

I embrace the opportunity which this note affords me, of recommending to all, who make the subject of the Christian ministry their study, the excellent Letters of Dr Miller, and the masterly review of a *Collection of Essays, &c.* which appears in the Christian's Magazine. I wish both these works were universally known. I wish also that Presbyterians fully knew the strength of their adversaries. I would therefore recommend to their perusal, Dr Hobart's Apology, and a work which I have read since this discourse was sent to the press, the Letters of Dr Bowden. When the judicious and pious reader has admired the animated declamation of the former, and the patient researches of the latter writer, he will conclude that neither of the Dr's knew much about the system of grace, or the constitu-

I have now demonstrated, that a lawful call to the office, is one of the distinguishing marks which God hath set upon the ministry which he approves; and I proceed to show also,

Secondly, That the Pastor according to God's heart, has a life corresponding to the functions of his holy office.

There is a striking analogy between a saint and the church. Grace is not complete until it terminates in glory; and the church militant is imperfect. Professions are frequently hypocritical, appearances are often discovered to have been without reality. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?—And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Ministers may have a divine call to the office, and yet afterwards give themselves up to the service of Satan, and betray their Master. Judas was an Apostle. There must therefore be a check upon Christian confidence. It is not sufficient that the Pastor has been regularly called, he must also adhere to his instructions. He that is *near the heart of God*, CHELIBBI, has not only received a regular ordination, but also continues to perform faithfully the duties of the pastoral office. Ministers are to be honourably received, and diligently watched. While they continue to live a life corresponding to their ministry, let them be esteemed as the servants of God, as the ambassadors of Christ. But when they shall have forsaken God, let them be rejected by the church. You will bear, my brethren, with our personal infirmities; you will sympathize in our calamities; you will pity our intellectual weakness; you will mourn for our unsuccessfulness; and if we should never acquire great popularity, we are not, merely on that account, to be rejected of the church. Not great attainments in eloquence, not courtly manners, not a talent of pleasing the high or the low, not popularity, nor even the degrees of success with which a tion of the Christian Church. The latter work contains a summary of Episcopal arguments. These arguments, however, when opposed to the shield of faith, are feeble as the dart of Priam. Such weapons are not so terrible to Presbyterians, as was the sceptre of Elizabeth.



ministry is accompanied, can determine whether a Pastor be far off, or near the heart of God. He is a Pastor approved of God, who is *pious, diligent, and faithful*.

(1.) A ministry evidently impious will meet with few advocates. This evil can be tolerated only in a church which has far departed from truth and holiness. It is not indeed necessary that we should have infallible evidence that a man is regenerated, in order to recognise him as a minister of Christ. Such evidence is impossible without a revelation from heaven. But before he is invested with this holy office, the candidate must be required to exhibit all the satisfactory evidence of which the case admits. He must manifest his faith *by his works*. It is of no importance that he *say he has faith*—that he tell us of his conversion. We look for the fruits of that faith. These we examine, and of them we judge. A Christian minister, destitute of piety, is in a deplorable condition. He makes it the business of his life, to serve a Master whom he hates, to explain a law at which his heart is in enmity, and to illustrate promises which his own soul rejects. He preaches a salvation of which he does not approve, and recommends a heaven which he never seeks. He describes terrors which are thickening around him, and he teaches others to escape a hell into which he is himself hastily travelling. But the Pastor according to God's heart, my brethren, is a man of piety. He loves the doctrines of the Gospel. These have been to his soul, green pastures and refreshing streams. To be united to Christ, as a member of his body, to be taught by the Spirit of adoption, is a source both of confidence and joy. Filled with humility, he admires in transports of delight the sovereignty of God. Grace appears to him pure, and calm, and great, and wonderful. The pious minister is constrained by the love of a crucified Saviour, and he loves the Father with his whole strength and mind. God appears to him in the communications of his Holy Spirit, as an infinite fountain of divine majesty and sweetness, pouring out his all-sufficiency, and like the sun in its glory, pleasantly diffusing both light and life. This encourages him,

(2.) To diligence in his sacred office. He feels the value

of the soul. He knows it to be immortal. He perceives the danger of sinners; and anxious for their salvation, he warns them of it frequently and fervently. Giving himself *wholly up to the duties of his ministry*, he renders subservient to it, his plans and his actions, his studies and his meditations. In the closet, upon his knees, he offers his flock to the Chief Shepherd; and, from the pulpit, he invites that flock to his Master's fold. From house to house, he visits, he examines, he exhorts. In afflictions, he soothes; in temptation, he admonishes; in sickness, he comforts; and in death, he resigns their departing spirits into the hands of that God who created both him and them.

(3.) The Pastor, who is near the heart of God, is faithful to God and to his church. Without corrupting the word of truth, or handling that word deceitfully, he preaches Christ crucified, as the sum and the substance of true religion. He deals plainly with sinners, uninfluenced by their frowns or their smiles. He unfolds their guilt, their depravity, their obduracy of heart; and he summons them to repentance. He explains the sovereign love of God, and the atonement made by the Saviour; and he demands obedience to the great commandment, "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." He insists upon the necessity of conversion, and of holiness; and explicitly and repeatedly declares, that unless a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. He inculcates, upon every one, attention to all God's ordinances; he shows them how they are to *behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church*. In a word, he faithfully teaches them to *observe all things whatsoever God hath commanded*.

(To be Continued.)

## STATE OF THE JEWS IN THE EAST.

*Rev. Dr Buchanan's Speech, before the late Anniversary Meeting of the London Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews.*

**D**URING my residence in the east, my mind was much occupied with the present state and circumstances of the Jews. I visited them in different provinces, examined their books, and discoursed with them on the subject of the prophecies; and I found that no where do they despair of being restored to Jerusalem; no where do they despair of beholding their Messiah. It is with great satisfaction, then, that on my return to England, I contemplate the establishment of your Society. It is, indeed, with much surprise I behold three hundred gentlemen assembled on the present occasion, under the patronage of noblemen of our country, to promote this noble design. The sudden elevation of your institution, and the interest which it has almost instantaneously created in the public mind, are sure prognostics of its perpetuity.—It is one of those institutions, which, like the Bible Society, need only to be proposed, to recommend itself to the minds of men, by its perfect reasonableness and propriety; and I may add, by the divine obligation it involves. I entertain a confident hope that this Society, or some institution analogous to it, will be perpetual in the Church of Christ, and that it will endure, to use an Oriental expression, as long as sun and moon endure, or at least as long as there is a Jew in the world who is not a Christian.

There is a measure I would propose to the consideration of your Society, which I think will contribute to its celebrity and success. I would suggest to you to open a correspondence with the Jews in the East.

Perhaps it may not be known to some, that by the events of the late war in India, a colony of the Jews have become subject to Great Britain. This is the colony of the white and black Jews of Cochin. The number is calculated to be about 16,000. Mr Frey informs me that the number of Jews in the United Kingdom is not reputed to be greater than 14,000.

So that our Jewish subjects in the East are yet more numerous than those in the West; and they are equally entitled to the regard and attention of your Society.

I visited Cochin soon after the conquest of the province. The Jews received me hospitably, and permitted me to examine their libraries and their synagogues, and they presented to me many valuable manuscripts, which are now deposited in the library of the University of Cambridge. One of these is a roll of the Pentateuch, on goat-skins dyed red; one of the most ancient, perhaps, which the East can produce. The white Jews live on the sea-coast, and have commerce with foreign nations: the black Jews live chiefly in the interior of the country. The Hindoos call them Israeli; they call themselves Beni-Israel, and not Jews; for their ancestors did not belong to Judah; but to the kingdom of Israel. They consider themselves to be descended from those tribes who were carried away at the first captivity.—In some parts of the East, the Beni-Israel never heard of the second temple. They never heard of the Christian account of the coming of the Messiah. Some of them possess only the Pentateuch, and Psalms, and Book of Job.—Others have no portion of scripture left. But their countenance, and their observance of the Sabbath, and of peculiar rites, demonstrate that they are Jews. The white Jews at Cochin despise the black Jews, as being of an inferior cast, and do not approve of intermarriages with them, because they do not belong to the second temple. Both among white and black Jews, I found that there was a general impression that there would soon be a rumour of wars, and a commotion among the people, on their account. The white Jews expect a second Cyrus from the West, who shall build this temple the third and last time.

You may address the Jews of Cochin with great advantage on the subject of the Christian religion, for they have the evidence of the Syrian Christians before them. These ancient Christians live in the vicinity, and are your witnesses. At one place in the interior of the country, which I visited, there is a Jewish synagogue and a Christian church in the same Hindoo village. They stand opposite to each other;

as it were the law and the gospel; bearing testimony to the truth, in the presence of the heathen world.

I was informed, that many years ago, one of the Jews translated the New Testament into Hebrew, for the purpose of confuting it, and of repelling the arguments of his neighbours, the Syrian Christians. This manuscript fell into my hands, and is now in the library of the University of Cambridge. It is in his own hand writing, with the first interlineations and erasures; and will be of great use in preparing a version of the New Testament in the Hebrew language. It appears to be a faithful translation, as far as it has been examined; but about the end, when he came to the Epistles of St Paul, he seems to have lost his temper, being moved perhaps by the acute arguments of the learned Benjamite, as he calls the apostle; and he has written here and there a note of execration on his memory. But behold the providence of God! The translator became himself a convert to Christianity. His own works subdued his unbelief. In the lion he found sweetness; and he lived and died in the faith of Christ. And now it is a common superstition among the vulgar in that place, that if any Jew shall write the whole of the New Testament with his own hand, he will become a Christian by the influence of the evil spirit.

This event occurred in the South of India; but a conversion no less remarkable took place some time afterwards in the North. Jacob Levi, a Jew from Smyrna, travelled over land to Calcutta, and heard the gospel from one of the Lutheran preachers belonging to the Society for promoting Christian knowledge, and became a convert to the truth. He delivered a testimony to the Jews, Hindoos, Mahomedans, and Christians; for he was acquainted with various languages, and spoke eloquently, like Apollos. But his course was short. He was ordained, like many witnesses of the Christian faith, to shine but for a moment. These solitary instances of the power of the gospel seem to occur, in almost every nation, previous to the general illumination. This conversion of Jacob Levi is recorded in the proceedings of the Society in Bartlett's Buildings, London.

But there is another body of Jews, not a colony but a kingdom of Jews, to which this Society may also address itself; and that is, the ten tribes. For the ten tribes, so long lost, have at length been found. It has been sufficiently ascertained, by the investigations of the learned in India, that the Affghan and Pyran nations consist of the descendants of the Jewish tribes of the first dispersion.

When I was in the South of India, I asked the black Jews, where their brethren, the great body of the ten tribes, were to be found? They answered promptly, that they were to be found in the North, in the regions adjacent to Chaldea, the very country whither they were first carried into captivity. On my return to Calcutta, I prosecuted the inquiry under the advantages which the learned natives of the college of Fort William afforded me. Sir William Jones had recorded it as his opinion, that the Affghans were Jews, and referred to various authorities. A further investigation confirmed the judgment of that illustrious scholar. There were Affghan Jews in Calcutta at the time: one of my own servants was an Affghan. The Affghans are generally reputed by us to be Mahomedans. I asked my servant, if he was a Mahomedan? "No," said he, "I am a Mahomedan Jew." I plainly discerned in his countenance the features of the London Jew. The general account of the Affghans is this:—That their ancestors were Jews—that their common histories record the names of David, Saul, and other kings of Israel—that the Mahomedans came upon them with an invading army, and said unto them, We are Jews as well as you; we observe circumcision, and keep the Sabbath: let us incorporate our nations, and be one people, and unite against the infidels—that they made a shew of yielding to Mahomedanism, (as the Jews of Spain and Portugal pretended to yield to Christianity); but in process of time the ascendancy of the new religion corrupted their ancient institutions; their sacred books began to deminish in number, and it came to pass at last, that in many places they could be only recognised to be Jews by their countenance, by tradition, by peculiar rites, and the observance of the Sabbath; which are the only marks which



distinguish some of the Beni-Israel of the South of India. Let us therefore address the ten tribes, and receive them in the state in which, by the providence of God, they are to be found. Some of the Jews of London are as ignorant, and as little entitled to the name, as the Affghans of India.

But there is a third body of Jews, to whom you ought to write: I mean the Samaritan Jews. They are not far from the shores of the Mediterranean, and are easily accessible. They possess only the Pentateuch. They are few in number, and will receive with much deference any communication which you will be pleased to make to them, relating to their religion, and to the present state of Jewish nations.

Let letters, then, be addressed to these three bodies of Israelites, not in the name of Christians, but in the name of the converted Jews, who compose a part of this Society. Let Mr Frey, the learned convert, write to them, not in the Rabbinical Hebrew, (for there are upwards of 20 dialects of Rabbinical or Commercial Hebrew in the world), but in the Hebrew of the Old Testament, which all understand; let him inform them of the great events that have taken place in the West, namely, that Jews have become Christians; that the Christians are sending forth preachers to teach all nations; that the Messiah is surely come; and that the signs of the times encourage the belief that Israel is about to be restored in a spiritual sense. Let him further direct their attention to particular prophecies, and invite correspondence. And after Mr Frey has exercised his ministry a year or two longer in this country, it may be expedient that he go forth as a missionary to the Jews of Cochin, with some of his brethren, that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." After preaching among them for a time, he may return again, and report what he has heard and seen.

But when you write these letters, a *present* must accompany them, after the Oriental manner. And let this present be the BIBLE. You need not, indeed, send the Old Testament to all: for the Jews of the East possess that book entire, with every jot and tittle that belongs to it. They are our *Librarians*. They are ordained by providence, as it were,

the official guardians of the perpetual purity of the Sacred Volume. But you must send them the NEW TESTAMENT in the Hebrew Tongue; in the language and character of the Old Testament, which all understand and revere. And let it have the *Massora*, that the text may be settled by good authority, before it pass out of your hands. We Christians are, in regard to the New Testament, the Massorites. We are qualified to determine the sense. If the version be sent forth without *points*, the words of our Saviour may be expounded by the Eastern Jews in different ways.—The Arabic, Persian, Chaldaic, and Syriac languages, all have points. You may take them away, indeed, as has been done in the Old Testament Hebrew; but if you do so, you will not be able to understand what is written, unless you have got it previously by heart. All the children learn these languages and the Hebrew in the East, with points; and they are constantly used by grown persons, when the sense is doubtful. A letter, without points, on a new and difficult subject, would be an enigma. It is commonly said in Europe, that “the points are not of divine origin.” But I do not understand the meaning of these words. If the *consonants* be of divine origin, the *vowels* are of divine origin. The consonants cannot be pronounced without the vowels. A consonant implies the presence of a vowel. The Hebrew consonants, which are said to be of divine origin, were changed in form by a heathen people. A child, in the time of Moses, would not have been able to learn the book of Genesis without points. When he had got it by heart, indeed, the points would be of no use: and for this reason, and for no other, are they not used in the synagogue. It is the labour of ten years for the Hebrew readers in the synagogue to learn to read the Scriptures without points. Had not Providence ordained the *Massora* of the Old Testament, it is impossible to say how great our difficulty might have been in translating that volume at this day: but the same Providence which has preserved the *consonants*, has preserved the *vowels* also.—

It is with surprise I learn, that as yet you have not obtained a version of the New Testament in the Hebrew language,

for the use of the Jews. It is surely the very first duty of your Society to execute this translation. You are beginning to work without instruments. How can you find fault with a Jew, for not believing the New Testament, if he has never seen it? It is not to be expected that he will respect a version in English; but give him the New Testament, in the language of the Old Testament, in the imposing form of the primeval Hebrew, the character which he is accustomed to venerate and admire, and then you do justice to his weakness, and may overcome his prejudice.

How strange it appears, that during a period of eighteen hundred years, the Christians should never have given the Jews the New Testament in their own language! By a kind of infatuation, they have reprobated the unbelief of the Jews, and have never, at the same time, told them what they ought to believe.

I shall conclude with observing, that the chief difficulties which this Society will probably meet with, will be from the opposing Jews at home. But when they see that your converts multiply, and when they hear that you are writing to other nations, regardless of their ignorance and opposition at home; when they learn that you have *discovered the ten tribes*, that you have sent to them the New Testament in the holy language; that you are discussing with them the subject of the prophecies; and that Mr Frey and his brethren are going forth as “ambassadors, in light ships, to carry the tidings of gladness to a nation scattered and peeled, terrible from their beginning hitherto,” (Isai. xviii.), the hostile Jews will be alarmed, their spirits will sink within them, and they will begin to think that a great day in Zion is indeed at hand.

Every time you meet here, in this public manner, in the presence of the Israelites, your cause acquires strength.— Every time that these annual sermons are preached, and the voice of prayer and supplication for the outcasts of Israel ascends to heaven, it is like the blasts of the rams’ horns before the walls of Jericho: and so the enemy will soon begin to consider it: and I doubt not that before you have encompassed the wall seven times, an impression will be made.—

It may be the will of God, that before the trumpet of your Anniversary assemblies has been seven times sounded, the wall will begin to shake; a breach will be made; and Joshua, the spiritual Joshua, will enter and take the city.

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## ON THE OBSERVATION OF THE SABBATH.

*“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”*

MOSES.

THE observation of the Sabbath was made a part of the Mosaic dispensation, and interwoven with the whole system. It is enforced in the moral law of ten commandments, as deliyered from Mount Sinai, introduced in the midst of their positive institutions, and enforced by the temporal punishments to be executed by civil authority. This shows its importance; evinces that it partakes of the excellency of the moral law; forms an eminent part of, and is fundamental to, the maintenance of all instituted worship; is typical of, and preparatory for, the heavenly Sabbath; and, on every account, is proper to be enforced by the authority of the magistrate, who may not draw his sword to propagate systems of doctrine and formulaş of worship, but may and ought to use his authority to repress immorality and profaneness, and to promote the public worship of God in the land. The substance of this command is of a moral nature. To separate some known, stated, and periodical portion of our time to religious purposes, when, all other engagements being postponed, men should assemble to worship God, and learn his will, is evidently an appointment resulting from the nature and reason of things. The glorious perfections of God—the rational nature of man—our relations and obligations to our creator and benefactor, governor and judge—the honour he requires and we owe him—our relations to each other as social creatures, who can instruct, assist, affect, and animate one another by joining together in one common exercise—and our situation in such a world as this, all render such an ordinance indispensable. Repeal this commandment—prohi-

bit this practice—you render public religion a matter of indifference—or, you destroy it. Such a repeal or prohibition implies an absurdity, which cannot be said of the repeal or prohibition of any ceremonial precept. The honour and worship of God, the interests of religion and morality, and the best happiness of mankind would be inadequately provided for without such an observance.

On this important subject, listen to the nervous reasoning and pious reflections of an eminent writer.\*

“What divine authority have I, for the peculiar sanctification of the Sabbath day?” Reason herself informs me, that men being made for eternity, their time should be partly sequestered to the contemplation of eternal things; that, being of a social nature, they ought to associate in their principal business, the worship of their God; and that, to avoid distraction, it is proper that there should be one fixed season of public devotion, common to all.—In the well known precept, which, to mark its perpetuity, and moral obligation, was written by God himself, on a table of stone; and was inserted in the very centre of that universal, that permanent rule of righteousness, divinely published from Sinai’s top, and into which ceremony never entered,—is not the seventh part of our time, peremptorily challenged for the religious service of God?—Is not the divine mandate there established, on the moral, the extensive grounds of God’s own example, and his blessing the Sabbath day.†—Was not this sacred season instituted in paradise; *made for man*, while no typical ceremony had yet commenced?—In six days the heavens, and the earth, and all their hosts, were finished: on the *seventh*, God rested from all his work; he blessed the Sabbath-day, and sanctified it: How?—he set it apart for his special service; and for the bestowing of his peculiar favours on men †—When redemption was published, was the privilege of the Sabbath revoked! was the duty of observing it superseded? Surely no. On that day, the patriarchal sons of God jointly presented themselves before the Most High. || Nor had

\* Rev. John Brown, late of Haddington.

† Exod. xx. 8—11. Duet. x. 4. † Gen. ii. 2, 3. || Job i. 6. & ii. 1.

the thunders of Horeb uttered their voice, when the Hebrew lawgiver spoke of the observation of the Sabbath as a well known custom; and to honour it, the manna was divinely restrained and preserved.\* Of the Jewish religion, how great a part the observance of the Sabbath was, the law and the prophets do clearly show.—What vestiges of the seventh-day Sabbath, for many ages, remained with the ancient Heathens, their histories still mark.—Derived they this observance from the Jews, whom they so heartily despised and abhorred? Surely not; but from their own most ancient progenitors. The outward observance was partly remembered; the true design was forgotten—Was not the observation of the Sabbath among the nations, when ceremonies should be no more, plainly foretold?† Is it not divinely demonstrated, that *there remaineth a Sabbatism, a keeping of Sabbath, for the New Testament people of God?*‡ Had not Jesus the Lord of the Sabbath, a power to change the season thereof, at his pleasure? Did not his resurrection, his resting from the laborious purchase of our salvation, more richly deserve a weekly memorial, than his rest from creation did?—Was it not proper, that the time of the New-Testament Sabbath, sacred to the memory of a finished redemption, should suggest that we Christians are not to labour for life, and then inherit our restful reward; but our privilege precedes our duty, and our labour of gospel-holiness follows our entrance into a state of new-covenant rest?—Was it not divinely predicted, that the *eighth* day, the day immediately succeeding the Jewish Sabbath, should, with Christians, be the stated season of public devotion?||—Did not Jesus' glorious resurrection; his repeated visits to his assembled disciples; his noted effusion of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, on the first day of the week; consecrate the same to the honour of his *finished* work?§ and, for this reason, is it not, by inspiration, honourably termed, *the Lord's day?*¶—On it, did not the inspired apostles, and their followers, for our example,

\* Exod. xvi. 23, 30. † Isai. lxvi. 23. ‡ Heb. iv. 9. || Ezek. xlii. 27. § Mark xvi. 1, 2, 9. John. xx. 19, 26. Acts ii. ¶ Mat. xii. 8. Mark ii. 28. Rev. i. 10.



ordinarily assemble for hearing the word; for sacramental breaking of bread, and for public prayer? \*—On it, were not the Christian churches divinely commanded to collect for their poor? † And where is now the professor, who, contemning the observance of the Sabbath, any while retains the least shadow of a Christian practice?—Blessed queen of days, on thee may I be always *in the Spirit*: may I count thee my *delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable*. Be shut, my heart, to every vain thought; let no idle, no evil communication proceed from my lips; let me rest from my servile, rest from my sinful, my legal works.

“Awake, my soul, the wings of the morning have begun their rapid course; the early sun, the warbling birds, sing their Creator’s praise.” Almighty Father, all things thy name resound, thou eternal Cause, Supporter, End of all. Wake up, my soul, and join the choir: thy Maker’s praise proclaim.—But soft! a Maker’s praise is not the half thou owest: praise thy REDEEMER; praise:—On this blessed day, thy Jesus rose; rose early, for thy good.—Up, sleeper, from thy bed: at earliest hour, from sadder bed, for thee the SAVIOUR rose.—On this great day he finished the purchase of my bliss; then early burst the bonds of death;—early forsook the mansions of the dead: and shall the bands of sloth, of sin, or sleep, forbid my early feasting on his love?—prevent my early triumphs in his praise?—Wake, wake, my soul, praise thy righteous, thy risen, thy exalted Lord: at the loved name awake.—“But why may not I, with others, sleep till eight or nine o’clock?” What others, my soul, are those? canst thou believe them Christians, who rise early on their labouring days, and loiter on the Sabbath? Art thou willing to hazard an eternity with them?—For a few hours of rest to thy body, a few delicious hours of sloth, wilt thou rob thy Maker, and run the risk of taking thy bed for ever in hell, where they have no rest, day, nor night, but are tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and of the Lamb?—Am I a candid expectant of everlasting fellowship with God, if I curtail, if I weary of that one day in seven, which is the amiable

\* Acts xx. 7.

† 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.

pledge of it?—Can I long for unceasing glory, if I do not long, and watch for the weekly Sabbath, more than they that watch for the morning?

“ I have awaked, but too late for the day: this world hath six parts of our time allowed her by God, yet still cries, GIVE, GIVE: how violently hath she urged me to encroach on the Sabbath, by sitting too late the night before, or rising too early on the day after?” Alas, my soul! is this world six times more precious than Jesus, than **JEHOVAH**, that I should rob him of his seventh part of my time for her sake?—Blessed Redeemer, come up higher in my heart; and ye worldly concerns, get you down, and sit below his footstool. “ When yesternight I retired to sleep, my mind was busied with ten thousand earthly cares; and to-day I have waked with vain and carnal thoughts unnumbered, crowding in my heart.” Lord, why should these trouble me, but especially on thy day? Vain thoughts are sin’s advocates, and thy adversaries: O forgive their wickedness; and, as fire melts wax away, so let them perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.—How long shall vain, shall vile thoughts lodge within me? how long shall the august, the everlasting state of things, be to my soul as a dark shadow, as the image of a dream?—On this sacred morning, why do not I live, as if just entering into eternity? as if beholding the glorious appearance of the great God my Saviour?—Are not eternal things as certain now, as they will be hereafter? Why then live I not alway in the believing view, and under the deep impression of the heavens vanishing; the elements melting; the earth flaming; the angels every where dispersed, to gather the elect from the four winds of heaven; and of their ascending to meet the Lord in the air, and be for ever with the Lord?—What a trifle will the pleasures, honour, or wealth of this world,—nay, of ten thousand worlds, be to me then?

“ What a mercy for man is the Sabbath !” What weary pilgrims, wandering in pathless deserts, were we, but for this pledge of immortality, whereon, from inexhausted stores, God pours down his spiritual blessings on us; and whereon we sit basking in the rays of his countenance, forget things

below, and, with angels and saints, converse with him, are warmed with love to him, live on him, and in him; and express our joy in songs of grateful praise! But how transcendent their felicity, who celebrate the everlasting Sabbath above! who, being far removed from weariness and pain, and rid of every vile, every impertinent thought, enjoy God and the Lamb, to the utmost stretch of their boundless wishes.

C. S.

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### MEDITATION ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

—“*The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: And, when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, —saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*”

1 COR. xi. 23—26.

“**N**OW we are to be feasted with the supper of our Lord; feasted on his flesh and blood.” Let a knife be put to my throat, if I be not *a man given to appetite* after Jesus Christ, and nothing beside. “Now the pastor debars the unworthy from the sacred banquet.” Listen, my conscience, if thy name be found in this black roll: ponder, how far in heart, or in practice, I am chargeable with these bloody crimes: faithfully charge home my guilt.—Ah! how each of these characters sting me to the quick! not one of these abominations, but I find lurking in myself.—Lord, “iniquities prevail against me; but as for my transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.” In thy all-cleansing blood, O *cleanse the blood which thou hast not cleansed.* “Now follows the sacred invitation to the feast.” Listen, my soul, ponder, if thou hast but one scripture-mark of these friends of Christ—Lord, methinks I *know the plagues of my own heart*; and look

on myself as the chief of sinners:—but ah! what a dwarf in religion! how withered a Christian must I be, that I can claim no other!

“How is my soul out of frame! but in obedience to thy dying command, *Do this in remembrance of me*; and depending on thy grace to supply all my wants, I come forward to thy table.” “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. Open my mouth wide, and fill it.” Cause me “hunger and thirst after righteousness,” that I may be filled. *Innumerable fears and evils encompass me about*: but let me break through them all, rather than see Jesus dishonoured by the long emptiness of his sacred table. Should we flee from him, because we know, that he is a God *gracious and merciful*? did he die in our stead, to make this rich provision for us; and dare we requite him, by openly reproaching him, and his feast, in striving to be among the last to come to it! Should we love seats, and depend on frames, more than God our Saviour? Let me *wash my heart and hands in his innocency*; his righteousness, “and so compass thine altar, O Lord. O send forth thy light and thy truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to thine holy hill. Then will I go to God’s altar; to God mine exceeding joy.”—Encouraged by thy promise, “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word: the hungry he filleth with good things, while the rich are sent empty away,” “I sit down at this table.” A worthless guest indeed! but, Lord, make me perfect through thy *comeliness* put upon me, as my wedding garment: O my King, sit thou with me, *that my spikenard of grace may send forth the fragrant smell thereof*. Now, that I am set down to eat this gospel passover, cursed be all the *leaven* of corruption, known or unknown, which cleaveth to my soul: Lord Jesus, “persecute and destroy it, from under these heavens: thy curse unto it.” Didst thou not die, to transfer the divine curse from my person to my sin? Didst thou not leave this, thy once worn robe, in legacy to thy executioners, my sins: quickly let them feel its influence; and, like the accursed *fig tree, wither away*.

“The bread and wine are taken, and *sanctified by the word, and by prayer.*” In *this word*, I see the divine warrant; the design, and the manner of receiving this feast. May these outward elements effectually represent, seal, and apply Christ and his benefits, to all his children, who partake to-day. May they, by faith, distinctly discern, feed upon, and apply to themselves his person, righteousness, and blessings, thereby represented. And may no scandalous, or grossly ignorant person, presume to eat of the children's bread. Lord, pity these assemblies where such, perhaps without the least trial, are cheerfully admitted to *eat and drink damnation* to themselves. Awful thought! perhaps just now thousands such, with their minister's allowance, crucify the Son of God afresh. Tremble, ye people, whose unnatural pastors, contrary to their solemn vows, to please your pride, open for you the gates towards hell, leading down to the chambers of death, who readily give you *TOKENS* of access, by profane communicating, to seal up, and confirm your eternal ruin.

But in the *taking* and *blessing* of these elements, methinks I see my adored Redeemer, from everlasting *chosen out of the people*. I view him anointed, and duly furnished, with every spiritual gift and grace, for his arduous work. Blessed be the Lord, who “*laid help upon one that is mighty; hath called him in righteoussnes, and given him to be a covenant of the people; a light to lighten the Gentiles; and his salvation to all the ends of the earth:—that the Spirit of the Lord God is upon him, and hath anointed him to preach liberty to the captives; and the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound; to bind up the broken hearted, to comfort all that mourn.*”——Blessed for ever be that generous Son of God, who, that fatherless strangers, rebellious sinners, might share of his endless felicity, undertook our debt, assumed our debased nature, fulfilled our bond service, and bore our awful curse; rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and his “*delights were with the sons of men.*”——Blessed be he, for all the harbingers of his coming to save, the ancient types, preludes, promises, and prophecies; every one of which proclaims his alacrity therein.——O. how my heart

admires his kindness! heaves with desire after, and burns with love to HIM, who first "loved me, and gave himself for me!" how she hungers and thirsts, to be filled with his righteousness, his grace, and glory! and to *shew forth*, before angels and men, that I trust in nothing; glory in nothing; rejoice in nothing; but in the *cross of Christ*, and God reconciled in him! *Stay me with flagons of Heaven's new wine: comfort me with apples of blessings, growing on the tree of life; for I am sick of love.*—O for the broad seal of Heaven, to every promise of the new covenant, to me this day.

"The sacred bread is broken; the wine is poured out." What meaneth this service? It is, that God, in my nature, was broken and bruised for me; his blood squeezed forth; his soul poured out unto death, by the weight of mine iniquities imputed to him, and the load of his Father's wrath due to me, executed upon him. Consider, my soul, the *Apostle and High Priest* of thy profession. Behold the great God, *glorious in holiness*, born of a sinful virgin! born in *the likeness of sinful flesh!* born under sin! cast out from the womb into a stable! *laid in a manger*, to the loathing of his person? Behold the *Lord of all*, early persecuted! as a *fugitive and vagabond*, driven from the promised land! forced to hide himself in the *land of graven images!* Behold the *high and lofty One*, who inhabiteth eternity; who dwells in the high and holy place,—in light to which no man can approach, obscurely sojourning in Nazareth, whence *nothing good* was expected! Behold the *King of kings*, debased to be a servant of servants, —to sinful men! the Heir of all things laboriously earning his bread with the sweat of his brow! Behold him whose name alone is JEHOVAH, the "Most High over all the earth," reproached as a glutton, a drunkard, a deceiver, possessed of, and in compact with Satan! Behold him whom archangels, with the profoundest adoration, confess and adore, "betrayed into the hands of sinners!" sold for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave!—forsaken of all his disciples!—by one denied with curses and oaths!—reviled, buffeted, spitted upon, crowned with thorns! condemned, and crucified between thieves!—On these, let my faith, not my



fancy, work; and my spiritual knowledge, not my imagination, be strong.—Let me enter within the veil, to contemplate, what HIS soul suffered, when “amazed and very heavy; sorrowful even unto death; troubled *till he cried*, What shall I say? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? and why art thou so far from the words of my roaring?” troubled till, being in agony, he did sweat great drops of blood! O what tenfold torments! what overwhelming billows! what boundless deeps of divine wrath!—Astonishing thought! the *Mighty God*, in our nature, *troubled in soul*, till he knew not what to say! sighing, sweating, roaring, groaning, dying under the weight of his Father’s fury, due to men! Still more endearing;—due to ME!

“The elements, the external symbols of the crucified Saviour, are delivered into my hands,” sweetened with his gracious words, “Take, eat: this is my body given for you; broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. This Cup is the New Testament in my blood, shed for remission of sins unto many: drink ye all of it. Do this in remembrance of me.”—O God-like!—love-like language!—“sweeter than honey to my taste!”—how powerfully it penetrates, melts, and ravisheth every corner of my heart! Infinitely stupendous! Hath JEHOVAH a body? was his body broken? his blood shed? was all FOR ME? Can I, for overwhelming joy, believe? yet, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”—And in the faith hereof, I take you, angels and men, and chiefly thee, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to witness, that I receive this bread and wine, as means instituted by JEHOVAH to feed my soul up to eternal life, as pledges of his giving, and of my accepting Jesus’ person, righteousness, and fulness, as my ALL IN ALL: that I accept of his person as my *Husband*, to dwell with me; as my *Redeemer*, to bring me from the loathsome prison, and rescue me from the galling yoke; as my *Mediator*, to procure endless peace between God and my soul; as my *Prophet*, to shew me the Father, and teach me his will; my *Priest*, to atone for my guilt, and intercede for my blessedness; my *King*, to subdue my heart, direct my path, keep me in safety, and destroy my foes; and my *Mas-*

*ter* and *Lord*, to be confessed and served, in face of danger, and defiance of death; my *Friend*, to support and comfort me in every adversity, and into whose bosom I may commit all my secret concerns; my *Shepherd*, to seek me out, to recover me when strayed, to keep me from want, to restore my soul, to cause me *lie down in green pastures*, to feed me, and for ever lead me unto fountains of living waters. His *righteousness* I accept, as the *sole price* of my happiness, the *foundation* of my pardon and peace, the *matter* of my boasting, and my everlasting *garment of salvation*. His *power and grace*, I accept as the *source* of my holy obedience, performing all things in and for me: his *Spirit* as my *strengtheners, comforter, and guide*: his *promise*, as the *charter* of my happiness, and the *channel* of my gracious supply from his fulness; his *law*, as my *rule*; his *cross*, as my *ornament and crown*. Jesus Christ, and all that is his, are mine; and I, and all that I have, are his, from henceforth and for ever. Let this be *written in my record on high*, and for ever *graven as with a pen of iron in the rock* of my heart.

While I use this sacred provision, hearing of men is not my proper work; the business is between Jesus Christ and my soul. Let me ponder his delightful words, "Take, eat; this is my body broken for you. This cup is the New Testament in my blood, shed for remission of sins unto many." Let me roll them as a sweet morsel, as honey and milk, under my tongue; let my meditation thereon be sweet.—Was Jesus' body broken, and his blood shed for *me*! for *me*, vanity! for *me*, lighter than vanity! for *me*, a worm wallowing amidst stench and corruption! for *me*, a stupid outrageous beast before him! for *me*, an useless wretch; a polluted sinner; a perverse child of disobedience! for *me*, who times without number refused the Redeemer, trampled his blood under foot, and made the God of truth a liar: My whole heart is moved, is melted, and ravished at the entrance of this word.—*What is this!*—Was JEHOVAH's body broken, and his blood shed for such a *dog*, such a *child of the devil*, an *enemy of all righteousness*, as I am? Was ever work; ever love like this! Why was it done? he loved me, and gave him-

*self for me.* *He loved me,* so mean ! so poor ! so deformed ! so froward ! so infamous ! so loathsome ! so abominable ! *He loved me,* who hated, loathed, and abhorred, and murdered him ! Thrice-pleasant ! transporting wonder ! the *Son of God loved me, and gave himself for me !* What can I more say ! Is this the manner of men, O Lord ?

But for what end did he love *me,* and give his body to be broken, and his blood to be shed for *me* ? Was it that I should “ not perish, but have everlasting life ? ” that he might “ love my soul from the pit of corruption ? ” that he might enter into the stable of my heart ; and make it an “ habitation of God through the Spirit ? ” Was it, that he might deliver and preserve *me* from idols ; and from the grievous servitude of corruption ? that he might recall *me,* a guilty fugitive and vagabond, from an endless, a wrathful exile from my God ? Was it, that he might make obscure and wretched *me,* in whom no good dwells, a shining *pillar* in the temple of his God ; give *me* a *new name,* better than of sons and daughters ; and bestow upon *me* everlasting fulness, riches, and rest ? Was not his body broken, and his blood shed for *me,* that divine justice might withhold her overwhelming floods of deserved vengeance from *me* ? might deliver *me* into the hands of unbounded mercy, to enliven, cherish, and bless *me* ? to acquit, and, amidst unfallen angels, and ransomed men, crown *me* with endless glory, life, and righteousness ? to overwhelm *me* with bliss, till I be for ever enraptured, amazed, and nonplussed, what to think, or say of his GRACE ?

But who were the guilty persecutors, betrayers, and murderers of him, who so loved *me,* and gave himself for *me* ?— Ah ! my sins :—he bare our sins *in his own body on the tree.* Bloody cannibals ! was it not enough for you to murder my soul ; but have you murdered my *God, my Saviour* too ! Oh ! if mine head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for your bloody crimes !— Ah ! the cursed deeds, the horrid acts, my sins have done ! what murderous things they be ! Rise, rise my heart, proclaim eternal war with every darling lust ; raise revenge ; slay

the murderers; spare none: O earth, cover thou not their blood, let their cry have no place. Almighty God, unto whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself; heap tenfold fury on their head: when thou makest inquisition for blood, remember them: the violence done to me, and to my Saviour, be on this wicked heart; our blood be on the cursed inhabitants thereof: These *foxes*, these *mother's children*, I cannot take or slay; but, in thy dreadful name, I turn and curse them: do thou seize; do thou tear them in pieces, while there is none to deliver them. Cursed be every inclination of my soul, every act of my life, *that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully, and keepeth back his sword from their blood.* Vile miscreants, let me serve you as you did my Saviour, my God. In his first infancy, did you inhospitably exclude him from the inn? Be gone for ever from my heart; let your place there be no more found. Did you early seek his life? Through his grace, I vow to take your first motions, your *tender little ones*, and dash them to pieces against his cross. Did you banish him from the holy land? Over his shed blood I swear to pursue you through every corner of my heart; my life, or my influence on earth, that you may find no rest. —Huddled you him up in base, in abandoned Nazareth, and made him earn his bread with *sore travel*? Despicable *dung* shall I account you, and every thing tainted with you, “that I may win Christ, and be found in him;” and uneasy and struggling shall be your life in my heart;—my house. Covered ye his blessed name with the vilest reproach? To believe,—to spread your execrable fame,—to load you with your just, but odious character,—shall be the business of my life.—Allowed you him *no where to lay his head*? Eagerly shall I strive, earnestly shall I pray, that you may find no room in me, or about me; no room in the church, or in the earth; that “the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and the whole earth be filled with his glory.”—Stirred ye up multitudes against him? Let me stir up ALL *against the kingdom of sin*: Ye powers of my soul, “crucify the flesh, with her affections and lusts; resist unto blood striving against *sin*.” Ye sons of

men, "hate evil; hate every false and wicked way; abhor it; abstain from every approach to it, and appearance of it: Awake, O Lord, to the judgment which thou hast commanded; subdue our iniquities, and cast our sins into the depths of the sea."—Abominations infernal, did you excite one disciple to betray, another to deny, and the rest to forsake him and flee? Now do I, ah! too long your unhappy disciple, covenant to give you up,—to give the most beloved of you up, into the hand of Jesus, my great *Elder* and *High Priest*, who *seeketh* your life; and "was manifested to destroy the works of the devil:" In his strength. I vow to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts; and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; to flee youthful lusts; to forsake the evil, and chuse the good.—Did you instigate his foes to spit on, set at nought, scourge, condemn, and crucify him? Through his grace, I purpose to oppose, to abominate, and condemn you; and, by a constant application of his death, for sanctifying me, and for weakening and killing you, to nail you to his cross.—Feeble resolves! Of myself, I can do nothing but sin: It is thine, Lord, and on thee I depend to *work all my work in me*; and "perform all things for me."

But why is this cup called the *New Testament in his blood*? Is it not because the whole covenant of grace, with all her blessings, as purchased by his blood; and all her promises, as ratified in it, is *therewith* divinely made over to me, and solemnly confirmed to me, by my reception and drinking thereof? O how highly favoured of the Lord am I! the "everlasting covenant is made with me; and this is all my salvation and all my desire." What clusters of transcendent blessings, and of "exceeding great and precious promises;" are here!—If I am guilty; the immutable God hath engaged to *blot out my transgression as a thick cloud*: if defiled; to *sprinkle clean water* on me, and *cleanse me from all my filthiness*: if hard-hearted; to *take away my heart of stone, and give me an heart of flesh*: if carnal, and earthly-minded; to *put his Spirit* within me: if perverse and plagued; to *see my ways, and heal them*: if grieved; to "restore comforts to me, and to my mourners:" if deserted; to *see me again*: if



tempted; to make his grace sufficient for me: if bent to backsliding; to “bring me again from Bashan hill,” and the seas devouring deeps; to *heal my backsliding, and love me freely*; never to *turn away from me to do me good*; and to *put his fear in my heart, that I may not turn away from him*: if I am in doubt with respect to my duty; he hath engaged to *teach me, a sinner, his way*: if my faith fails; he hath promised, that in Jesus’ “name shall the Gentiles trust:” if I am under the prevalence of obdurate impenitency; he hath bound himself, that I “shall look on him whom I have pierced, and mourn:” if my love chills; he is deep sworn to “circumcise *my heart to love the Lord*:” if I am given to Atheism; he testifieth against me, that he is “God, even my God:” if I am in trouble, and like to be terrified with mine adversities, and enemies; he saith, “I will be with him in trouble: When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee: fear not, I am with thee; be not dismayed, I am thy God:” if, in soul or body, I am poor and needy,—am presaging sad wants; he assures me, that “bread shall be given me, and my water be sure; that my God will supply all my need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus:” if I am concerned for the spiritual welfare of my posterity; he engageth to pour out his *Spirit on my seed, and his blessing on mine offspring*.—Do I tremble for the case of Zion? he hath engaged to *build her up*; to make her, “as though she had not been cast off;” to enlarge her peace; “give her pastors according to his own heart, to feed his people with knowledge and understanding; to be as the dew to Israel, make him revive as the corn, grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.” Am I wearied of an evil world? he hath pledged his truth, that I “shall go up to *the mount Zion above, with everlasting joy on mine head*; enter into the palace of the King; *be made a pillar in the temple of my God, and go no more out*.” Engraven as in leaves of brass,—deep marked with Jesus’ blood, these mighty promises shine: they continue, “like mount Zion, which shall never be removed.” Mountains may depart, and hills be removed: but God’s loving-kindness will he not take from me, nor suffer the sworn,



the blood-ratified covenant of his peace to be broken. Here, in some humble place, let my name for ever stand, below the WORTHY LAMB.—O for a strong, a lasting faith, to credit the Almighty's word : to embrace the promise of his Christ ; and call the joys of heaven my own !

But why do I partake of these symbols ? It is to “ shew forth the Lord's death till he come.” It is *in remembrance* of Jesus, as my finished sacrifice, and my absent friend, who returns quickly to receive me to himself ; that where he is, I may be with him, to behold his glory ; and be like him, by seeing him as he is. Lord, who would not remember THEE, by the suffering of torment and death ? how much more by eating the *bread of life*, and drinking the *cup of salvation* ? Let my right hand forget her cunning, if I forget thee ; if I forget to love, to serve, and to long for thee ; if I prefer any advantage on earth, to thy service ; if the enjoyment of thee be not the chief, the sole quintessence of that heavenly happiness which I wish, or expect.—O when shall I be feasted, *with all the fulness of God* ! when shall faint, twilight, momentary, views of thy countenance, give place to bright, meridian, endless vision ! “ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace ; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. I desire to depart, and be with Christ, which is far better.” But suppose my days on earth be prolonged, I hope to carry about with me the relish, the impression of this divine visit, till I die. Never, I hope, shall corruptions, doubts, or darkness, prevail against me, as heretofore. “ My mountain stands strong ; I shall never be moved.”——

“ My sweet ravishment is already gone : Jesus hideth his face, and I am troubled.” Let me trust in the name, in the promise of the Lord, which doth not ebb and flow with my frames.—Carnal heart, where art thou now ?——Not one thought upon divine things can I command : Ah ! my cursed pride, and dependence on my frame, on my wisdom and strength, have brought me to this !—After so clear and delightful views of my *God, my Saviour*, must I leave this table as a stupid, a carnal, careless beast ?—What if all was a mere delusion ?—Few moments ago, I hoped to rise full of the

Holy Ghost, and in the firm assurance of a speedy interview with Christ, in his Father's kingdom: but now, were it not, that I cannot, I dare not, give up my claim to that promise, which I thought the Rock of Israel spoke to me at \* \* \* \*, I behoved to conclude the manner of my present removal from this table, an awful presage of Jesus' shortly driving me from his judgment-seat, with a tremendous, "I know you not; depart from me, you worker of iniquity."—"Now, being come from the table, had I any secret place, I would retire a little, and pour out my complaints unto God."—Sometimes, deeply impressed with a Redeemer's dying command, have I, through floods of fear, of lust, of temptation, and of divine hidings, struggled forward to his sacred feast, and have come away rejoicing in God through him.—Sometimes I have gone up, continued at, and come away like a serpent, which feedeth on dust and ashes.—But never immediately after so ravishing a frame, was my soul altogether swallowed up of corruption.

"Now I look on, while others partake." When I think what a miracle of redeeming love it is, to see these sinful men feasting with God upon the flesh and blood of his only begotten Son: when I hear Jesus repeat these affecting words, "Take, eat; this is my body broken for you: this is my blood of the New-Testament, which is shed for many: which is shed for you:"—when I hear his sufferings exhibited, his promises declared, agreeable to the various and unnumbered cases of his children, my heart begins to glow: Lord, kindle it into a "vehement flame.—Now is come salvation and strength:" the Lord gives me a sealed pardon of all my sins, a clear view of my King in his beauty, and of the heavenly land afar off: now he saith to my soul, "Come let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; and though they be like crimson, they shall be as wool. Thou shalt be as though thou hadst not been cast off."—Lord, should death now seize me in thine arms, scarce would his terror make me afraid; scarcely could I feel his cold embrace. While I believe, while I see thy love in dying for me, how earnestly I covet death, that I may be with thee,—

may perfectly resemble my Father who is in heaven!—I was not formed for earth and sin; nor can I live on things so vile:—how I tremble to think of relapsing into my lusts!—how the view of thy death hath made the world dead to me; and me to it! May I rather die a thousand deaths than lack thy presence. Since here I cannot enjoy thee to my wish; let me die, that I may *know* thee, *even as I am known*. How my breast burns with the view of that ETERNITY, whose beginnings I feel in my soul! O when shall death put on my clay pale silks for marriage-ropes, in which, rather from which, I shall go to *God mine exceeding joy*.—What dreadful assaults from Satan hath my soul sustained! but now, as if he had lost all his darts, I feel nothing but inexpressible tranquillity and peace with God, through my Lord Jesus Christ.

“The communicants come and go from the table, with the high praises of God in their mouth.” When I meet with Jesus on earth, how it tunes my heart to praise him! When I retire from this world to the celestial banquet, what high songs shall be in my lips! what everlasting joys on my head! When we, ransomed millions, retire from the judgment-seat, to the palace of the King, how all along the passage, shall we shout the REDEEMER! For ever, with what melody shall we cry, “Salvation to our God that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb!” “How hath the discourse at this table warmed my heart! how pertinently hath my case been spoken to! what encouraging promises have I heard!” Now I see, and am persuaded, that nothing can separate me from the love of Christ, or turn away his mercy from me: now can I, with pleasure, kiss crosses, or comforts, smiling goodness, or afflicting justice: I can do all things through Christ strengthening me; I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.—Only SIN I will not, I cannot endure.—When I can read my title clear to mansions in the heavens,—I bid my griefs and fears depart; I wipe my weeping eyes. “The table is drawn.” But blessed JEHOVAH, the gospel-table is not drawn, the *fulness of God* is not exhausted; the feast in glory shall never be finished:—O to drink of the *new wine* with Christ in his Father's king-

dom! O to receive my next communion in the immediate presence of God! Ordinances of the Most High: precious means of my fellowship with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; how gladly would I exchange you for God himself as my ALL IN ALL! Cisterns, how willingly would I part with you, for the infinite *fountain of living waters*! House of God, in which *a day hath often been better than a thousand*; how cheerfully would my soul exchange thee for the *house eternal in the heavens*! To it swift be my passage, short my road; may I but shut my eyes, and see my God.

“Now prayer is to begin; what a roll of distressed persons are here recommended to our sympathy!” My soul, I charge thee, now and afterward, to carry their case before God; weep with them that weep; in all their affliction be thou afflicted, as if it were thyself, being yet in the body.—Let me, with the congregation, thank the Lord for what of his goodness he caused to pass before us. Let us bewail our unworthy carriage in his presence. Let us beg that he may fix on our heart what we have heard, seen, felt, and tasted “of the word of life. *Let us strive together in our prayers for Zion, till her righteousness go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth.*” “Let us now sing psalms with grace.” “My heart is fixed, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise.”—Sweet lines!—the joy; the delight of my soul! let no officious impertinent thought intrude on my mind, while I join to sing them.

“Now the pastor proceeds to bless us in the name of the Lord.” Why this bustle among the people to get out before, or during the pronouncement of this solemn blessing? Are these hurrying professors in compact with Satan? Have they sworn to him, that they shall never willingly hear it? Are they tired out with the delightful work of the day? Have they no manners toward their Maker, that they will not wait a decent *farewell*? Or, reckon they his blessing unworthy of a moment's patience? I wish this *scandalous* flying off, be not the prelude of their dismissal from Jesus' bar, loaded with a grievous, an eternal curse! Lord; how heartily my soul says AMEN to this sweet benediction! By this *grace of*

*the Lord Jesus Christ, this love of the Father, and communion of the Holy Ghost, do men live; and herein is the life of my soul.*

*See Brown's Christian Journal.*

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## ON DUELLING.

*A Fragment from the Rev. Dr Mason's Oration on the mournful death, in a duel, of the late General Hamilton, of America.*

FATHERS, friends, and countrymen! The grave of Hamilton speaks. It charges me to remind you, that he fell a victim, not to disease or accident, not to the fortune of a glorious warfare; but, how shall I utter it? to a custom which has no origin but superstition, no aliment but depravity, no reason but in madness. Alas! that he should thus expose his precious life. This was his error. A thousand bursting hearts reiterate, This was his error.

Shall I apologize? I am forbidden by his living protestations, by his dying regrets, by his wasted blood. Shall a solitary act, into which he was betrayed and dragged, have the authority of a precedent? The plea is precluded by the long decisions of his understanding, by the principles of his conscience, and by the reluctance of his death. Ah! when will our morals be purified, and our imaginary honour cease to cover the most pestilent of human passions?

My appeal is to military men. Your honour is sacred. Is it honour to enjoy the esteem of the wise and good? The wise and good turn, with disgust, from the man who lawlessly aims at his neighbour's life. Is it honourable to serve your country? The man cruelly injures her, who, from private pique, calls his fellow citizen into the dubious field. Is fidelity honourable? That man forswears his faith, who turns against the bowels of his countrymen, weapons put into his hand for their defence. Are generosity, humanity, sympathy, honourable? That man is superlatively base, who mingles the tears of the widow and orphan with the blood of a

husband and father. Do refinement, and courtesy, and benignity, entwine with the laurels of the brave? The blot is yet to be wiped from the soldier's name, who cannot treat his brother with the decorum of a gentleman, unless the pistol or the dagger be every moment at his heart. Let the votaries of honour now look at their deeds. Let them compare their doctrine with this horrible comment.

Ah! what avails it to a distracted nation, that Hamilton was murdered for a punctilio of honour? My flesh shivers! Is this, indeed, our state of society? Are transcendent worth and talent to be a capital indictment before the tribunal of ambition? Is the angel of death to record, for sanguinary retribution, every word which the collision of political opinion may extort from a political man? Are integrity and candour to be at the mercy of the assassin?—And systematic crime to trample under foot, or smite into the grave, all that is yet venerable in our humbled land?

My countrymen, the land is defiled with blood unrighteously shed! Its cry, disregarded on earth, has gone up to the throne of God; and this day does our punishment reveal our sin! 'Tis time for us to awake! The voice of moral virtue, the voice of domestic alarm, the voice of the fatherless and widow, the voice of a nation's wrong, the voice of Hamilton's blood, the voice of impending judgment, calls for a remedy. At this hour, Heaven's high reproof is sounding from Maine to Georgia, and from the shores of the Atlantic to the banks of the Mississippi!

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Certainly few can read this pathetic fragment with indifference. A picture of the hideous subject, indeed, cannot be surcharged. Even the expressive pen of Dr Mason seems conscious of its inability to do it justice. "The grave of Hamilton speaks."—"Let the votaries of honour now look at their deeds. Let them compare their doctrine with this horrible comment." Let them contemplate their pride—their passion—their insatiable revenge—their bold invasion of God's right of vengeance—their furious contempt of death, judgment, and eternity.



## THE SON OF GOD INCARNATE.

*Extract of a Letter from Publius Lentulus to the Roman Senate.*

“ CONSCRIPT FATHERS,

**T**HERE appeared in these our days, a Man of great virtue, named Jesus Christ, who is yet living among us; and of the Gentiles is accepted for a Prophet of truth; but his own disciples call him the Son of God. He raiseth the dead, and healeth all manner of diseases. A Man of stature, somewhat tall and comely, with a very reverend countenance, such as the beholders may both love and fear; his hair, the colour of a filbert, full ripe, to his ears, whence downward it is more orient of colour, somewhat curling or waving about his shoulders; in the midst of his head, is a seam or partition of his hair, after the manner of the Nazarites; his forehead plain and delicate; his face without spot or wrinkle, beautified with a comely red; his nose and mouth exactly formed; his beard thick, the colour of his hair, not of any great length, but forked; his look, innocent; his eyes grey, clear and quick; in reproving, awful; in admonishing, courteous; in speaking, very modest and wise; in proportion of body, well shaped. None have ever seen him laugh, but many have seen him weep. A Man, for his beauty, surpassing the children of men.”

*From the Cover of the Christian Observer, for March 1810.*

As to the authenticity of this letter, and the accuracy of its contents, they are accompanied with all the documents of which the editor is possessed. It is an indisputable *fact*, however, that God was manifested in the flesh and dwelt among us. The incarnation of the Son of God is an inexplicable mystery. Thereby two natures, infinitely distant, are united in one person! What divine perfection is displayed in the wonderful constitution of the person of our glorious Mediator! *Unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given.* In obedience to the gospel call, let us believingly claim and use him as our own, for all the important purposes for which he is qualified, given and needed. Because he is the Lord our God and near kinsman Redeemer, let us gratefully acknowledge and take ourselves bound to keep all his commandments.

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WEDNESDAY, DEC. 26. 1810.

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THE CONSTITUTION, CHARACTER, AND DUTIES,  
OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

*"I will give you Pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."* JER. iii. 15.

(Continued from page 411.)

III. **T**HE sum of pastoral duty is the edification of the church.

This, you will recollect, is according to my arrangement, the third and last general division of the discourse. In the text, that minister, which God approves, and in mercy bestows upon a congregation of Christians, is represented as one "*which shall feed with knowledge and understanding.*" The edification of the Christian church is, in fact, the object of all gospel-ordinances. And to the attainment of this object, discipline as well as doctrine, is subordinate. The original words are more comprehensive and expressive, than the words "feed with knowledge." RoGNIM VeRaGNU DêGNah, is translated in the Septuagint, *Poimeuas poimainousi poimainontes, Shepherds who shall pasture you, performing the duties of a shepherd, with knowledge.* This embraces, the whole business of a shepherd about his flock, the whole care which he takes for their preservation and increase. And

the faithful shepherd must, of necessity, provide pastures for his flock; inspect, from time to time, their state; designate his own sheep from other herds; and exercise over them that power which is necessary for their welfare. The edification of the church cannot be promoted, with intelligence, by the pastor, unless he teach, inspect, seal, and rule, the several persons who are committed to his charge, *that he may watch for their souls as one who must give an account.* The duties of the gospel ministry, are, therefore, to preach the gospel—to examine the state of the congregation—to administer the sacraments—and to exercise ecclesiastical power for the preservation of order in the church.

1. The Pastor according to God's heart, preaches to his congregation the gospel of Christ. This is the food which he diligently provides for immortal souls. This gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Christ crucified is the substance of it. And this subject is far from being contracted. No, my brethren, it embraces whatsoever is useful for the perfection of the man of God. Preaching the gospel is an official exhibition of the system of grace in all its parts, accompanied with a direct offer of all its blessings to all sinners, and with fervent admonitions to receive and improve the offer, and the gift. God is exhibited to view in all his attributes. Man is described, as a creature, dependent upon God, rational and accountable, bound to know, love, and serve God perfectly, and labouring under the guilt and the pollution of sin, original and actual. The Redeemer is revealed in his person and offices, as he really is, God manifested in the flesh, our prophet, our priest, and our governor, the only mediator between God and man, and our only Saviour. Salvation, through him, is *offered*, to every one, without terms, and without conditions. And the pre-requisites to the *enjoyment* of happiness in heaven, are explained, and required of all: Faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, love to God, and holiness in heart, speech, and behaviour. Union with Christ by faith is manifested as the only ground of pardon and acceptance, the only source of grace and holiness, the only foundation of morality, and the only fountain of per-

fection, and felicity, and glory. The Spirit of God is exhibited in his divinity and excellency, and efficacy—the author of all motion, all beauty, and all glory. He is revealed as the Sanctifier and the Comforter. The doctrine of conversion is explained, and the necessity of conversion is urged upon every conscience. The Holy Scriptures are explained, and the truths of inspiration are illustrated and applied. The history, the prophecy, the precept, the doctrine, the promises, and the ordinances, yea, all the parts of the counsel of God, are displayed without fear and without partiality, by the faithful pastor. The order of God's providence is marked and proclaimed. The events which fulfil predictions, and the duties which, from the signs of the times, devolve upon Christians, are duly exhibited. The perversions of science, (falsely so called,) and the misrepresentations of Scripture, dangerous to the sentiments and morals of men, are detected and refuted. The order of the church of Christ is vindicated; and the history, of God's judgments upon the nations is unfolded. Men are taught to introduce the principles of Christianity into full operation, in all the various relations of life, and Jesus, the Saviour, is proclaimed as *Head over all things*, the governor, and the judge of the universe.

Such a subject, my brethren, as this gospel which we preach, so interesting, so various, so copious, and so magnificent, most assuredly requires the devotion to its service of talents and erudition. In order to qualify a man to preach this gospel, it is necessary that he have good sense, extensive information, and much experience. He must be a man of reading, of study, of piety, and of prayer, in order to become a workman who needeth not to be ashamed. Such a subject as this also requires that it be discussed plainly, solemnly, and fervently. Nor is it altogether unimportant to the edification of the church, whether the gospel be preached by the pastor to his congregation, by reading in their hearing, or by what is generally termed extempore speaking. To this question I have paid some attention. And, from the observations which I have been enabled to make, I conclude, that it is more agreeable to the mind of God, in the institution of the gospel

ministry, that the pastor should *speak* to his hearers, from the fulness of his understanding and his heart, upon a subject which he has thoroughly studied and digested, than that he should confine himself, entirely to the *recitation* of words which he has committed to memory, or to the *reading* of a manuscript which he holds before him. The voice of *nature*, the voice of *scripture*, and the voice of *experience*, are certainly, in favour of extempore sermonising. 1. This is the order of nature. Speech is the natural mode of communicating our thoughts to others. Writing is an artificial substitute for speech; and by its means we converse with those to whom the voice cannot reach. But when we address those who are present, it is more natural that we *speak* what we know, than that we either *repeat* what we have committed to memory, or *read* what we have written. 2. All scriptural example is upon the side of extempore preaching. Thus, the ministers of the synagogues taught and exhorted. Thus, all the apostles and evangelists practised. Thus did also our blessed Saviour. Having read his text, he “*closed the book,*” and gave the meaning. “*And he began to say unto them,*” &c. Luke iv. 20, 21. And, 3. Experience also recommends this example to our imitation. The most successful ministers, in the best days of the church, thus preached the gospel. The early reformers, in this as well as in other particulars, imitated the example of the primitive pastors; and the most eminently successful ministers in every age, did likewise. If at any time, signal awakenings have commenced under the ministry of one who habitually *read* sermons, it was found necessary to employ *preaching* extemporaneously, in cultivating the field and in gathering the harvest.

There are also many strong objections against the opposite method. It restrains the inventive faculty of the preacher; it diminishes his dependence upon God's Spirit, while actually engaged in his ministry; and it prevents those intellectual exertions, which, excited by the occasion, give birth to the most natural and forcible remarks. It is also calculated to impede the discharge of other duties. The Pastor of a congregation, who, during an ordinary life, serves one church, must

neglect parochial duties, if he is under the necessity of writing two sermons every week. This labour must likewise prevent study. In short, the habit of *reading* or *recitation* has gone far toward banishing discipline, and toward filling the church with a superficial ministry. It has had another injurious effect. For as action and re-action are equal and contrary in the moral, as well as in the physical world, it has driven the great body of the people away from the churches of the regularly educated ministry, to follow declaimers, who have nothing to recommend them but their natural and extemporaneous eloquence. Nor is this all. Those who cannot preach except by reading, have sometimes been placed in a very disagreeable predicament. If they are called upon, in providence, to preach, and have not a sermon in their pocket suitable to the occasion, they become justly liable to the terrible charge, Isa. lvi. 10. "*Dumb dogs; they cannot bark.*" Indeed, if the practice of *reading* were universally adopted in the public worship of the Lord's day, it would go far toward the total overthrow of the ordinance of the Christian ministry. As any one may write, so any one may read, and then there is no necessity for an ordained ministry to preach the gospel.

The apologies offered for this innovation have always appeared to me unsatisfactory. "There are some ministers who cannot correctly explain religion, unless they confine themselves to discourses previously written." I trust, my brethren, this apology will never be made for *your* pastor. I believe the principle of it is incorrect; and I venture to say, that every man who can write well, and can read well, would have spoken well, had he cultivated attentively the talent of speech. What! shall there be found men of talents for every other department that requires eloquence, except for the ministry of Christ's gospel? In the senate, and at the bar, men of information and of taste have listened with interest to extempore eloquence. But it has been said, "There are some congregations which feel so little interest in the great doctrines of religion, as to have no relish for discussions which are not recommended by correctness of composition:" a compliment which I hope shall never be paid by its pastor to this congre-



gation. I shall now dismiss this subject, after I shall have observed, that men of superior talents and acquisitions will certainly command respect; whatever be the mode in which they address their hearers; but these valuable endowments might be employed much more successfully in the service of the church, by cultivating an extempore elocution, than by reading sermons. Let the *Ambassador for Christ*, be thoroughly acquainted with his Bible; let him enrich his mind with various knowledge; let him correct his thoughts by frequent composition; let him accurately digest the subject about which he is to speak, and let him enter the pulpit and address his congregation in total dependence upon his God; let him pour out his heart, not *with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*, and his gain in spiritual effect will far counterbalance his loss in elegance of expression.

2. The pastor of whom God approves, is in duty bound, from time to time, to examine the religious state of his congregation.

This is the work of the Christian bishop. The duty of inspection, is in Scripture combined with that of feeding. And every pastor is, of course, a Bishop. 1 Pet. v. 2. "Feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof."\* Acts xx. 28. "The Holy Ghost hath made you overseers,† to feed the church of God." It is evidently, therefore, both the duty and the right of every minister to exercise in his pastoral charge that power of inspection, on account of which the name Bishop is bestowed upon him.

The abuse which the prelacy has made of the word Bishop, has not only cherished its Antichristian usurpation, but has also greatly contributed to banish from the church that religious inspection of congregations, which is necessary to their edification. That convenient interpretation which separates inspection from teaching, places the people beyond the reach of ecclesiastical rule, and soothes the indolent pastor in his total neglect of parochial duty. You will recollect, however,

\* *Episkopountes*, exercising the power of a Bishop.

† *Episkopous*, Bishops.

my brethren, that the pastor which God hath promised to give to his people, is one according to his own heart. He shall feed the flock of God, inspecting their religious state. He inquires, from time to time, into their progress in Christian knowledge. He examines, in the light of truth, the correctness of their views, their sentiments, and their experience. He takes account of their conduct in relation to all the practical duties of Christianity. He takes care to acquaint himself with the facts, which, more than any declarations, evidence their religious character. Personal interviews, family visitations, and public examinations, are employed with all possible frequency, for the edification of the church. And thus shall the pastor be enabled to divide rightly the word of truth, to give them meat in due season.

3. It is the duty of the Christian pastor to administer the sacraments of the New Testament, to the members of his church.

Sacraments are instituted by Christ, for the confirmation of our faith; and they manifest our separation from the world. These sacraments are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are seals as well as signs of divine grace to the heirs of salvation. But the administration of them is committed unto the hands of fallible men, who cannot judge the heart, or determine the state of any man. The rule of administration, therefore, is not our *opinions* of a man's state, but our *knowledge* of facts respecting the applicant. He is considered as in covenant with the church, who receives the seal, as the property of the church; who receives its mark, as a member of the church; who receives its peculiar badges of distinction; he, in fact, is necessarily considered as already enlisted in the cause, to whom the oath, the sacrament, is administered. The facts to be ascertained, in order to administer the sacraments aright, are therefore two. 1. Is the applicant within the covenant which exists between the visible church and God? 2. Considering the special character of the sacrament to be administered, is there no unfitness in the visible state of the applicant to the reception of the ordinance?

Children cast by providence within the bosom of the church

are, according to the dispensation of grace, within the covenant; they are church members. It is the birth-right of every one who is born of believing parents, or of whose parents one is a believer, to be a church member. Every bud upon the branch belongs to the good olive-tree, as well as the branch itself. Such children are to be baptized; because there is nothing in the nature of the ordinance unsuitable to infants. It seals and recognizes their visible covenant connexion, and it may seal their engrafting unto Christ. Children are inadmissible to the Lord's Supper; because in their admission, the special object of the ordinance could not be answered. They are incapable of that intellectual entertainment which commemorates the death of Christ.

Baptism has very improperly been called Christening: and this name cherishes the superstition which gave it birth. It is maintained by many that Baptism makes the subject both a church member and a Christian—that it regenerates. The Pastor according to God's heart, will not, however, my brethren, err so egregiously in this matter. It shall be his care and his delight, as it is his duty, to administer the seals of the covenant according to the divine direction. The adult who makes an intelligent profession of the gospel, whose conversation is exemplary, and joins the church in covenant with God, is admitted to baptism, is admitted to present his offspring in baptism, and is admitted to the Lord's table also. Anxious to present his flock perfect in Christ Jesus, the pastor warns them to conform to the primitive example which he himself adopts as the model of a regular church, enjoying its sacraments and its doctrines. Acts ii. 41, 42. *They that gladly received his word were BAPTIZED: And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in BREAKING OF BREAD, and in prayers.*

4. It is the duty of a Christian minister to exercise authority over his flock. This is necessary to their edification, and it is included in the exercise of the duties of a pastor. It is implied in *feeding* with knowledge. The Greek verb which we generally translate feed, and which comprehends the sum of pastoral duty, signifies to rule as well as to teach, and is

frequently so translated in the New Testament.\* The power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven is in the hands of every Christian minister. It has been committed to him by the Head of the church. The use of the key of *rule*, as well as that of *knowledge*, belongs to him. And in the exercise of spiritual power for the edification of the church, he must maintain order, examine scandals, call the disorderly to account, admonish and rebuke with all authority.

I have now done with the doctrinal discussion of this text. I have endeavoured to give you satisfactory evidence, that the Ministry of the Gospel is a permanent institution of Christ, secured to his church by his faithful covenant. I have given you a general view of the constitution, the character, and duties of that ministry, and I shall shortly proceed, according to appointment, to set apart by prayer and the laying on of the hands of this Presbytery, the candidate whom you have chosen to the ministry of this church. Until that work is accomplished, I shall postpone the application of my discourse. And may the Father of our spirits, from whom proceedeth every good and perfect gift, realize to you, in the pastor which you are about to receive, the promise of my text—*And I will give you Pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. Amen.*

After Prayer and singing a Psalm, *The Formula of Questions*, &c. was read, and the Candidate, having given to each question a satisfactory reply, was ordained by prayer and the “laying on of hands,” to the ministry of reconciliation, and settled to the pastoral office of the Congregation. The application of the Discourse immediately followed in the Charge, 1. to the Minister, and 2. to the Congregation.

### CHARGE TO THE MINISTER.

You stand now, my brother, before this congregation, in a relation in which you never stood before. You are their Pastor. You stand before the ministry of the church in a new relation. You are invested with authority as an ambassa-

\* *Poimainó*, Mat. ii. 6. Rev. ii. 27. and xix. 15. Homer frequently styles his kings, *Poimenes*.

dor of Jesus Christ. You stand before that God who is the witness of the solemnities of to-day, in a new relation. The Holy Ghost hath made you an OVERSEER. You occupy a post of honour, and a post of danger. You stand in a needy station. Permit me, to warn you of its difficulties; to admonish you of its duties; and to assure you in the discharge of these duties, of an all-sufficient help.

In doing this, I claim, over you, no prelatical authority. In office, and in power in the church of Christ, you are equal to any man upon earth. The Apostolical commission has been transmitted to you unimpaired. You are an ordained Minister. I claim over you no other power than what the actual preacher has a right to exercise over every hearer—the power of divine truth over the conscience.\* When we per-

\* Such was the power which the Prophets and Apostles possessed and exercised. In them it was extraordinary. They were not limited to expositions and applications of the written revelation. They were inspired to make new revelations. And who can lawfully resist inspiration? The gift of inspiration clothed the Apostles with an extraordinary character. This, and not any Episcopal or Archi-episcopal power, gave them authority over all the churches. At present, the scriptures of the New Testament, as well as those of the Old, possess authority over all the churches. The same authority did the Apostles possess in their day. They were miraculously qualified to guide the faith and the worship of Christians. These *divine gifts* are distinct from the *commission* which constituted them ministers. The commission is perpetually transmissible; but the extraordinary gifts, and the powers connected with them, have terminated. Indeed, while they continued, they were exercised only on extraordinary occasions. In common cases, the Apostles acted as mere Presbyters. Acts xiii. 1—3. and xiv. 23—27. and xvth chapter throughout. Never, but when acting by inspiration did, the Apostles assume any power over the ordinary ministry. Never, otherwise, did they claim superiority over Presbyters. Paul exercised the right of directing Timothy, and prescribing for Titus, for *He spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost*; and that was a warrant for the actions of these two Evangelists. Paul is long since dead; but the *authority* which he exercised over these ministers, remains, undiminished; not in the hands of an ambitious Prelate, but

vert that truth, our words are without authority, and resistance becomes virtue.

We have, to-day, my dear brother, presented you to this church, as the gift of God, for their edification. We hope you are the fulfilment of the promise of our Saviour to this people, *I will give you Pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.* In this hope, I repeat to you the words of the Apostle Peter, "Feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly: not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." You have indeed to encounter difficulties in your pastoral office, of which you are not yet fully aware.

There has been no opportunity for you hitherto to feel the difficulty of managing aright the spiritual concerns of a congregation. You have not felt the tender tie which binds the pastor to his flock. You have not felt, in all its exquisite anxieties, the responsibility of a watchman who must render unto God an account for souls. Under new circumstances, also, corruptions, which have been supposed extinguished, will again revive. Passions, which have been considered as destroyed, will be excited into fresh contentions. A multiplicity of undescribable anxieties, will put your temper to a severe trial. Your self-denial will be frequently put to the test. Your reputation will be assailed by enemies. Your words will be misunderstood, and your motives misrepresented. Your most disinterested exertions will often be undervalued. I

in the Holy Scriptures. The epistles are, to-day, as binding upon us as they were on Timothy and Titus. The Apostles themselves, in the very exercise of their superior power, and with their inspired lips, teach the doctrine of Presbyterian parity. 1 Pet. v. 1. "The *Presbyters* which are among you, I exhort, who am also a *Presbyter.*" 2. "Feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof"—as *Bishops, Episkopountes.* 3. "Neither as being lords over God's heritage."—Not as *masters of the clergy, katakurieuontes tón klérón.* 5. "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility." There are not, in fact, two creatures in the universe more dissimilar, than a *Christian Bishop* and a *Dignitary* of the church of England.



know your congregation. I have long known them. I love them and esteem them. They will endeavour to make you in every respect comfortable. But they are human. They are imperfect. And it is always difficult to direct and to control several active, inquisitive, high-spirited, and diversified minds, so as to effect one great object, the edification of all, and the good of the whole church of Christ. To these difficulties, is added the power of Satan, which you will have to resist in all its devices. *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* Amidst these trials and difficulties, you must, nevertheless, continue unwearied in the work whereunto you are now ordained.

Having in view the edification of the church, it becomes you to stir up the gift that is in you. It is your duty, my brother, to cultivate, by frequent and fervent devotion, close intimacy with your Redeemer. You must read and study the scriptures, as a sinner struggling for deliverance from the body of death—as a Christian growing in grace and in knowledge—as a critic weighing every expression, and thoroughly searching every subject—as a pastor, who, mindful of his people, collects diligently for their use.—You must read the scriptures as an ambassador for Christ, that you may understand and proclaim your Master's will. In preaching Christ crucified, and in administering the sacraments, exercise both diligence and faithfulness. And let not the ordinance of discipline be neglected in your ministry. Take heed to your life and conversation, and let them be such as become the gospel. Be an example to the flock in all love and humility. Be patient, be sober, be vigilant. Visit your people, and strive to know them as men and as Christians. Indulge not, either in the pulpit or in private, personal animosities. Reprove and rebuke with all authority. Give not heed to slanders, and listen not to the tale of the censorious. In discipline, be circumspect and prompt, meek, but decisive. Show to your people that you seek their salvation, “of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you.” And in the dis-

charge of these duties, put your trust in God. However great your difficulties and your duties, greater still is your support.

God is to the faithful minister an all-sufficient help. He is a father and a friend. He will bear you up in your afflictions. He will deliver you from danger. He will strengthen you for your labours. He pledges his faithfulness for your support. To the commission which he hath, through us, to-day delivered unto your hands, he hath added a promise, which you will never forget. It will inspire you with a confidence, which gives energy and dignity to your ministry. *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*  
Amen.

#### CHARGE TO THE CONGREGATION.

I feel, my brethren, more joy than I can express, in turning to you, toward the close of the public duties which have to-day devolved upon me, in order to make application to you of the text which I have selected for discussion. "And I," saith the Lord, "will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." For this object you have often sought; and you have often been disappointed. You have now succeeded. Behold the answer of your prayers. Your pastor is before you. Do you recognize him as the gift of God to you—as the ambassador of Christ—as the minister of your own choice? I know you do. And I charge you, in the name of the great God whose minister he is, that you continue to cherish toward him such a disposition.

He is entitled to your esteem. Many who have no sense of religion, esteem its ministers for their learning, their talents, their integrity, or their venerable deportment. Ignorant devotion also looks upon ministers with superstitious veneration. But we expect from you the exercise of a more intelligent respect for your pastor. Reverence your Lord and Saviour, embrace with love the work of salvation, and you will esteem highly for that work's sake he who preaches the gospel of peace. *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!*

Your minister also has a right to expect submission from you to the authority which he exerciseth over you. This power is for your own edification. *“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.”*

I need not, brethren, put you in mind that you are bound to support comfortably your minister and his family. When the church had called upon your liberality heretofore, she was not disappointed. And on this occasion, also, you have manifested the same disposition. You have made liberal provision for your pastor. Ministers deserve from their people a comfortable support. Spending their time, their talents, and their strength, for the good of the church, it is hard if the church will not provide for them. The labourer, yea, the common labourer, is worthy of his hire. And despicable indeed must that congregation be, which would not cheerfully communicate, until the minister who labours for their salvation could live as comfortably in the world as they do. I speak to every individual. You have not done your duty, until you have enabled your minister to live as well as you do. *“For God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.”*

Let me also charge you to be much engaged in prayer to God for your pastor. That Christian, who habitually supplicates the throne of grace for a blessing on the ministry, will profit by the word. Cultivate also pious conversation with him, and provoke him to instruct you, in private, as well as in public. Let your houses be open for his reception; and let your families be instructed to respect his visitations. Be manly, as well as pious. Indulge not toward him a censorious spirit. Trouble him not with tales of defamation. Join him, and support him in the maintenance of discipline, and in promoting the general interest of religion in the church. Confine not your exertions within the limits of your own congregation; but, with a noble generosity, co-operate with your pastor in every plan which is calculated to spread the

gospel, to provide a learned and pious ministry for the church, or to increase the number and strength of other congregations.

“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.” Amen.

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## NEW-YORK BIBLE SOCIETY.

—“*His word runneth very swiftly.*”

PSALMIST.

**T**HE Subscribers, desirous of extending the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, in which God has revealed the way of salvation to our lost and ruined race, and being persuaded that a more extensive distribution of them among persons who are destitute of them, will have, by the divine blessing, most beneficial effects, have formed themselves into a Society, to be called **THE NEW-YORK BIBLE SOCIETY**, of which the Constitution shall be as follows:

I. All copies of the Scriptures, distributed or published by this Society, shall be without notes, and of the version in common use among Protestants, in whose languages, respectively, it may be deemed useful to distribute or publish them.

II. Persons of every denomination may become Members.

III. Every Member shall pay five dollars at the time of subscribing the Constitution, and three dollars every year afterwards. Every person who shall pay fifty dollars in any single payment, shall be a Member during Life, without any further contribution.

IV. The business of the Society shall be conducted by twenty-four Managers, viz. a President, two Vice-Presidents, two Secretaries, a Treasurer, and eighteen others, who shall, after the first election, be chosen annually by ballot, by the Members present, on the first Monday in December. Seven of the Managers shall be a quorum for the transaction of all business, except the appropriation of money above the sum of

two hundred dollars, when thirteen shall be necessary: in either case, the President, or one of the Vice-Presidents and one of the Secretaries, shall be of the quorum. They shall make by-laws for regulating the business of the Society; carry on its necessary correspondence; and lay before the Society, at the Annual Meeting, an account of their transactions during the preceding year.

V. A special Meeting may be called at any time by the President at his own pleasure, or at the request of any three Members.

VI. No alteration of this Constitution shall be made without the concurrence of two-thirds of the Members present.

At a Meeting of the Members of the Society, on Monday, the 4th of Dec. 1809, the following gentlemen were elected Officers and Managers for the ensuing year:

Rev. Dr Livingston, President.

Rev. Dr Mason,

Rev. Mr Parkinson,

Rev. Dr Miller,

Rev. Dr M'Leod,

} Vice-Presidents.

} Secretaries.

D. L. Dodge, Treasurer.

Managers.

Rev. Dr Milledoler,

Rev. Dr Romeyn,

Rev. Mr Williams,

Rev. Mr M'Lay,

Rev. Mr Thatcher,

Mr Elisha Coit,

Mr Jno. Stoutenburgh,

Mr Robert Gosman,

Mr J. I. Margarum,

Mr Divie Bêthune,

David Gelston, Esq.

Mr John R. Murray,

Mr John P. Mumford,

Mr Zachariah Lewis,

Mr Leonard Bleeker,

Mr Andrew Gifford,

Henry Rutgers, Esq.

Mr John Mills.

*To the Rev. John Owen, Secretary to the British and Foreign Bible Society.*

Rev. Sir, New-York, 19 Dec. 1809.

WE are directed to announce to you, and through you to the British and Foreign Bible Society, that a number of persons

in this city, of different religious denominations, have recently formed themselves into an Association, under the name of *The New-York Bible Society*. The Constitution which they have adopted, and a List of their Officers and Managers, are herewith inclosed.

It is scarcely necessary to say, that the laudable example of the British and Foreign Bible Society has prompted to this measure; that we have heard, with the liveliest satisfaction, of the extensive operations, and of the signal success of that Institution; and that we shall consider ourselves as happy if we are enabled to tread, at an humble distance, in the same steps, to cherish a similar zeal, and to act in habitual dependence on that divine blessing which has so evidently attended its labours.

We shall consider it as a favour to receive from your Society all the information, counsel, or aid of whatever kind, which your superior advantages may enable you to give. Our resources are, as yet, small, and our operations, of course, for the present, must be confined within corresponding limits. But we hope, under the blessing of Him who alone can render means effectual, that both our resources and our zeal may increase; and that we may be employed as the instruments of communicating to thousands, who would not otherwise possess it, that precious Word which is *the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth*.

We are, Reverend Sir, with much respect for yourself, and with fervent prayers for the prosperity and growing usefulness of your excellent Institution,

Your Friends and obedient Servants,

SAMUEL MILLER, }  
ALEX. M'LEOD, } Secretaries.

*To the Rev. Doctors Miller and M'Leod, Secretaries to the  
New-York Bible Society.*

Rev. Sirs,

*Fulham, 20 Jan. 1810.*

I AM instructed to express to you the high degree of satisfaction, with which the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society received the intelligence, transmitted through your Let-



ter, of the 19th ult. that a Society had been formed in the City of New-York, under the designation of "*The New-York Bible Society.*"—The Committee, faithful to the spirit of that encouragement which they have held out to foreign nations, unanimously and cordially resolved to assist the funds of your infant Society by a donation of £100; and I am authorized to desire that you will draw upon our Treasurer for the amount of that donation.

The Committee observe, with the most lively emotions of joy and gratitude, the progress which the Holy Scriptures are making, under the auspices of Divine Providence, on their way to universal circulation. They consider those establishments, which are successively rising up in the United States of America, as peculiarly favourable to the accomplishment of that object; and they desire to concur with their American brethren in blessing God, who has counted them worthy to be engaged in so honourable and animating an employment.

Be encouraged, then, to proceed in that track upon which you have entered; and cherish a hope that God, in whose name you are associated, will cause that light, which you are imparting to the *eyes* of your fellow-creatures, to shine into their *hearts*, and thereby render you the happy instruments of making many—very many—wise unto salvation.

With cordial wishes and prayers for the prosperity of your Institution, I subscribe myself, on my own behalf and that of my Colleagues,

Rev. Sirs,

Your's, very faithfully,

JOHN OWEN, Secretary.

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## ON BIBLE SOCIETIES.

—"The word of God is not bound."

PAUL.

**P**ERHAPS some wellwishers to the Christian Selector, may think that too much relative to Bible Societies is admitted into the work, and occupies that room which might

have been more profitably devoted to something else. The editor will be sorry if this has offended a single individual. It would give him a high degree of satisfaction, were he able to please those who stept forward in aid of an attempt which he so anxiously wishes to succeed; and in favour of which he would willingly make very considerable sacrifices in order to contribute towards its ultimate establishment, in the hands of those whose attention to the subject is still most respectfully solicited.

Although he would be happy to see a greater variety of papers, suited to the declared design of the Christian Selector, crowding forward; yet, he thinks, few subjects, in point of intrinsic importance and present utility, are superior to Institutions for the circulation of the Holy Scriptures—Institutions contemplating nothing less, than that every nation under heaven shall, in their own languages, read the word of salvation. Bible Societies need only to be proposed, to reccommend themselves to the minds of men, by their perfect reasonableness and propriety;—and by the divine obligations they involve. If Providence favours, it is intended, by occasional statements of interesting facts, reported from different parts of the world, to give illustrations of the indisputable excellence of such Establishments. This, it is presumed, accords well with the avowed design of this Compilation; namely, “*to subserve the interests of religion and morality, agreeably to the word of God and the subordinate standards of the Church of Scotland.*”

In the present sceptical agitation of the human mind, when not only all creeds and confessions, but even the holy scriptures themselves, are decried by many, it is the duty of all presbyterian christians, of every denomination, to unite their earnest contendings for both the one and the other. Although no human composure, however excellent, is to be put on a level with the word of God; the only rule of faith and manners, yet explanatory subordinate standards are of great use in the practical application of that rule. They are a strong bulwark against error—tend to preserve the truth in its purity; and the professors of it in unity. Materially consonant

to scripture, and divinely authorized,\* such summaries are well calculated to discover the harmonious chain of scripture truth; and to defend it against the attacks of its adversaries. Let such, therefore, be held in due estimation. Expressive of grateful obligations to God and faithful ministers, in the happy enjoyment of her supreme and subordinate standards, the church may still, with great propriety, adopt her ancient language, relative to the revenue of her well beloved's vineyard: "*Thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.*"†

Among the constituent members of the *New-York Bible Society*, several at home cannot fail of being highly gratified to observe some of their own countrymen,—brethren in ecclesiastical office and church communion, occupying both higher and lower departments in that laudable Institution. Characters whose praise is in the churches: who, although they cannot extend the right hand of fellowship in the visible church, upon any other principles than those contained in that system which they have exhibited; yet cheerfully appreciate the talents and piety of their acquaintances; and, as opportunity offers, communicate with them as friends and christians. On common ground, they promptly combine their efforts with those of fellow christians, of every denomination, to promote the general cause of christianity. This is a practical proof that conscientious church members are not governed by that unsocial, illiberal disposition with which they are frequently so unjustly reproached. No; they alone, rightly understand what true christian liberality is, and act upon its principles.

Amidst the crimes and calamities of our age, it is cheering to behold such a wide field of utility, as that which divine Providence has opened to the British and Foreign Bible Society—such enterprize to enter it—such means and zeal. What christian would not esteem it at once his privilege and honour to co-operate in the good work, to the extent of his opportunity and power? The common enterprize is grand! The in-

\* Exod. xx. 3—17. Mat. vi. 9—13. 2 Tim. i. 13. Heb. v. 12: vi. 1, 2.

† Song xiii. 12.

dustry and harmony with which christians, of so many denominations, have united in prosecuting this important object, cannot fail of being attended with some good effect on all concerned. It is an approximation to that unity and brotherly love among christians which all good men so ardently desire. The novel sight of so many christian denominations, uniting with ardour to diffuse a knowledge of the common records of their faith, is peculiarly grateful in these days of division.

The Six Reports which the British and Foreign Bible Society has published, cannot fail to seize the attention and gladden the heart of every Christian who reads them. He will think he sees, at no great distance, the day when every region shall feel the influences of that charity for which Christendom has called. A well executed History of Bible Societies would be a most interesting and valuable work. Certainly not less so, than a record of that bloody strife which has long caused its terror in the land of the living. To the inspired oracles alone, are we indebted for an accurate and saving understanding of the mind of God. "*Behold the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.*"\*

One of these Bible Societies, declare "it to be, not only the object of their prayers, but their hopes, that before the present generation shall have passed away, the Holy Scriptures will be read by all the principal nations under heaven: and thus the way be opened for the fulfilment of the prediction of the Prophet, *the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.*" How glorious the prospect! nor, calculating upon the rapid success of the united efforts of Bible Societies, within these few years since the establishment of the parent Institution in London, do their hopes appear too sanguine or extravagant. Every christian must

\* 1 Kings xix. 11, 12.

sincerely wish, that the scattered streams of beneficence, now springing and descending from ten thousand sources, may quickly form that mighty river, which shall at last gladden and fertilize the nations of the earth.

The *revealed word of God* is, and ever has been, the source of what is most valuable in human knowledge, most salutary in human institutions, pure in human affections, comfortable in human condition, desirable and glorious in human expectations. It is the pearl of great price, to buy which, the merchant, in the parable, sold all that he had, and yet was rich. Without this, wealth is poor; and the treasures of ancient wisdom, and modern science, a mass of inanimate knowledge.

It was the most glorious consequence of the Reformation to draw forth the Book of God from the obscurity in which it had been kept, and by giving translations in the vernacular tongues, to throw open its treasures to the people, and thus also to secure them for ever against its future loss. It was the unsealing of the Fountain of Life, that its waters might freely flow for the healing of the people. To preserve the authority of this blessed Book unimpaired, and to enjoy the privilege of a free conscience, enlightened and imboldened by its truth, our forefathers suffered much. With this Volume in their hands, and its spirit in their hearts, they knew their God and did exploits. If there is now in the character and circumstances of their posterity any thing worth preserving, to this Book are we to trace the good which remains, and look also for the improvement which is to come.

He who came to *preach the gospel to the poor, to bind up the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind*, when he was reading this very passage out of the Book of God in the Jewish synagogue, added, *This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears*. Christians, you are called to re-accomplish this prediction, by sending the Word of Life, all simple and salutary as it is, wherever it may be wanted: to the dwellings of the poor and distressed; to the huts of the distant and solitary; to the chamber of the prisoner, and the cell of the criminal; where it

may ease the pressure of the captive's chains by breaking asunder his spiritual fetters; and last, though not least, to the bed-side of the old, whose eyes, dimmed with the rheum of age, can yet spell out its contents. With this Book in your hands, you go to the poor, not with the aspect of a partizan, to instill the notions of a sect, but in the fair and open guise of truth, which they cannot suspect, to make them an offering of charity in the spirit of love. You go as the Stewards of the greatest Benefaction, which mankind ever received; the Bequest of the Prince of Life, *who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might become rich.* Surely, if it is lawful to estimate the good to be anticipated from this labour of love by the evils which it avoids, or the inconveniences and objections which it obviates, we may hail the day, when the word of God, entirely unobstructed by the passions of men, shall run and be glorified in its course.

When we consider what it has cost to establish the religion of Jesus in the world, the miracles, the sorrows, and at last the life of the Lord of glory, the labours and sufferings of the apostles, the privations of the early christians, the blood of innumerable martyrs, and the prayers and studies, the preaching and laborious ministry of so many great and good men in past ages; and at the same time reflect, that, in consequence of the discovery of the art of printing, we have it now in our power to communicate, at the easiest rate, the knowledge of a gospel, for which so much has been expended; it seems almost an insult to ask, if there is a disciple in Christendom, who can refuse his aid to such a charity. The request would indeed appear impertinent, if the consequences were less vast, or even less than infinite. Considering too, the zeal, with which proselytes have been made to every sect in history; the travels of missionaries to the extremities of the earth; the industry and generosity with which error itself has been propagated; and the funds, which have been accumulated, for the service of Christianity in many of its artificial forms, its friends are almost ashamed to importune for contributions to circulate



the simple word of God. But the very simplicity and greatness of the object forbids them to remain silent.

If it be considered that the Holy Scriptures are the most invaluable of treasures, and, next to the divine Saviour of mankind, of whom they testify, the greatest gift that the Maker and Judge of all men has ever made to the world;—that, secure in their own intrinsic excellence, they have stood the test of ages, defied the combinations of their enemies, and, to this day, maintain, with increasing conviction, their exalted character, as the Revelation of the Most High God, the rule of faith and practice; the sovereign antidote of evil; and the unerring guide to peace, and a blessed immortality;—little need be said to engage Christians in the support of Bible Societies, the object of which is, the circulation of these sacred oracles.

Institutions which, considering the magnificence of their design, the extent of their object, the incalculable good they are now doing, and which, under the blessing of the Almighty, they may continue to promote, to the unspeakable happiness of the most distant generations, can never be too highly admired, nor too warmly supported.

The united efforts of these happy Institutions, strengthen the faith of anxious Christians, and inspire them with the comfortable assurance, that in the midst of the dreadful commotions, which now agitate the nations and kingdoms of this world, the great Head of the church is, after all, the *Universal Monarch*; and shews himself most active in those very events, which excite the most gloomy apprehensions in the breasts of feeble believers.—*Great is he, and his name is great in might.*

Amidst the awful desolations which are now changing the face of the world,—desolations by which thrones have been overturned, torrents of blood shed, all the bonds of Society torn asunder, and the triumphs of ambition raised upon the wreck of great nations;—it is encouraging to the reflecting mind to behold an Empire rising conspicuously in view, of a very different description; whose prosperity will be likely to ensure to its subjects the divine protection and blessing. In

proportion as it prevails, the sword of contention will be sheathed, the wounds of civil discord healed, and nations united in one comprehensive bond of unity and peace. In uniting our efforts to circulate the Word of Life throughout the world, in the common language of every nation, let us cherish the hope of hastening the advent of that glorious day, "*when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as waters cover the sea.*"

May the meetings of Bible Societies be blessed with much joyful intelligence, from every quarter of the world; announcing that their exertions do increasingly prosper; that the darkness is passing away; that the glorious light of the gospel is shining brighter and brighter; and that to the many thousands who reside in the cottages of poverty, and whom God, in his inscrutable wisdom, feeds with the bread of tears, beauty is given for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

*See Appendix to the Sixth Report, &c.*

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### LIBERALITY OF SENTIMENT.

— "*Why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*" PAUL.

**L**IBERALITY of Sentiment, is that generous disposition, which a man feels towards another, who is of a different opinion from himself; or, as one defines it; "that generous expansion of mind, which enables it to look beyond all petty distinctions of party and system, and, in the estimate of men and things, to rise superior to narrow prejudices." As liberality of sentiment is often a cover for error, and scepticism on the one hand, and as it is too little attended to by the ignorant and bigotted on the other, the reader has here a view of it by a masterly writer.

"A man of liberal sentiments must be distinguished, from him who hath *no religious sentiments at all.*" Deeply impressed with unfeigned love to God, to man, and to truth; but

humbly conscious of his own liability to mistake, "he is one who hath seriously and effectually investigated, both in his Bible and on his knees, in public assemblies and in private conversations, the important articles of religion. He hath laid down principles, he hath inferred consequences; in a word, he hath adopted sentiments of his own.

"He must be distinguished also from that tame undiscerning domestic among good people, who, though he has sentiments of his own, yet has no judgment to estimate the worth and value of one sentiment beyond another.

"Now a generous believer of the christian religion, is one who will never allow himself to try to propagate his sentiments by the commission of sin. No collusion, no bitterness, no wrath, no undue influence of any kind, will he apply to make his sentiments receivable; and no living thing will be less happy for his being a christian. He will exercise his liberality, by allowing those who differ from him as much virtue and integrity as he possibly can.

"There are, among a multitude of arguments to enforce such a disposition, the following worth our attention.

"First, We should exercise liberality in union with sentiment, because of the different *capacities, advantages, and tasks* of mankind. Religion employs the *capacities* of mankind, just as the air employs their lungs and their organs of speech. The fancy of one is lively; of another dull. The judgment of one is elastic; of another feeble, a damaged spring. The memory of one is retentive; that of another is treacherous as the wind. The passions of this man are lofty, vigorous, rapid; those of that man crawl, and hum, and buz, and, when on wing, sail only round the circumference of a tulip. Is it conceivable that capability, so different in every thing else, should be all alike in religion? The *advantages* of mankind differ. How should he who hath no parents, no books, no tutor, no companions, equal him whom Providence hath gratified with them all; who, when he looks over the treasures of his own knowledge, can say, This I had of a Greek, that I learned of a Roman; this information I acquired of my tutor, that was a present of my father; a friend gave me this branch

of knowledge, an acquaintance bequeathed me that? The *tasks* of mankind differ; so I call the employments and exercises of life. In my opinion, circumstances make great men; and if we have not Cæsars in the state, and Pauls in the church, it is because neither church nor state are in the circumstances in which they were in the days of those great men. Push a dull man into a river, and endanger his life, and suddenly he will discover invention, and make efforts beyond himself. The world is a fine school of instruction. Poverty, sickness, pain, loss of children, treachery of friends, malice of enemies; and a thousand other things, drive the man of sentiment, the christian, to his Bible, and, so to speak, bring him home to a repast with his Benefactor, God. Is it conceivable that he, whose young and tender heart is yet unpractized in trials of this kind, can have ascertained and tasted so many religious truths as the sufferer has?

“ We should believe the christian religion with liberality, in the second place, because *every part of the christian religion inculcates generosity*. Christianity gives us a character of God; but, my God! what a character does it give! GOD IS LOVE. Christianity teaches the doctrine of Providence; but what a providence! *Upon whom doth not its light arise!* Is there an animalcule so little, or a wretch so forlorn, as to be forsaken and forgotten of his God? Christianity teaches the doctrine of redemption; but the redemption of whom!—of all tongues, kindreds, nations, and people: of the infant of a span, and the sinner of a hundred years old: a redemption generous in its principle, generous in its price, generous in its effects; fixed sentiments of Divine munificence, and revealed with a liberality for which we have no name. In a word, the illiberal christian always acts contrary to the spirit of his religion; the liberal man alone thoroughly understands it.

“ Thirdly, We should be liberal, because no other spirit is *exemplified* in the infallible guides whom we profess to follow. I set one Paul against a whole army of uninspired men: “ *Some preach Christ of good will, and some of envy and strife. What then? Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. One eateth all things, another eateth herbs; but*

why dost THOU judge thy brother? *We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*" We often enquire, What was the doctrine of Christ, and what was the practice of Christ. Suppose we were to institute a third question, Of what TEMPER was Christ?

"Once more: We should be liberal as well as orthodox, because truth, especially the truths of christianity, *do not want any support* from our illiberality. Let the little bee guard its little honey with its little sting; perhaps its little life may depend a little while on that little nourishment. Let the fierce bull shake his head, and nod his horn, and threaten his enemy, who seeks to eat his flesh, and wear his coat, and live by his death: poor fellow! his life is in danger; I forgive his bellowing and his rage. But the christian religion, —is that in danger? and what human efforts can render that true which is false, that odious which is lovely? Christianity is in no danger, and therefore it gives its professors life and breath, and all things, except a power" against the truth.

"In fine, liberality in the professors of religion is a *wise and innocent policy*. The bigot lives at home; a reptile he crawled into existence, and there in his hole he lurks a reptile still. A generous christian goes out of his own party, associates with others, and gains improvement by all. It is a Persian proverb, *A liberal hand is better than a strong arm*. The dignity of christianity is better supported by acts of liberality than by accuracy of reasoning; but when both go together, when a man of sentiment can clearly state and ably defend his religious principles, and when his heart is as generous as his principles are inflexible, he possesses strength and beauty in an eminent degree."

"Sadly hath the anger of the Lord divided his people.— No doubt each party extol themselves as purest, and are too ready to wipe their mouth, and say, *We have done no wickedness*; readier to spy the mote in their neighbour's eye, than the beam in their own. God indeed chargeth his people to withdraw from them that walk disorderly; but none of our divisions seem to be managed with due fear and trembling: we rather

strive to say, than to *do more than others*: we are too much disposed to love others as they bear *our* image, and are of *our* party, rather than as they bear the image of Christ in holiness of life; as if the ties of faction were stronger than those of religion: an itch to be the reverse of those we do not join with, often leads us into practical blunders.—Amidst all our contests, we sadly harmonize in losing spiritual liveliness, in neglect of an holy and humble conversation; and of wrestling with God, till the *Spirit be poured out from on high*. Lord, save the fearers of thy name from ignorance, pride, prejudice, and want of brotherly love; let none of them oppose thy Spirit and grace to thy righteousness and truth: what, in the controversies of these times, tends to thy honour, or their immortal interests, teach thou them; dispose them to pray and confer together on spiritual things, in which they are agreed, that they may come to *see eye to eye*, in the truths in which they differ; let none of them hazard their souls to hear Heathenish poison, or Arminian stuff, instead of the gospel of Christ; nor associate with such as privately teach it: let none of them dare to communicate with such persons as they should be ashamed to sit with at a public inn: let none of them dare to acknowledge those for ministers, who have no proper evidence of concern for souls, and no just token of a mission from Christ; for these, however they may tickle their fancy, and move their passions, *shall not profit this people at all*: let none of them swear sinful oaths; nor lawful bonds which they do not understand; and which they make no conscience to keep, except as a badge and tie to a particular party: let none of them separate from corrupt ministers, without studying to separate from corrupt lusts and practices: let none of them contemn brethren; and far less, in Jesus' name, deliver precious saints or ministers to Satan, because their head is not of the very same size with theirs.—Alas! how often are the least intelligent the hottest in a controversy! these who implicitly take up notions, the most rigid in requiring others to receive their sentiments! how often are the most noisy disputants but very ordinary practisers! and how often too are persons very blameless in



their life, extremely careless about the truths relative to the order of Jesus' church! Woes me, will we rob God upon the one hand or the other, and so bring a curse upon our nation? But, O thrice happy church triumphant, when the redeemed of the Lord, out of every party, justly called christian, shall for ever sweetly concur in the celestial worship, and *prefer one another in love!* O for a *double portion* of their insight into divine truth; of their self-denial, love to the Lamb, and to one another!

*See Theol. Misc. & Brown's Christian Journal.*

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### ON CHURCH OFFICERS, CHIEFLY DEACONS.

*“Let all things be done decently and in order.”*

PAUL.

JESUS CHRIST sits “upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth, even for ever.” He “has, in every age of the world, wisely adapted the external dispensations of religion to the state of his church. Religion itself, as an inward principle, is every where the same: Enoch and Abraham, Moses and Paul, were “*all made to drink into one Spirit.*” But the forms of religious worship, which the saints enjoyed, were exceedingly different. None, however, despised that dispensation under which divine love had placed him. Each of them submitted to it with reverence.

The New Testament dispensation, it must be confessed, exceeds in glory, and has a superior claim upon the attention of christians. It is simple and appropriate, and is to remain until “*time shall be no longer.*” Ah! what disciple of Jesus shall despise it? All its ordinances are conducive to piety. Christianity, in its doctrines and institutions, is one connected system. No part can be altered, without diminishing the beauty of the whole. Error in sentiment produces error in practice, and every deviation from truth tends to absolute apostacy.

Christian ministers are bound to the preservation of eccle-

siastical order, as well as to the maintenance of evangelical doctrine.—It is the duty of every disciple to know the law of the house of God. But there is a remarkable inattention, even among pious people, to this subject. Nor does the writer expect to correct the evil. The subject is unpopular—beneath the notice of those who think themselves already sufficiently wise.”

Under the Old Testament, the ministry of the tabernacle and temple was conducted by the High Priest, the Priests, and Levites. The ministry of the New Testament Church is committed to Pastors, Ruling Elders, and Deacons. The received principles of the Reformed Church of Scotland on this head, are exhibited in her *First and Second Books of Discipline*, particularly in the *Second*.\*

CHAP. II. “As in the Civil policy, the whole commonwealth consisteth in them that are governors, or magistrates; and them that are governed, or subjects; so in the policy of the Kirk, some are appointed to be rulers, and the rest of the members thereof to be ruled, and obey according to the word of God, and inspiration of his Spirit, always under one Head and chief Governor, Jesus Christ.

“Again, the whole policy of the Kirk consisteth in three things, *viz.* in Doctrine, Discipline, and Distribution. With doctrine is annexed the administration of sacraments; and, according to the parts of this division, ariseth a threefold sort of officers in the Kirk, *to wit,* of Ministers or Preachers, Elders or Governors, and Deacons or Distributers: all these may be called by a general word, Ministers of the Kirk.”——

“In the New Testament, and time of the Evangel, he,” [Jesus Christ] “hath used the ministry of the Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Doctors, in administration of the word; the Eldership for good order, and administration

\* The Second Book of Discipline was agreed upon in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1578; inserted in the registers of Assembly, 1581; sworn to in the National Covenant; revived and ratified by the Assembly, 1638, and by many other Acts of Assembly: and according to which, the Church government was established by law, 1592 and 1640.

of discipline; the Deaconship to have the care of the ecclesiastical goods.

“Some of these ecclesiastical functions are ordinary, and some extraordinary or temporary. There be three extraordinary functions, the office of the Apostle, of the Evangelist, and of the Prophet, which are not perpetual, and have now ceased in the Kirk of God.”——

“There are four ordinary offices or functions in the Kirk of God; the office of the Pastor, Minister or Bishop; the Doctor;\* the Presbyter or Elder; and the Deacon.

“These offices are ordinary, and ought to continue perpetually in the Kirk, as necessary for the government and policy thereof; and no mo offices ought to be received or suffered in the true Kirk of God, established according to his word.”

CHAP. VIII. “The word Deacon sometimes is largely taken, comprehending all them that bear office in the ministry, and spiritual function in the Kirk. But now, as we speak, it is taken only for them, unto whom the collection and distribution of the alms of the faithful, and ecclesiastical goods, doth belong. The office of the Deacons is an ordinary and perpetual ecclesiastical function in the Kirk of Christ.”——

“Their office and power is to receive, and to distribute the whole ecclesiastical goods unto them, to whom they are appointed. This they ought to do, according to the judgment and appointment of the Presbyteries or Elderships (of the which the Deacons are not members) that the patrimony of the Kirk and poor be not converted to private men’s uses, nor wrongfully distribute.”

CHAP. IX. —“Under the patrimony we comprehend all things given, or to be given, to the Kirk and service of God;”——“together with the continual oblations of the faithful;”——“all such things, as by law or custom—are possessed by the Kirk.”——

“The goods ecclesiastical ought to be collected and distri-

\* From the second paragraph of this chapter, it appears that the Doctor’s office is considered as of the same sort, and included in that of the Minister or Preacher.

buted by the Deacons, as the word of God appoints, that they who bear office in the Kirk be provided for, without care or solicitude. In the Apostolical Kirk, the Deacons were appointed to collect and distribute what sum soever was collected of the faithful, to distribute unto the necessity of the saints. These collections were not only of that which was collected in manner of alms, as some suppose, but of other goods, moveable and immoveable, of lands and possessions, the price whereof was brought to the feet of the Apostles.

“This office continued in the Deacon’s hands, who intromitted with the whole goods of the Kirk, ay and while the estate thereof was corrupted by Antichrist, as the ancient records bear witness.”

CHAP. XII. — “As for the Kirk-rents in general, we desire that order be admitted and maintained amongst us, that may stand with the sincerity of God’s word, and practice of the Kirk of Christ.” — “The ecclesiastical goods to be uplifted, and distributed faithfully to whom they appertain; and that by the ministry of the Deacons, to whose office properly the collection and distribution thereof belongs; that the poor may be answered of their portion thereof; and they of the ministry live without care and solicitude: as also, the rest of the treasure of the Kirk may be reserved and bestowed to their right uses.

“If these Deacons be elected with such qualities as God’s word craves to be in them, there is no fear that they shall abuse themselves in their office, as the profane Collectors did before. Yet, because their vocation appeareth to many to be dangerous, let them be obliged, as they were of old, to give a yearly account to the Pastors and Eldership; and, if the Kirk—think expedient, let Cautioners be obliged for their fidelity, that the Kirk-rents nowise be dilapidate. And, to the effect this order may take place, it is to be provided, that all other Intromitters with the Kirk-rent, Collectors general or special; whether it be by appointment of the Prince, or otherwise, may be denuded of further intromission therewith, and suffer the Kirk-rents, in time coming to be wholly intromitted by the ministry of the Deacons.”

The reader may consult also, the *First Book of Discipline*, written only a little while before the *Second*, but does not appear to have ever been so fully sanctioned.

The same ecclesiastical officers are held forth in the *Form of Presbyterian Church Government, and of Ordination of Ministers*; agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, with Commissioners from the Church of Scotland, as a part of the Covenanted Uniformity in Religion, betwixt the Churches of Christ in the three Kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland; and approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1645.

*Officers of the Church.* “The officers which Christ hath appointed for the edification of his Church, and the perfecting of the Saints, are, some extraordinary, as Apostles, Evangelists, and Prophets, which are ceased. Others ordinary and perpetual, as Pastors, Teachers,\* and other Church Governors, and Deacons.”

*Deacons.* “The Scripture doth hold out Deacons, as distinct officers in the Church; † whose office is perpetual; ‡ to whose office it belongs not to preach the word or administer the sacraments, but to take special care in distributing to the necessities of the poor.” ||

*Officers of a particular Congregation.* “For officers in a single Congregation, there ought to be one at least, both to labour in the word and doctrine, and to rule. § It is also requisite that there should be others to join in government. ¶ And likewise it is requisite that there be others to take special care for the relief of the poor.” \*\*

The same orders are also recognized in the *Directory for Church Government*;—agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, with the assistance of Commissioners from the Church of Scotland.

In addition to the above quotations from the subordinate standards of the Church, the following extracts from three respectable modern writers are laid before the reader. As it is to principles, and not to persons, that attention is requested, the names of these authors are here withheld. They

\* Under the head *Teacher or Doctor*, the venerable Assembly define the Teacher's office as distinct from the Pastor's; nevertheless, when there is but one minister in a particular congregation, they injoin him to perform, so far as he is able, the whole work of the ministry. Some think, however, that the names of pastor, teacher, bishop, and presbyter, are but different names for one and the same office.

† Phil. i. 1. 1-Tim. iii. 8. ‡ 1-Tim. iii. 8—15. Acts vi. 1—4. || Acts vi. 1—4, &c. § Prov. xxix. 18. ¶ 1-Tim. v. 17. Heb. xiii. 7. ¶ 1 Cor. xii. 28. \*\* Acts vi. 2, 3.



belonged to two different presbyterian denominations. One of them is still alive. The other two, though something discordant in this imperfect state, are, there is reason to believe, now come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

The first of the authors, here alluded to, teaches, that the ordinary officers of the Christian Church "are divided into BISHOPS, OVERSEERS or ELDERS, and DEACONS. Bishops or elders are subdivided into *pastors*, or *elders that labour in word and doctrine*, and *elders that only rule well.*"—"Thus we have three distinct kinds of Church officers, PASTORS; RULING ELDERS; and DEACONS. The office of the first including the power of the two latter; and that of the second the power of the last, but not the distinguishing power of the first; and the office of deacons includes no power peculiar to either of the two preceding offices."—"The divine appointment of DEACONS in the Christian Church is beyond dispute."\*—"Their work is to manage the temporal affairs of the congregation, relative to the table of the poor, the table of ministers, and the table of the Lord."†—"No other work is annexed to their office in scripture."—"There is no hint in scripture, that the offices of RULING ELDER and DEACON were designed to be *temporary*. Both of them were appointed on moral grounds and necessities, respecting every church and period. The rules concerning them both are to be observed till the end of the world."‡—"No congregation can, therefore, answer to Jesus Christ, for *dropping* of deacons, any more than for the *dropping* of ruling elders."—"It is both sinful and shameful that these officers, the divine institution of which is so plainly marked in scripture, should be so often wanting in christian congregations, under pretence that ruling elders have their whole power resident in them."

The second author writes; "The standing officers of the New Testament church are the Pastors and Elders."—"To rule is common to both, and is assigned to them exclusively; but to labour in the word and doctrine, as well as to rule, belongs only to one."—"To suffer any one of these officers to fall into disuse, much more to set them aside as improper or unnecessary, is to insult the royal authority of Jesus Christ, the only Lawgiver to his people. The deacon is an officer whose business is to take care of the poor. But his existence seems to depend upon certain circumstances. Time was, even after the church had become a regular organized body, when

\* Acts vi 1—6. 1 Tim. iii. 8—11. Rom. xii. 8. 1 Cor. xii. 28. Phil. i. 1. † Acts vi. 2. 1 Cor. xii. 28. ‡ 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14.



no such order of men existed. It belonged originally to the apostles and elders to watch over the concerns of the poor. But their wants and number became so great, that those officers found it no longer possible to "serve tables," and discharge their other engagements. This is the reason of the command which they issued;—"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you, seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this matter."\* That the office of deacons was discharged by the apostles and elders, cannot be reasonably doubted. The proof is clear and full.† —"The office of the deacon, therefore, seems to depend upon the number and wants of the poor in particular churches. When their number and necessities are such, as the pastor and elders can attend to, without neglecting their more important duties, we can see no need for a separate order. The circumstances which required and attended the first appointment of deacons, seems fully to warrant this opinion.—But the number and necessities of the poor, which, in the beginning, required the separate order of the deacon, vary almost in every society, and, in some, have no existence at all. The same argument cannot apply to elders; for the reasons upon which the office of the elder, as well as that of the pastor, is built, are unalterable; on which account it was less necessary that the scripture should record any thing concerning the commencement of the eldership: and it is not possible to shew that they did not exist at the day of pentecost, when the New Testament church was completely organized."

The *third* teaches; "The officers of the New Testament church, are of three sorts, viz. ministers of the word, ruling elders, and deacons."—"The deacon's office respects the temporal concerns of the church, and is called serving of tables.‡ He is to provide the bread and wine for the communion, and assist in the services of the Lord's table, and especially to look after the maintenance of the poor of the church."—"Deacons were the first officers chosen by the New Testament church, when founded by the apostles."—"Their business is to give timely information concerning the necessities of the poor, to the church session, that provision may be made for them; and also to distribute to them carefully, honestly, and in simplicity, without respect of persons. They ought to attend to the wants of orphans, and such as are destitute of understanding to provide for themselves. Neither preaching the word, nor bearing rule in the government of the church, belong to their office. As the powers of the deacon's office, are implied in the ruling elder's, it is a question

\* Acts vi. 1, 2, 3.

† Acts iv. 34, 35.

‡ Acts vi. 2.

whether, in every church, the office of deacon, as distinct from the elder, is absolutely necessary."

So much for the standing officers of the Christian Church. The reader's attention to the manner in which these ecclesiastical officers are vested with their respective powers, is next solicited. Excepting the *second* author, who speaks not on the subject, the same authorities above quoted are again produced.

#### SECOND BOOK OF DISCIPLINE.

CHAP. III. "Vocation or calling is common to all that should bear office within the Kirk, by which qualified persons are promoted to any spiritual office within the Kirk of God."

—"This ordinary and outward calling hath two parts, election and ordination. Election is the choosing out of a person or persons, most able, to the office that vakes, by the judgment of the eldership, and consent of the congregation, to which the person or persons shall be appointed."—"Ordination is the separation and sanctifying of the person appointed, to God and his Kirk, after he is tried and found well qualified. The ceremonies of ordination are fasting, earnest prayer, and imposition of hands of the eldership."

CHAP. VIII. "The deacon ought to be called and elected, as the rest of the spiritual officers, of the which election was spoken before."

See likewise, the *First Book of Discipline*. That summary of church policy judges imposition of hands at ordinations unnecessary, even in the institution of the Ministry.

#### FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

*Doctrinal part of Ordination, &c.*—"No man ought to take upon him the office of a minister of the word without a lawful calling.\* Ordination is always to be continued in the Church.† Ordination is the solemn setting apart of a person to some public church-office.‡ Every minister of the word is to be ordained by imposition of hands, and prayer with fasting, by those preaching presbyters to whom it doth belong."—"The power of ordering the whole work of ordination is in the whole presbytery."—"He that is to be ordained minister—is to be examined, and approved of by those by whom he is to be ordained."—"Preaching presbyters, orderly associated, either in cities or neighbouring villages, are those to whom the imposition of hands doth pertain, for those congregations within their bounds respectively."\*\*

See also the *Directory for Church Government*.

\* John iii. 27. Rom. x. 14, 15. Jer. xiv. 14. Heb. v. 4. † Titus i. 5. ‡ 1 Tim. v. 21, 22. § Num. viii. 10, 11, 14, 19, 22. ¶ Acts vi. 3, 5, 6. || 1 Tim. v. 22. Acts xiv. 23. xiii. 3 § 1 Tim. iv. 14. ¶ 1 Tim. iii. 7, 10. v. 22. \*\* 1 Tim. iv. 14.

The *first* author formerly quoted, after stating a variety of occasions at which hands were imposed, adds, "Levites under the Old Testament, and Ministers under the New, are set apart to their office, by laying on of hands;"\*—that the ordination of *ruling elders* "ought to be transacted in much the same manner, as that of *teaching elders* or pastors;"—and relative to deacons, that "their election and ordination ought not, in its manner to differ from that of elders."—the first deacons "the apostles ordained by prayer and laying on of hands."†

The *third* author observes, "Laying on of hands was a solemn usage both under the Old and New Testament dispensation;"—"at the ordination of church officers this took place."—"The reasons for the imposition of hands do not now exist, except at the setting apart of men to the ministerial office. All the other kinds of the imposition of hands ought now to cease."

In the *Christian Selector*, an able writer proves, "that imposition of hands at ordinations is a scriptural appointment—is the ordinance of God;"‡—"that the whole work of ordination—is included in the direction, "*Lay on hands*;"§—"that Office power is expressly said to have been conferred—with imposition of hands;¶—"that the doctrine of "*laying on of hands*," is one of the *principles of the doctrine of Christ*, a fundamental doctrine in the perfect edifice of Christian knowledge;||—"is the divinely appointed *model* for setting apart, to the pastoral office,—candidates duly qualified for the ministry of reconciliation."\*\*

A variety of sentiments relative to the work, election, and ordination of the standing officers of the Christian Church, are now before the reader. In several respects, these sentiments are somewhat discordant with each other, and with common usage in the church. The given extracts abundantly show, that all these different parts of our subordinate standards uniformly teach, that, agreeably to Christ's appointment, the whole ministry of the New Testament church is committed to three distinct kinds of ordinary and permanent officers,—*pastors, ruling elders, and deacons*. Passages bearing more fully on the deacon's office are selected, because, in that respect, the presbyterian church ~~is~~ now practically very inattentive. In many congregations deacons do not exist.

\* Num. viii. 10. Acts xiii. 3. 1 Tim. iv. 14. † Acts vi. 1—6. ‡ Pages 366—371. 401—403. § 1 Tim. v. 22. ¶ 1 Tim. iv. 14. || Heb. vi. 2.  
\*\* Acts xiii. 2, 3.

From these extracts the reader will observe, that, whilst some think the deacon's office is temporary and precarious, depending upon the number and wants of the poor; others maintain, that it respects the whole ecclesiastical goods, patrimony, rents, or temporal concerns of the church;—that although deacons are not necessary to the regular organization of the church judicative; as neither her doctrine, worship, government, nor discipline, fall within their official jurisdiction; yet they are needful in order to put the constitution of a regularly organized church into full operation. Even those congregations, which set aside, as unnecessary, that divinely instituted rank of church officers, are obliged to appoint a different order, *Congregational Managers*, in their place; an order, however personally respectable, unfounded in scripture, unknown among the institutions of the presbyterian church; and, itself unconstitutional, natively productive of still farther degrees of anarchy in her government. Independent of either session, presbytery, or synod, these *officers* are appointed and directed by the *Congregation*; and to the *Congregational Meeting* only, they are amenable for their official conduct.

It is readily admitted; yea, explicitly maintained, as taught by the author first quoted, not only that the deacon's office is included in the ruling elder's, but also that *both* the deacon's and ruling elder's offices are included in the pastor's. It is refused, however, that the powers of the ruling elder supersede the necessity for deacons, any more than that the powers of the pastor exclude the need for ruling elders. No order of servants in Christ's house can rightfully exercise their powers to the exclusion of their fellow-servants. All are engaged to their respective works by the same authority. The apostles were the primary depositories of power; and after them, teaching elders are competent to the management of all ecclesiastical concerns. Ruling elders are the constitutional assistants of the ministry in government, and deacons the assistants of both ministers and elders, in managing the temporal affairs of the church. The scriptures declare the church's need for deacons;\* their qualifications;† the manner of their election and ordination;‡ and the *fact* of their existence in organized churches.¶ Which of these opinions are best founded, and tend most to the honour of Christ, and edification of his body mystical, is referred to the determination of competent judges.

The manner in which *ruling elders* and *deacons* should be ordained to their respective offices, does not appear to attract much attention. The common practice is by an appropriate

\* Acts vi. 1. † 1 Tim. iii. 8. ‡ Acts-vi. 5, 6. ¶ Philip. i. 1.

prayer, without either fasting or imposition of hands; and sometimes on the sabbath. The church standards do not minutely determine the mode. The *first* author says, it "ought to be transacted in much the same manner, as that of *teaching elders*." The first deacons, he says, were "ordained by prayer and laying on of hands." Some think, however, that upon the first deacons, after their ordination, the apostles laid their hands, in order to communicate the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost. The *third* author says, "the reasons for the imposition of hands do not now exist, except at the setting apart of men to the ministerial office." He states not these reasons, however.

If the first deacons were ordained by imposition of hands, why are not ruling elders and deacons ordained in the same manner now? As the power of ordering the whole work of ordination is in the whole presbytery, orderly associated; and as *ruling presbyters* are necessary constituents of that court, so associated; and, conjunctly with the *teaching presbyters*, examine the person to be ordained; why do they not also join in the imposition of hands?

Church policy is a subject extensively interesting, and correct notions about it are of great importance. For several years past, the things specified have borne rather perplexingly upon the writer's mind. Neither the books nor the persons to which he has hitherto had access have given him much satisfaction. The perusal of Mr M'Leod's very excellent sermon, inserted in this publication, farther engaged his notice, and has moved him thus to exhibit the preceding extracts. To these he sincerely requests the attention of those whose lips should keep knowledge. Creeds and Confessions, ratified by both civil and ecclesiastical authority, do not cramp an orderly freedom of inquiry and discussion. Although, perhaps, of equal value, the neglected subject bears upon none of the distinguishing peculiarities of any one presbyterian denomination. Whilst this makes discussion more necessary, it also renders it more pleasant, and cherishes the hope of its being no less disinterested and impartial.

C. S.

Dec. 1810.

N. B. Want of adequate encouragement, and a generally felt extraordinary stagnation of trade, urge the discontinuation of the *CHRISTIAN SELECTOR*, for a time. Should Providence favour, its publication may be resumed in the spring. In the mean time, the communications of friends, on that head, will be gratefully received by the printer. It would be insolence in the editor to think the comprehensive design proposed has been executed: nor, indeed, do the limits of one volume afford a full opportunity. Its spirit, however, has been humbly kept in view. The design was laudable; and, with increasing solicitude, is still left at their feet whose aid was all along requested. Those who have encouraged the attempt are affectionately remembered by the editor.



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