

# Christ, Lord of All:

## PRIZE ESSAY

ON SOME DISTINCTIVE PRINCIPLES OF THE  
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

— BY THE —

REV. SAMUEL KENNEDY, B.A.,  
LIMAVADY.



PRICE

::

::

::

THREEPENCE.

# Christ, Lord of All:

## PRIZE ESSAY

ON SOME DISTINCTIVE PRINCIPLES OF THE  
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

— BY THE —

REV. SAMUEL KENNEDY, B.A.,  
LIMAVADY.



PRICE        ::        ::        ::        THREEPENCE.

# PREFATORY NOTE.

---

At the meeting of Synod held in June, 1915, prizes were offered by Mr. William Kerr and an anonymous donor "for the two best pamphlets on the Distinctive Principles of the Church." The special purpose of the brethren who offered these prizes was to secure literature, by means of which the young people of the Church and others making enquiry in regard to our distinctive testimony might have help given them, at once adequate and suitable, in their endeavours to realize the Scripturalness of our position as a Church of Christ. A committee, consisting of the Professors of the Theological Hall, together with Mr. William Kerr and Mr. Robert Holmes, Elders, was appointed to deal with the whole matter of the competition. It was arranged that the general title for the essay submitted in competition should be—Christ, Lord of All : Essay on some Distinctive Principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and that under this designation the following subjects should be dealt with, viz. :—

- (A) The Plenary Inspiration and the Divine Authority of the Old and New Testaments.
- (B) The Divine Law of Worship.
- (C) The Divine Law for Nations : Subjection to Christ.
- (D) The History and Present Position of the British Nation in relation to this Law.
- (E) The Duty of the Christian to Christ and to the Nation in view of National Sin.
- (F) The Divine Law in relation to Secret Societies.

Unanimously, and very cordially, the Committee decided to award the first prize, value £10, to the Rev. Samuel Kennedy, B.A., Limavady, and to recommend Synod to take whatever measures were necessary for having his essay published and widely circulated. This recommendation was adopted, and the Committee continued as a Publication Committee. Mr. Kennedy not only acceded to the request of Synod to place his essay in the hands of this Committee, but also, for the purpose of assisting in meeting the expenses of printing and circulating it, generously returned to the Convener the cheque he had received as a prize.

This essay, bearing on great Scriptural principles, is placed before the public with the earnest desire and prayer that it may be abundantly blessed by God to the strengthening and enlargement of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and to the enrichment and uplifting of many outside the limits of that Communion, and so be a means of bringing nearer the time when Christ shall be one, and His Name one, in all the earth.

S. G. KENNEDY,  
Convener of Publication Committee.

BELFAST,  
NOVEMBER, 1916.



# CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION - - - - -	7
THE PLENARY INSPIRATION AND THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS - - - -	9
THE DIVINE LAW OF WORSHIP - - - - -	21
THE DIVINE LAW FOR NATIONS : SUBJECTION TO CHRIST	27
THE HISTORY AND PRESENT POSITION OF THE BRITISH NATION IN RELATION TO THIS LAW - - -	36
THE DUTY OF THE CHRISTIAN TO CHRIST AND TO THE NATION IN VIEW OF NATIONAL SIN - - - -	48
THE DIVINE LAW IN RELATION TO SECRET SOCIETIES -	64

# CHRIST, LORD OF ALL:

## ESSAY ON SOME DISTINCTIVE PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

---

### INTRODUCTION.

1. The supreme lordship of Jesus Christ may be regarded as the great distinguishing principle of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

2. Churches and religious systems, generally, have some doctrine or principle more outstanding and distinguishing than any other and which is regarded as fundamental and formative; e.g., the supremacy of the Pope is the cardinal principle of Roman Catholicism; the supremacy of the Scriptures of Protestantism; the sovereignty of God of Calvinism; but the Mediatorial Headship of Christ is the great root principle of Reformed Presbyterianism.

3. That this is a leading Scripture principle may be abundantly proved. A few passages only may be cited. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power (authority, R.V.) is given unto Me in heaven and in earth"—Matt. xxviii. 18. "And hath put all things under his feet and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church"—Eph. i. 22. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord; to the glory of God the Father"—Phil. ii. 9-11.

4. The Confession of Faith says, "It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man; the Prophet, Priest and King; the Head and Saviour of His Church; the Heir of all things; and Judge of the world." Chap. viii., Sec. 1.

5. Our Doctrinal and Practical Testimony says, "The Lord Jesus Christ is the King of all believers. . . . He is sole King and Head of the Church, having authority in it as its supreme Legislator and Judge. He has also dominion over all things—over angels, principalities and powers; over all mankind; over the kingdoms of the world and their rulers; and over the whole residue of creation—administering the vast kingdom of providence in subservience to the display of the divine glory in the redemption of the church." New Edition: Chap. v., Sec. 17.

6. "The great Distinctive Doctrine of our Church from which her other Distinctive Principles are derived, is the Kingly office of our Lord Jesus Christ—the office last to be recognised, the one that completes and crowns those that go before. This Kingly rule of our Redeemer extends to all the relations of man's life, meets the moral issues that arise in each one, and is the principle that leads to their right adjustment. And it is not a little remarkable that nearly all the pressing questions of our time, the issues that must be met, arise in the field of obedience to Christ, and remain unsettled while men remain in rebellion against Him. If men would once yield obedience to the plain teachings of Christ, these questions would one and all be answered, and our difficulties could be settled. Until this obedience is rendered to Him this settlement can never come. The demand, then, of our time is for the maintenance of the principle of Christ's authority over all."—Rev. W. J. Coleman, D.D., U.S.A., in the R.P. Convention Volume, 1896.

---

## I.—THE PLENARY INSPIRATION AND THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

1. The Reformed Presbyterian Church makes her appeal to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as her supreme standard. The Book of Government and Order, page 10, says, "The supreme and

infallible Standard of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland is the Word of God." The first term of communion in our Church is : "The acknowledgment of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice."

2. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are of "Divine Authority," because they are the Word of God, and, as such, differ from all other writings ; and they are the Word of God because they are the written revelation of His mind and will to men, and given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

3. The Confession of Faith, Chap. I., Sec. 4, says, "The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (Who is truth itself), the author thereof ; and, therefore, it is to be received, because it is the word of God."

4. [The D. and P. Testimony, Chap. I., Sec. 3, says, "The writings usually called the Old and New Testaments, and these only, are given by inspiration of God, and are the word of God ; holy men having been moved by the Holy Spirit to write them, and having been infallibly guided by Him both in matter and language. The Holy Scriptures, in their originals or faithfully translated, are in themselves, without interpretation, addition, or sanction, from man, a clear, perfect, and authoritative rule of faith and duty, obligatory on men



individually and socially. The genuine text of the Old Testament in Hebrew and of the New Testament in Greek is the supreme, infallible, and ultimate standard in all matters of religion."

5. The Old and New Testaments, and they only, form what is called the Canon, that is, the rule of faith and practice. There is a great difference between Romanists and Protestants on the question as to what books or writings are entitled to a place in the Canon. Romanists say, that only those books which THE CHURCH has decided to be divine in their origin, and none others, are to be included in it. Protestants say, (1) That, with respect to the Old Testament, those books, and those only, which Christ and His Apostles recognised as the written Word of God, are entitled to a place in the Canon. (2) That, with respect to the New Testament, those books, and those only, which were written by the Apostles, or received their sanction, are to be recognised as of divine authority, and entitled to a place in the Canon—the Apostles being the duly accredited messengers of Christ, of whom He said, "He that heareth you, heareth Me."

6. On the grounds specified in Section 5, the so-called apocryphal books are rejected and form no part of the Canon. They were not recognised by Christ as the word of God. Besides, they abound in errors and in statements contrary to those found in the Old and New Testaments. "The Books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of Divine Inspiration, are no part of the Canon of Scripture and, therefore, are of no authority in the

Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings" (Confession of Faith, Chap. I., Sec. 3). Our D. and P. Testimony condemns as errors, (1) "That the books known by the name of the Apocrypha are of equal authority with the Holy Scriptures." (2) "That the reading of the Apocrypha is a proper part of the public worship of God."

7. The position of supremacy, which we claim for the Scriptures, and which they claim for themselves, as an authoritative guide in all matters of faith and practice, and the final court of appeal, was accorded to them all down the course of history till such times as a pure Christianity began to be vitiated by Romanist and Anti-Christian error, and tradition came to rank as a source of religious authority—the rival and co-partner of the Bible.

8. In the ages before the Reformation the Bible was practically dethroned, and the Church became the arbiter of truth, the keeper of the conscience, and the ultimate tribunal for the settlement of all controversy. But when Luther began the work of reformation he brought forth the holy lamp of the Bible from beneath the bushel which Romanism had placed on it and gave it back to the world. Instead of making the Bible dependent on the Church for authority, he reversed matters, and made the Church dependent for authority on the Bible.

9. Now, God might have produced the Bible for man by His own immediate energy, acting directly and



alone, as He did when He wrote the Ten Commandments with His own finger on tables of stone ; but He chose to produce it by the instrumentality of special agents who wrote it under the inspiration of His Holy Spirit. These men, however, were not mere machines, and used as such by the Holy Spirit, with their self-consciousness suspended or their intellectual powers superseded, but free, intelligent, voluntary agents, who, while used as the organs of God and inspired by the Holy Spirit as such, were free to exercise their distinctive mental characteristics, and have impressed upon their writings their individual peculiarities. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man ; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."—2 Pet. i. 21.

10. When we speak, then, of the inspiration of the Bible, we mean by inspiration, an influence of the Holy Spirit on the minds of the writers, which rendered them infallible as the organs of God in the communication of His mind and will to men. And this inspiration is **PLENARY** or **FULL** (as opposed to partial) in the sense of extending equally to all parts of the Bible, and of extending also to the words or verbal expression as well as to the thoughts or sentiments of the sacred writers. Nor is it confined to moral and religious truths, but extends to the statements of facts as well, whether scientific, historical, or geographical. It extends to everything which any sacred writer asserts to be true, and to the words as well as the thoughts.

11. But while it is claimed that the sacred writers were fully inspired as to all they teach, whether of

doctrine or fact, it is not claimed that they had plenary knowledge. As to matters of science, philosophy, and history, they stood on the same level with the men of their time. They were inspired and infallible only as teachers, and when acting as the spokesmen of God. Their inspiration no more made them astronomers, for example, than it made them agriculturists.

12. That the Bible is equally inspired in all its parts may be shown from the fact that the sacred writers were the organs of God in all they wrote ; from the fact that Christ and His Apostles refer to all parts of the Scriptures, or to the whole Old Testament, as the word of God—making no distinction as to the authority of the Law, the Prophets, or the Hagiographa (Psalms, etc.) ; from the fact that Christ and the writers of the New Testament refer to all classes of facts, doctrinal, historical, and incidental, as infallibly true, our Lord expressly saying, “the Scripture cannot be broken.”—John x. 35.

13. That the inspiration of the Bible extends to the words of the sacred writers is evident, (1) from the very design of inspiration which was to secure an infallible record of truth—and a record consists of language ; (2) from the fact that men think in words ; and if the thoughts of the sacred writers were inspired, so were their words, for their thoughts are in their words (3) from the clear affirmations of the Bible itself on the point : “Which things also we speak, not in the **WORDS** which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the **Holy Ghost** teacheth ; comparing spiritual things with **spiritual**” (that is, “joining **SPIRITUAL THINGS** to

SPIRITUAL WORDS"—according to one interpretation), 1 Cor. ii. 13, compared with "I have put my words in thy mouth," Jer. i 9, and, "the Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His WORD was in my tongue," 2 Sam. xxiii. 2 ; (4) from the fact that the New Testament writers, while quoting from the Old Testament for the purposes of argument, often base their argument upon the very words used, thus ascribing authority to the word as well as the thought ; for example, Christ said that David by the Spirit called Him Lord, that is, David used that word.—Matt. xxij. 45. Paul in Gal. iii. 16, lays stress on the fact, that in the promise made to Abraham, a word used is singular and not plural, "seed," "as of one," and not "seeds," "as of many."

14. In opposition to the view here presented, and which we hold to be the Scriptural and Reformation view, it is maintained, we think, wrongly, by some, that inspiration rendered the writers of the Bible infallible only in teaching moral and religious truth, and that they might err as to historical and scientific facts ; that inspiration was but a pre-eminent degree of that spiritual illumination which in a less degree is common to all Christians ; that while Christ's personal teachings were infallible, the Apostles and others were inspired in a lower degree.

15. Proofs based upon internal evidence for the inspiration and divine authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, may be briefly given as follows:—

(1) Their writers claimed to be inspired and to speak in the name of the Lord. They preface their messages with, "Thus saith the Lord," "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it," &c



(2) New Testament writers quoting from the Old Testament Scriptures use such formulae as these :—  
 “The Holy Ghost saith,” Heb. iii. 7, “The Holy Ghost this signifying,” Heb. ix. 8, “David in the Spirit says,” Matt. xxii. 43. (R.V.) Thus to them the Old Testament was Divinely inspired and Divinely authoritative.

(3) We have these express declarations in the New Testament with regard to the Old, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” 2 Tim. iii. 16, “God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,” Heb. i. 1, “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man ; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Pet. i. 21.

(4) Jesus Christ, the great Teacher and Saviour of men, hands us the Old Testament and tells us that it is the Word of God ; that its authors spoke by the Spirit ; that the Scripture cannot be broken ; that the whole law must be fulfilled. He, Himself, constantly quotes from the Old Testament. We give only two examples :  
 “It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer.” Matt. xxi. 13. “He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.” Matt. xxii. 43-44.

16. Similarly, proofs, based upon internal evidence, for the inspiration and divine authority of the New Testament, may be easily furnished. We mention, (1)

Jesus Christ promised the Holy Spirit to His Apostles to aid them in their public apologies or defences for themselves and their faith, "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak ; for it shall be given you in the same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Matt. x. 19, 20. "Howbeit when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth ; for he shall not speak of himself ; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak : And he will show you things to come." John xvi. 13.

(2) The apostles claimed, (a) to have the Spirit in fulfilment of the promise of Christ. "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, . . ." Acts xv. 28 ; (b) to speak with authority as the prophets of God, "He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy spirit," 1 Thes. iv. 8. "We are of God : he that knoweth God heareth us . . ." 1 John iv. 6 ; (c) to class their writings on a level with the Old Testament Scriptures, "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of us, the apostles of the Lord and Saviour." 2 Pet. iii. 2.

17. Further proofs, partly of an internal and partly of an external kind, for the inspiration and divine authority of the Old and New Testaments, are given by Rev. Thomas Martin, in his CATECHISM ON THE PRINCIPLES AND POSITION OF THE R. P. CHURCH, as follows :—"The miracles performed by those who wrote

them ; the predictions which they contain, and which have in many cases been strikingly fulfilled ; their astonishing preservation ; their sublime and God-honouring doctrines ; their holy precepts ; the entire harmony of all their parts ; and the amazing effects which they have produced upon individuals and communities"—Question XI. He might have added, as additional confirmation, a reference to the fact of the holy, simple, temperate, yet heroic lives of their writers.

18. From what goes before it will be seen that we hold that the plenary inspiration and divine authority of the Scriptures stand or fall together. Lax views of their inspiration tend to undermine their divine authority, and VICE VERSA. The importance of Scriptural views of both cannot be overestimated.

19. It is necessary in these days of the so-called "Higher Criticism" of the Bible to emphasise the fact that the authority of the Old and New Testaments is inherent in themselves as the Word of God, and does not rest upon what is called the "Christian consciousness" of the believer, as those who hold the new theory of subjective inspiration say it does. This new theory is as fatal as it is fascinating. It would destroy the real inspiration and authority of the Scriptures by transferring the seat of authority from the written testimony of the word to the unwritten testimony of the Spirit in the Christian's inner life and experience. When the Confession of Faith says, Chap. I. Sec. 5, "yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof



(holy Scripture), is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts," it blends the external witness of the revelation with the internal witness of the Spirit ; it teaches that the function of the Spirit is not to LEND authority to the Scriptures, but to RECOGNISE and CORROBORATE an authority already inherent in Scripture. In other words, the testimony of the Spirit does not MAKE the Bible true, but PERSUADES and ASSURES of a truth which is already present in the Bible in virtue of its Divine character. The Bible brings its own credentials with it, and does not come begging for them to any inner experience of men, however heavenly, or inspired, or "Christian," it may be. "To the law and to the testimony : if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."—Isa. viii. 20.

20. The plenary inspiration of the Scriptures is set aside by the "Higher Critics" as an old "traditional" view. Hence, as our D. and P. Testimony points out, it is specially necessary, at the present time, to insist upon the doctrine of plenary inspiration because of the influence of the so-called "Higher Criticism." A specimen of this criticism is referred to on the same page, where we read, "A species of criticism, that is most unreasonable, and that has never been applied to any other writing, has been employed in the case of the Old and New Testaments. The record is parcelled out, not merely in chapters or considerable portions, but even verse by verse or clause by clause, and assigned to various sources, the hand of an author or editor being supposed to be detected in the use of a word or



in the shade of meaning in a clause. The earlier books of the Bible have been specially singled out for this kind of 'critical' dissection."—Chap. I., Sec. 9.

This sort of criticism goes upon the "presupposition" that verbal inspiration is wholly out of the question.

21. With regard to the objection taken to the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Bible on the ground of alleged "discrepancies" in the sacred text, we simply quote a few wise words of Dr. Charles Hodge on the point: "(1) These apparent discrepancies, although numerous, are, for the most part, trivial, relating in most cases to numbers or dates. (2) The great majority of them are only apparent, and yield to careful examination. (3) Many of them may be ascribed to errors of transcribers. (4) The marvel and the miracle is that there are so few of any real importance. Considering that the different books of the Bible were written not only by different authors, but by men of all degrees of culture, living in the course of fifteen hundred or two thousand years, it is altogether unaccountable that they should agree perfectly, on any other hypothesis than that the writers were under the guidance of the Spirit of God. In this respect, as in all others, the Bible stands alone."

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul : the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple, Ps. xix. 7. "Search the Scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life ; and they are they which testify of me" (Our Lord). John v. 39.

## II.—THE DIVINE LAW OF WORSHIP.

1. Religious worship consists in that homage and honour which men give to God, as a Being of infinite perfection, whereby they profess their subjection to and confidence in Him, as their chief good and only happiness. It may be viewed as either internal or external ; the former consisting in that inward homage which rational beings owe to God, such as loving, believing, fearing, trusting Him, etc. ; the latter consisting in the outward expression of that homage, by the observance of His instituted ordinances.

2. The worship of God is of four kinds : secret, family, social, and public,—the ordinances of which are set forth in the Word of God which, being “the only infallible rule of faith and practice,” is the Divine law of worship, or its supreme and only directory.

3. The Confession of Faith, Chapter 21, Section 5, says, “The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear ; the sound preaching, and conscionable (or conscientious) hearing of the Word, in obedience unto God, with understanding, faith and reverence ; singing psalms with grace in the heart ; as also the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ ; are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God ; besides religious oaths and vows, solemn fastings, and thanksgivings upon special occasions, which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in a holy and religious manner.”

4. The D. and P. Testimony of our Church, Chapter xi., on Christian Worship, section 13, says, "The only rule for the worship of God is His own revealed will. No worship can be pleasing to Him but that which He Himself requires. Christ, the Church's Head, has prescribed all the laws and ordinances of Christian worship ; and neither individuals nor Churches have power to set aside, amend, or alter in any way, what He has prescribed. It is the Church's duty to receive, observe, and keep pure and entire, all the ordinances of worship as Christ has appointed them in His Word."

5. The principle regulative of Divine worship contained in the foregoing section is that adopted by the true Reformers of Scotland in dealing with the corruptions in worship of the Church of Rome, viz., That for all the constituent elements of every ordinance of worship we require the POSITIVE AUTHORITY of DIVINE APPOINTMENT or PRESCRIPTION, either in the form of direct command, "good and necessary consequence," or approved example—such example as that of Christ or His Apostles ; and that we are not at liberty to introduce anything else in connexion with the worship of God except what comes properly under the heading of mere "decency and order," e.g., the fixing of the TIME when public worship should begin, the PLACE of meeting, etc.

6. This principle is also clearly laid down in the 21st Chapter of the Confession of Faith, section 1 :—"The acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself and so limited by His own revealed Will, that He may not be worshipped according to the im-



aginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not PRESCRIBED in the Holy Scripture." The moulding of God's worship in accordance with human taste or the fashion of the time is here strictly ruled out. Then in the 20th Chapter of the Confession, which treats of "Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience," we have the following explicit declaration on the same subject:—"God ALONE is LORD of the conscience, and hath left it FREE from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything CONTRARY to His Word, or BESIDE it in matters of faith and worship."

7. The Second Commandment, according to the Larger Catechism, Answer 109, forbids "all devising, counselling, commanding, using, and anywise approving, ANY religious worship NOT INSTITUTED BY GOD HIMSELF." And in the Shorter Catechism, in answer to Question 51, it is said, "The Second Commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images, or ANY other way NOT APPOINTED in His Word."

8. Row, when giving an account of the labours of Knox and the others associated with him in the reorganising of the Church at the time of the Reformation, says, "They took not their example from any Kirk in the world—no, not from Geneva—but laying God's Word before them, they made reformation according thereto." It was largely through the faithful application of this great principle that so complete a reformation was effected in the Church of Scotland—a reformation whose completeness, alas ! has been much cancelled in more recent years.

9. Are the views on matters of worship set forth, as above, in our Subordinate Standards in accordance with the teaching of the Supreme Standard, the Word of God? Is the principle with regard to worship which they lay down Scriptural? We make our appeal to Scripture in support of affirmative answers to these questions: (1) When Moses was about to make the Tabernacle by Divine direction, God said to him, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." (Heb. viii. 5.) And the general principle given for his guidance in all things relating to the worship of God was this: "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt NOT ADD thereto, nor diminish from it." (Deut. xii. 32.) There was to be no deviation whatever from the forms prescribed, either in the way of addition or diminution; and, again and again, we read of everything being done "as the Lord COMMANDED Moses." (2) God punished men for setting aside His appointments, e.g., Nadab and Abihu were slain for offering strange fire before the Lord which He commanded them not. (Lev. x. 1-2.) Uzzah, with good intent, but without Divine authority for his act, put forth his hand to steady the ark of God (the carrying of which, by God's appointment, belonged to the Levites alone); and God smote him for "his error . . . and he died." (2 Sam. vi. 6-7.) Uzziah, the King, was smitten with leprosy for presuming to burn incense upon the altar of incense, a function which, by Divine appointment, belonged to the priests (2 Chron. xxvi. 16-21). These instances of the manifestations of Divine displeasure show the necessity of adhering rigidly to the Scriptural principle of worship.

(3) The Lord Jesus Christ, as the Head of ordinances, appointed all the parts of New Testament worship and condemned any departure from His requirements. He pronounced worship "vain" which He had not commanded—"in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Mark vii. 7.) In His great commission the Saviour, when about to ascend to glory, laid upon His Apostles or His Church the obligation to make disciples of all nations, and "to teach them to OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER HE HAD COMMANDED THEM." (Matt. xxviii. 18-20.) What Christ has "commanded" is to be the guiding principle.

(4) The Apostles of Christ in establishing and extending the Church under the unerring and promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, adhered to what their Lord had "commanded"; and we, to-day, are required to be imitators of the Apostles, even as they also were of Christ. Moreover, we find Paul specially commending those to whom he wrote for keeping the ordinances as he delivered them to them. (1 Cor. xi. 1-2.)

10. By the application of the Scriptural principle of worship, here exhibited, only the Psalms of inspiration, unaccompanied by an instrument of music, would be sung in the praise service of the Churches of Christ, and the singing of uninspired hymns and the use of instruments of music would be condemned as corruptions of God's ordinance of praise and as violations of one of God's requirements, or as additions to His own appointments. The application of the principle would also make a clean sweep of all Ritualistic and Romish practices such, for example, as the signing with the sign



of the cross in baptism, kneeling at the Communion, bowing to the East, the wearing of symbolical vestments, the lighting of wax candles in churches in the daytime, the ceremonial use of incense, holy water, the mixed chalice, the elevation of the host, etc., etc.

11. The principle regulative of Divine worship which was adopted by the Lutheran and Anglican sections of the Reformers and which is embodied in the 20th Article of the Church of England, was, that "The Church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies. . . and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything contrary to God's Word written." This implies that it is lawful for the Church to ordain whatever is not "contrary" to the written Word, the practical interpretation of which is that the Church may introduce in worship whatever God has not expressly forbidden in His Word, e.g., the corruptions of the ordinance of praise, and the Ritualistic and Romish practices above-mentioned.

12. How true are the words of Calvin : "The rule (as set forth in our subordinate standards) which distinguishes between pure and vitiated worship is of universal application, in order that we may not adopt any device which seems fit to ourselves, but LOOK TO THE INJUNCTIONS OF HIM WHO ALONE IS entitled to prescribe. . . . Such is our folly, that when we are left at liberty, all we are able to do is to go astray. And when once we have turned aside from the right path, there is no end to our wanderings, until we get buried under a multitude of superstitions."



### III.—THE DIVINE LAW FOR NATIONS : SUBJECTION TO CHRIST.

1. Webster in his Dictionary defines NATION as “the body of the inhabitants of a country united under the same government ; a people, as distinguished from those of different descent, language, or institutions.” Sometimes the term NATION is used, not very properly, in a more restricted sense to mean “the voluntary society which is formed within the nation for purposes of government,” that is, the national or governing society composed of the legally qualified electors, the Sovereign and Houses of Parliament. This body carries on the work of government according to certain principles which in their entirety form the Constitution of the nation, and for which the nation as a whole is responsible. The Constitution or fundamental principles of a nation, enjoying the light of Divine Revelation, ought to possess a Scriptural character. When they do not possess such a character, but are unscriptural and antichristian, dishonouring to God and His Word and His Son Jesus Christ, the citizens have the right, without forfeiting the privileges of citizenship, to protest against such principles and to dissent from, or refuse membership in, the national society that endorses them and consents to govern or be governed by them. Moreover, they have the right to testify against the nation itself which has set up a Constitution embodying such principles, and against the national evils which flow therefrom. It is this right which Reformed Presbyterians claim and exercise in the realm of citizenship as will appear later.

2. The Nation is an organism or organisation having the characteristics of a moral person, and has, therefore, moral obligations—one of the first and most important being to acknowledge Christ, the Invisible King, and to obey His Law. As a moral person a nation may serve Christ, the King, and enjoy His favour and blessing ; or may rebel against Him and merit His righteous judgments.

3. With regard to the abstruse question of the origin of civil or national government it is sufficient to quote the words of our D. and P. Testimony : “It is the will of God, declared in the constitution of human nature, and clearly revealed in the Scriptures, that mankind ought to associate in civil society for the Divine glory, and individual and social good. Civil government is not, therefore, merely the suggestion of necessity, nor is it the invention of man ; it is a moral ordinance of God.” (Chap. xii., Sec. 5.) And as the moral ordinance of God it is under His authority and is to be administered according to His own revealed will.

4. That the will of God revealed in the Bible is the law for all nations which possess it is evident from the fact that the moral law, as summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments, was addressed to and received by Israel at Mount Sinai in a national capacity—that nation being rewarded for its adherence to it, and punished for its violation of it,—and from the fact that the Bible is full of messages to nations as such. The messages of the prophets were chiefly messages to the nations, not to Israel alone, but to all other nations. In other words, the Bible is the supreme and infallible standard for nations as well as for individuals and churches. (See Deut. xvii. 18-20.)

5. Nations being called into existence by God are under His authority. But the exercise of His authority over nations God has committed to His Son Jesus Christ, as Mediatorial King, to Whom He has committed ALL rule and authority and power and dominion in heaven and earth as the reward of His humiliation and obedience unto death. "All things are delivered unto Me of my Father." Matt. xi. 27. "All power (authority, R.V.) is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." Matt. xxviii. 18. "The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hand." John iii. 35. These are the words of Christ Himself and lordship over the nations is undoubtedly a part of the universal authority given by the Father to the Son as Mediator, or a part of the "all things" "delivered unto Him" or "given into His hand." The same great truth is clearly taught by the Apostles in their epistles. "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power; and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church." Eph. i. 20-22. "For in that He hath put all in subjection under Him, he left nothing that is not put under Him." Heb. ii. 8.

6. Some of the titles or names given to Christ in the Scriptures clearly teach His mediatorial dominion over nations. He is spoken of as "the Governor among the nations," Ps. xxii. 28, as "King of nations," Jer. x. 7, as "the prince of the kings of the earth," Rev. i.



5, as "King of kings and Lord of lords," Rev. xvii. 14, and xix. 16. These are no empty titles. He to Whom they are applied must be the Supreme Ruler of nations.

7. Nations are declared in the Word of God to be the subjects of Christ's dominion. Daniel (Chap. vii. of his prophecy) saw a vision of the nations, represented by wild beasts; being destroyed one after another. Then the prophet sees the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven, "and there was given unto him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages, should serve him." Verse 14. Take along with this the vision of John referring to the consummation of the purpose of God with regard to the world, and it will be seen that the subjection of all nations to Christ will one day be accomplished—indeed, until this subjection takes place the gracious purpose of God in the world cannot be wholly fulfilled. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms (kingdom, R.V.) of this world are (is, R.V.) become the kingdoms (kingdom, R.V.) of our Lord and of His Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. xi. 15.

8. It is the Divine law for nations, that is, it is the will of God the Father that the nations of the earth should come into subjection to His Son Jesus Christ to Whom He has delegated authority over them. This is the great duty and privilege of nations. Subjection to Christ on the part of nations would not only honour Him, but promote their own honour and highest well-being. Moreover, they are COMMANDED to be in sub-

jection to Christ. "The great Biblical classic on the subject of civil government is the second Psalm." This Psalm is a "sublime vision of the nations in revolt against Jehovah and His Anointed, with a declaration of the Divine purpose to maintain His King's authority, and a warning that the world that is, must bow to Him or perish." The Psalm is divided into four parts. In the first there is a vision of the nations taking counsel against Jehovah and His Anointed, saying, "let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us." Second, there is a vision of God regarding this rebellion with scorn and anger, and saying, "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill. Third, the Son Himself speaks, and declares the Divine decree, announcing that Jehovah had said to him, "Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen (nations, R.V.) for thine inheritance." Finally, the rulers of the nations are exhorted to render submission to their rightful King. "Be wise, now, therefore, O ye kings ; be instructed ye judges of the earth." "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little." All nations, therefore, all kings and judges, are under moral obligation to place themselves in subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Prince of the kings of the earth.

9. Indeed, the duty of nations to be in subjection to Christ, as King, may be inferred from the duty of individuals in relation to Him. For, if it is the duty of men, as individuals, to be in subjection to Christ, as King, it is equally the duty of nations, that is of men in a national capacity, or associated and organised for

purposes of government, to be in subjection and under law to Christ, since His authority is over men in all relations of life. Moreover, when the tremendous powers and responsibilities of nations, and which they can only derive from God, are considered—e.g., the right to punish criminals, and the power of life and death over their subjects, which they exercise—the case for their subjection to Christ, the King, and His law, becomes specially clear and imperative. “He (the civil ruler) is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.” Rom. xiii. 4.

10. Our D. and P. Testimony (Chapter xii., Sec. 8) says, “Nations, as such, have been, by the immutable decree of God the Father, given to Jesus Christ that He may rule over them as their supreme Lord. They are, therefore, required to recognise Him as their Head ; to submit to His Mediatorial authority ; and to appoint their rulers, frame their laws, and regulate their whole administration, according to His revealed will and in subservience to the interests of His kingdom.”

11. There is another theory of civil government called the secular or Voluntary theory very different from this. It confines the action of the State to secular or worldly things, declares that religion and politics are to be kept quite apart, that Church and State are to be completely separate ; whereas the Scriptural theory is, that civil government, is God’s ordinance, and, like everything else, is placed under Jesus Christ as Mediator, and is to be conducted, not merely for the temporal good of man, but also for the glory of God, the good of the church, and the glory of Christ, the King.



"The powers that be are ordained of God," Rom. xiii. 1. Civil magistrates or rulers are called ministers of God for good to men, and are spoken of as "not a terror to good works, but to the evil" (same chap., verses 3 and 4).

The Confession of Faith states (Chap. xxiii., sec. 1), "God, the supreme Lord and King of the world, hath ordained civil magistrates to be under him over the people FOR HIS OWN GLORY, and the public good." If the civil rulers have no regard for the true religion or the Church of Christ, in the nation in which they exercise their functions, how can they hope to promote the Divine glory? In the nation of Israel godly rulers concerned themselves with religion and the Church of God. The proper relation of Church and State is a question of great importance and of far-reaching issues. It has been well said, "No more baseless fantasy ever entered the mind of man than that Church and State can be completely separate!" One of three relations the Church MUST bear to the State—that is, the Church must dictate to the State (the Romish view), or the State dictate to the Church (the Erastian view), or Church and State must each be independent and supreme in its own sphere, and yet in friendly alliance and co-operation (the Scriptural view);] but completely separated Church and State can never be. "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee (the Church) shall perish." Isa. lx. 12.

12. It follows, then, that a nation's subjection to Christ will be manifested in the following ways:—



(1) By its acknowledging governmentally, in some suitable way, say, in the Constitution, God the Father as the source of all authority ; His Son Jesus Christ as the Ruler of Nations ; and the Holy Spirit as the Author of the Divine Law by which it is to be guided. (2) By adopting the Divine Law or the Bible as its supreme moral standard in all its legislation and administration, to the rejection of such standards as the mere will of the people, human reason, and political expediency. (3) By requiring moral and religious qualifications in its rulers, in conformity to the Divine Statutes : "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." 2 Sam. xxiii. 3. "Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness ; and place such over them to be rulers." Ex. xviii. 21. (4) By promoting the interests of the true religion and the Church of Christ, in opposition to the theory of religious equality which leads to national atheism. (5) By entering into a solemn covenant to serve Christ, its King, and render true allegiance to Him. Israel was a covenanted nation, and was in this, and many other respects, a type and pattern of what all nations should be. "And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." Ex. xix. 8. "And Jehoiada (the priest) made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord's people ; between the king also and the people." 2 Kings xi. 17. "Nations, being necessarily under the moral law and subjects of God's moral government, ought, when they are favoured with the light of divine revelation, to enter into solemn covenant with God, binding themselves

to loyal allegiance to Jesus Christ the King of nations, and engaging to order all their national action in accordance with the moral law and in subserviency to the interests of Christ's kingdom. Such covenanting is necessary to promote in the highest degree the Divine glory and national prosperity." D. and P. Testimony, Chap. xiii., sec. 6.

13. Judged by the foregoing tests the British Nation, as will readily appear, cannot be regarded as enjoying the high honour of being a nation in subjection to Christ, nor any other nation of the world at the present time. Indeed, many object that the subjection of the nations to Christ is a beautiful ideal, but not likely to be ever realised. But the question is not whether it is a beautiful ideal, but whether it is THE SCRIPTURAL ideal of national duty and prosperity. If so, no true Christian can say it will never be realised. It will be realised one day; and all Christians should not only bear faithful testimony against the rebellion of the nations to Christ, but should diligently and zealously labour for their willing and joyful submission to Him, as Saviour-King. The truth of the Headship of Christ over nations is the present truth in a very special sense. It is God's message to the nations that His Church must faithfully declare. Not until the nations accept and apply this truth will they enjoy true prosperity; for not until it is accepted and applied by them will many perplexing national and social problems be solved, and such heaven-daring evils as aggressive war, national Sabbath desecration, the licensed liquor-traffic, and national

pandering to Romanism and Ritualism come to an end. "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet." 1 Cor. xv. 25.

O God, do Thou raise up Thyself,  
The earth to judgment call ;  
For Thou, as Thine inheritance,  
Shalt take the nations all.

---

#### IV.—THE HISTORY AND PRESENT POSITION OF THE BRITISH NATION IN RELATION TO THIS LAW.

1. We have stated in the last section of the preceding article that the British Nation cannot, judged by certain tests, be regarded as enjoying the high honour of being a Nation in subjection to Christ. We now proceed to deal more fully with the relation of the British Nation to Christ, and to do so, as the subject of this article requires, under two heads, viz., the Nation's PAST and the Nation's PRESENT relation to Christ, or, to the Divine Law for Nations, (subjection to Christ).

2. It is evident that, in dealing with the present position of the British Nation in relation to Christ, we must, in order to a proper estimation and understand-

ing of that position, take some account of the history of the Nation with reference to the subject on hand. A Nation's past and present are closely connected just as is the case with an individual or with a church. God required the people of Israel to frequently remember the past history of their nation, and make comparisons between the past and the present, in order to their learning important lessons. "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations : ask thy father and he will show thee ; thy elders, and they will tell thee." Deut. xxxii. 7.

[3. At the beginning of the sixteenth century Britain was a moral waste. The nation was in slavery to the Pope of Rome. In the providence of God, chiefly though the heroic labours of John Knox, a blessed Reformation was accomplished in these lands. In our Historical Testimony mention is made of two Reformations, the first being called the Reformation from Popery, in the 16th century, and the second the Reformation from Prelacy, in the 17th century.

4. The most memorable step in the progress of the First Reformation in Scotland was the adoption of the National Covenant in 1581. "The active efforts made at the time to restore Popery, and the dread of Jesuit plots for the overthrow of the Reformation, furnished the occasion for this important measure." (Historical Testimony.) It was truly national in its scope, being subscribed by the King (James VI.) and Council and by persons of all ranks throughout the kingdom, not only in 1581, but again in 1590 and 1596. By the



National Covenant Scotland renounced POPERY IN TOTO as contrary to the plain teaching of Scripture and as the enemy of the chartered liberties of mankind, and engaged to defend Protestantism to the utmost of its power. Some years previously the Scotch Parliament had passed a law, "that no person should afterwards be admitted to the exercise of authority in the kingdom without taking an oath to maintain the Protestant religion, and that none but Protestants should be admitted to any office, with the exception of those that were hereditary for life." And now the National Covenant not only safeguarded Protestantism by throwing around it the defence of the law, but it made Protestantism the very basis of the legal constitution then reared.

"In the illuminating radiance of Scripture truth the Covenanters (Reformers) had learnt, that if their country was to be permanently saved, not only must its Church be constituted and governed according to the Christian standard, but the State as well ; and while recognising that the functions of Church and State were distinct, they held that, as momentous consequences for good or evil depended on the attitude to each other of the two spheres of duty, these ought to be mutually helpful instead of being mutually hostile or indifferent, and that only by supplying one common bond of obligation to which both were amenable, could their co-operation be secured. This was furnished by the National Covenant, which, while assigning to king and people their respective civil duties, and to the Church its specific religious duties, held all alike

responsible to the supreme duty of obedience to Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords."—Symington, "The Story of the Covenanter Church," p. 31. Thus the nation of Scotland entered into covenant with God, renouncing Popery and pledging itself to maintain the true Reformed religion as practised by the Church of Scotland, which was Protestant and Presbyterian. Thus the nation of Scotland professed subjection to Jesus Christ as its King.

5. During the next forty years after the adoption of the National Covenant which had sounded the death-knell of Popery in Scotland, the king, James VI. (who in 1603, on the death of Queen Elizabeth, became also king of England and Ireland under the title of James I.), and after him Charles I., made gradual and persistent efforts, having first of all secured for themselves despotic power, to destroy the Presbyterian Reformed religion in Scotland and substitute full-blown Prelacy in its place, and had almost succeeded, when a storm of indignation burst out over the whole kingdom which led to the renewal of the National Covenant in 1638, with certain additions protesting against and renouncing Prelacy as well as Popery. The renewal of the National Covenant signalled the beginning of the Second Reformation.

6. In 1643 the Second Reformation was still more firmly established by the adoption of another covenant called THE SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT which embraced the whole three kingdoms. That this Covenant was also truly National is evident from the

fact that it was subscribed by the Westminster Assembly, by both Houses of Parliament, and by all ranks and classes throughout the three kingdoms with few exceptions. It was also, a few years afterwards, on his accession to the throne, sworn by Charles II. "The public faith was thus plighted by all the organs through which a Nation is accustomed to express its mind and will." (Martin's Catechism, Question 175.) It has been well said of the Solemn League and Covenant, "It is impossible to conceive how it could have been rendered more emphatically a national engagement." The objects which those entering into this Covenant engaged to prosecute were:—the preservation and defence of the true Reformed (Presbyterian) Protestant religion, the propagation and extension of the Reformation, the promotion of unity and uniformity in religion in the three kingdoms according to the Word of God, the extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, profaneness, and everything contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness.

7. Certain great principles underlie, or are assumed in, the Solemn League and Covenant, viz., that communities or nations are under the moral government of God, and bound to yield obedience to His law—that nations may enter into covenant with God—and that public covenanting is a valuable means of promoting true religion.

8. We hold that these Covenants—the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant—are still binding upon the British Nation for the following



reasons : "The things engaged to in these Covenants are Scriptural and right ; they were concluded by the representatives of the people, and cordially entered into by the people themselves ; they were ratified and confirmed by public legislative acts ; the identity of the nation is as real in all moral respects as the identity of an individual ; the things engaged to, have not been fully accomplished ; and it is inherently sinful in the nation to regard them with indifference, or to follow a course at variance with them." [Martin's Catechism, Question 191.

9. Now, during the period of the Second Reformation, the British Nation may be truly said to have become a Christian Nation. (1) It recognised Christ as its King and as Head over all things to the Church. (2) It recognised the Word of God as of Divine authority, and as the standard by which the laws of the country should be framed and its administration conducted. (3) By the Act of Classes it excluded the malignants and all known enemies of the Reformation from all offices of power and trust. (4) It was a nation in covenant with God ; indeed the Covenants may be regarded as the written Constitution of Britain while they remained in force, and the taking of the oath of the covenant (Solemn League) was the condition of holding any office of power and trust in the nation. (5) It respected the Sabbath and put a check upon all profanity and immorality. "Even Macaulay admits that the contrast between the morals of this period, and of that which preceded and followed, was so great as to be almost incredible." McDonald, JEHOVAH-NISSI, p. 74.



10. Our Historical Testimony says, "The Reformation of this period extended to the State as well as to the Church. The honest aim of the Reformers was to bring the institutions and policy of the country into conformity with a Scriptural standard, to set up rulers whose lives and official conduct should be in practical subjection to the Word of God, and to exhibit the civil power in proper and friendly alliance with an unfettered Church. They required that the nation, as such, should own allegiance to Messiah, the 'Prince of the kings of the earth,' and should assume its position 'as a righteous nation keeping the truth.' By various national acts, this high and noble end was sought to be realised."

11. Unfortunately, Britain did not long continue to be a Covenanted Nation, a Nation in subjection to Jesus Christ, the King, having a Scriptural and Christian Constitution and Administration. Charles II., on his restoration to the throne of the nation in 1660, perfidiously violated without scruple and in the most flagrant manner all his solemn engagements on behalf of the Second Reformation. Having secured for himself, by the manipulation of unfaithful and time-serving parliaments, a position of absolute supremacy or despotism over Church and State, he proceeded to overthrow the whole Covenanted and Scriptural Constitution of the Nation. The Covenants were annulled, being branded as treasonable and rebellious deeds, and ordered to be burned by the common hangman; the oath of the Covenant was abolished; the Act of Classes was repealed, and the door of admission to places of power and trust thrown open to persons opposed to the

Reformation ; Presbyterianism was overthrown and Prelacy restored ; by the Act Rescissory all the laws made in favour of the Reformation were abolished, and the parliaments which had made them were declared illegal. At one fell stroke all the legislation of the preceding twenty years was set aside.

12. Years of terrible persecution followed the despotic measures of Charles II. Many faithful subjects of the realm suffered martyrdom rather than forswear the principles of the Reformation. James II., an avowed Papist, succeeding to the throne on the death of his brother, Charles II., in February, 1685, and assuming the reins of government without oath of any kind, proceeded to open up the way for the complete re-subjugation of the empire to the thralldom of the papacy. And so long as the king confined his inveterate hostility to the Puritans of England and the Covenanters of Scotland and plied them with direful persecutions he sat securely upon his throne ; but when he turned his hand against the Prelatists, robbing some of the bishops of their rich livings and some of the nobility of the rewards of office, the nation became thoroughly aroused ; Prelacy rose in rebellion ; James was compelled to betake himself to flight ; William, Prince of Orange, was made king in his stead ; and the Revolution of 1688 was effected.

13. While our covenanting forefathers hailed the Revolution as a "remarkable instance of the goodness of God" to the British Nation, in many respects, they

recognised that the Settlement that accompanied it was sadly defective, and they dissented against it—against both the Revolution Church and the Revolution State.

14. It is important that we understand the features or principles of the Revolution Settlement, as bearing upon the nation, if we are to understand the present relation of the nation to Jesus Christ the King. We mention a few of these features: (1) There was no proper acknowledgment of the authority of God, no explicit recognition of the claims of the Word of God, or of the supremacy of Jesus Christ as King of Nations. The rule by which that Settlement was framed was, not the law of God, but mere expediency. (2) It established Prelacy in England and Ireland, inserting it in the very heart of the Constitution and providing for its perpetual maintenance, though a system of religion contrary to the Word of God and rejected by the nation at the time of the Second Reformation. (3) While Prelacy was abolished in Scotland and Presbytery established in its stead, it was merely because the latter was agreeable to the inclinations of the people and not because it was agreeable to the Word of God, or, because the former (Prelacy) was an insupportable grievance to the people and contrary to their inclinations—thus mere political expediency was the guiding principle. (4) It invested in the Crown, as one of its inherent rights, a perpetual and undisguised supremacy over the Church in these kingdoms. (5) It provided that the reigning monarch **MUST BE** a member of the prelatial church, and must undertake, **AS A CONDITION**



OF HOLDING THE THRONE, to maintain that church in all its privileges. (6) It did not repeal the Act Rescissory by which the Reformation had been overthrown, but left it upon the Statute Book. (7) While excluding Romanists from places of power and trust in the nation, it exalted to such places men who were indifferent to religion and hostile to the church's best interests, instead of requiring Scriptural qualifications in the nation's rulers as was provided for in the Acts of the Reforming period. (8) Lastly, and very specially, it left the Covenants, in which the nation had plighted its faith to God, in the grave in which the Stuart kings had buried them; the oath of the Covenant was still rejected, and an unqualified oath of allegiance was required wholly incompatible with the nation's prior engagements to God.

15. Our Historical Testimony states, "It is deeply to be deplored that, at this memorable era, neither these nations (kingdoms) nor their new ruler, rendered to God according to His great goodness. They improved not, as they ought to have done, the opportunity so happily presented of avouching their allegiance to the King of kings, Who had wrought for them wondrous deliverance, and of restoring to a Scriptural basis the government in Church and State. . . . The Revolution Settlement was, in its fundamental provisions, marked by errors and defects, the consequences of which, even to our own day, have been most detrimental. . . . The civil institutions, unlike those which had been previously set up, did not pretend to possess a Scriptural character. Even the Covenants by which the Reforma-



tion had been ratified were wholly ignored by the great mass of the community, while by many others they were positively and contemptuously repudiated ; and thus it continues to be to the present day."

16. Thus the British Nation at the Revolution Settlement did not return to her allegiance to Jesus Christ. The Constitution then set up was erected upon the ruins of Britain's Covenanted Constitution. How does this nation stand to-day in relation to Christ? "Of all the evils embodied to-day in that political compact (the Revolution Settlement) not one has been removed ; of all its defects not one has been remedied. Whatever its sins—whether of omission or commission—they have all come down to us as a legacy, a legacy, moreover, that by its dead weight has been dragging the nation downward in the scale of moral being." McDonald, JEHOVAH-NISSI, p. 105.

17. True, since the Revolution Settlement some changes have been made for the better in the nation, changes which have been attended with beneficial results, e.g., the political power which formerly was centred in the hands of a few has been extended to the great body of the people, and civil rights have been similarly extended ; capital punishment for offences in connexion with property has been abolished ; and, further, slavery has been abolished, no British subject can now hold property in man. But these changes made, largely, if not altogether, on the ground of political expediency, have not materially altered the nation's relation to Christ and His law.

[18. Indeed, since the Revolution Settlement, changes of another kind have been made which have estranged the nation further from Christ and His law. Jews, Mohammedans, and even infidels and atheists have been admitted to the British Houses of Legislature to take part in making laws for and ruling a people enjoying the light of Divine Revelation. Popery, from whose bondage the Reformation emancipated the nation, is now largely endowed out of the public funds of the nation; and, recently, the king's Accession Declaration has been emasculated by the elimination of its strong protest against the blasphemy and idolatry of Transubstantiation and the Mass. The Sabbath is desecrated to a deplorable extent by the nation's mail service. The immoral Liquor Traffic, with its blighting and ruinous effects upon rulers and ruled, is licensed and protected by the nation. And a Bill for the setting up of a Roman Catholic Parliament in Ireland has been passed into law, though its operation is in the meantime postponed. Other evils might be cited, but we have said enough to show that the British nation has sunk to a lower level since the Revolution Settlement, and that its present attitude to Christ and His law is one of hostility and rebellion—an attitude which is aggravated by the fact that the nation itself seems insensible to its actual condition and to its awful guilt and danger.

## V.—THE DUTY OF THE CHRISTIAN TO CHRIST AND TO THE NATION IN VIEW OF NATIONAL SIN.

1. A Christian is "a professed follower or disciple of Christ." Paul writing to Christians said, "Ye are Christ's," that is, Christians belong to Christ as His disciples, owning His supremacy over them as their Saviour and King, their Lord and Master. Christ Himself stated His terms of discipleship, during His earthly ministry, in these words, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall find it. For what is a man advantaged if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away. For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his glory and in his Father's and of the holy angels." Luke ix. 23-26. The Church cannot modify these terms. They clearly imply entire consecration to Christ; that Christ must have first place in the life of the professed disciple—first place in all relations of life and everywhere. These terms also imply the acceptance of the Law of Christ, as laid down in the Scriptures, as the rule of life; the duty of separation from all sin or moral evil; consistent loyalty to Christ and faithful witnessing for Christ in all relations of life. "If ye love me keep my commandments."

John xiv. 15. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." John xv. 14. "Ye shall be witnesses unto me." Acts i. 8. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. ii. 10.

2. An American Presbyterian minister (Dr. Terrett) in an address, in Philadelphia, on "Christ, the Nation's King," said, "Christ claims the man, **THE WHOLE MAN**, for Himself, in obedience and service. But man is **WHOLE** only in his relations, domestic, social, and political. Man was born to be a citizen. He was made for the nation, as truly as for the home. He is not, cannot be, all that he ought to be as a man, until he is all that he ought to be as a citizen. If it be true, then, that man belongs by nature in political relations, who shall say that in these relations he is emancipated from the authority of Jesus Christ? If he be Christ's servant he will show it here. **HE CANNOT BE CHRIST'S SERVANT AND NOT SHOW IT HERE.** . . . The best of man's life is his relational life, and in all his relational life he belongs to Christ. By what argument shall we be justified in saying that while a Christian man is bound to submit himself to Christ's authority, yield himself to Christ's influence, and open himself to Christ's inspiration in his domestic relations, in his social relations, in his business relations, that in performing the duties, and bearing the responsibilities involved in his **POLITICAL RELATIONS** he is justified in recognising some **LOWER** law, and in acting under the impulse of some poorer motive. If a man belongs in the nation he is bound to serve Christ there as much as anywhere.



This is man's largest sphere; these are man's noblest engagements; solemnest obligations; shall he not here, if anywhere, acknowledge Christ's authority and seek to do His will? Oh! how much Christ needs trained, accomplished servants, who have learned that there is no sphere in life in which they cannot serve Him; that there is nothing worth doing for a man which they cannot do for Him. CHRIST CANNOT SPARE A SINGLE INCH OF MANHOOD. HE HAS REDEEMED AND HE CAN USE IT ALL." (Quoted and italicised by Rev. Professor R. J. George, D.D., U.S.A., in his tract, "CHRIST'S.")

3. The foregoing sections will help us to answer the question, What is the duty of the Christian to Christ and to the Nation in view of National sin? We have seen that the British Nation is not now in subjection to Jesus Christ, but in many respects in rebellion against Him, being guilty of many and heinous sins. Therefore, the duty of the Christian, who would be truly faithful to Christ in his political relations, clearly is, to protest, and dissent from the national body, to adopt thereby the attitude of separation from the nation's sins, and so free himself from responsibility for its sins. "The Christian who understands that civil government is the ordinance of God and should be conducted for His glory, cannot voluntarily unite with a government which ignores the very Author of government, refuses to accept His perfect moral standard for rule, and otherwise also discharges God of His own institution. The Christian who apprehends the sublime doctrine of the Headship of Jesus Christ over the Church, cannot in-

corporate with a national body which vests in its chief representative that prerogative of the Messiah. The Christian who maintains the spiritual independence of the Church, cannot continue membership in a national society which exercises Erastian control over any Church ; he cannot share in the power that inflicts this spiritual slavery. The Christian who contends that Presbytery is the Scriptural form of Church Government, cannot be a member of a national society which allies itself in the closest manner with a Church that is wholly Episcopal and Prelatic. The Christian who believes that the Papacy is a system of false doctrine and a political despotism, cannot be a member of a society which admits Romanists to power in its membership and management, and endows Popery and its institutions out of its public funds. The Christian who loves the Day of God and resists all encroachments upon its sanctity, cannot be a member of a society which legalises and enjoins services which violate the law of the Lord and profane His holy day. And the Christian who mourns the iniquity of the drink traffic in the crime and misery it produces, cannot be a member of the society which licenses the traffic and derives millions annually from its prosperity. If these evils do not demand political dissent and separation till there be radical reform, what other evils are necessary to carry this conclusion ? . . . . To the conscience of every such Christian in the national association for rule, the voice of the Lord is imperative—‘Come out from among them and be ye separate.’” (“Political Dissent in Great Britain,” Rev. J. Kerr, D.D. Second Edition, p. 35.)

4. This position of protest, dissent, and separation in national affairs is assumed by the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Her members do not identify themselves with any of the political associations ; they do not swear oaths of allegiance to the Crown and Constitution ; they do not accept or seek any of the offices of the State ; they do not vote at Parliamentary Elections ; and they do not otherwise embrace any civil privileges which would involve them in responsibility for national sin. This position of political dissent has been maintained by the R. P. Church, and often re-affirmed by her, since the Revolution Settlement ; and it is clearly defined and enforced in the Church's Testimony. The Historical Testimony, in the Section entitled "Testimony against National evils," says, "The evils incorporated in the Governmental system of Britain and Ireland are such as still to necessitate from us dissent and separation. The protest of Covenanters against the Revolution Settlement remains in full force. The Episcopal hierarchy forms an essential part of the Constitution. It exhibits a most heterogeneous blending of things civil and ecclesiastical. The Government is much less Protestant and Christian now than it was at the period of the Revolution, since Papists and Jews are admissible to all but the highest offices, judicial and executive. Whatever reforms have been made in the national representation and policy, it is undeniable that there is now a much greater encouragement given to Popery than at the Revolution ; and that the whole national polity is conducted in a way that manifests a wider departure from the principles of the Covenanted Reformation. . . . It would



be a plain abandonment of an essential part of a Covenanted Testimony to accept of seats in the British Legislature, or to vote at the election of representatives in Parliament, who are required to swear oaths, binding them to support the complex, Prelatic and Erastian Constitution which was established at the Revolution."

The D. and P. Testimony (Chap. xii. Sec. 10) says, referring to an immoral and anti-christian civil society, "Professing Christians in the nation who approve of and give support to, such a constitution, are fully responsible for its anti-christianism. In such a case the Christian who would be loyal to Christ, although he may be entitled, according to civil law, to all the rights of membership in the governing society, is yet, according to the moral law, debarred, by the immorality of the society itself, from the acceptance of membership in it. It would be disloyal to Christ to exercise the elective franchise in such a society or swear allegiance to its authority. Christians ought to testify faithfully against the exclusion of Christ's authority and law from the national constitution, and ought to stand aloof from the iniquity against which they testify. Genuine Christianity and genuine patriotism alike constrain them to seek national reformation by such faithful testimony and consistent separation, and by such other means as the law of Christ permits."

5. The right to dissent and separate from the nation or governing society, or from any association, will not



be denied by any intelligent person. It is one of the elementary rights of citizens and members of society, and its denial would lead to injustice, tyranny, and bondage. It is a right that has many applications in the social sphere and that is being exercised continually. In every public assembly a vote with the minority is a dissent from the action of that assembly, and the dissenter may claim to have his dissent recorded if he thinks the question at issue one of sufficient importance. Non-established churches dissent from the established, and the established churches remain separate from the non-established. Even in politics, one party dissents from the platform or principles of another. But that a church or members of a church should dissent and separate from the Constitution and governing society of the country in which they live seems to many a strange and unaccountable thing ; and yet it is only a further and higher application of the principle or right of dissent. Such action is often branded as gross disloyalty and a species of rebellion. But political dissent is neither rebellion nor the equivalent of rebellion ; it is consistent with the purest patriotism, and true, loyal devotion to one's country. Not every kind of political evil, however, requires the dissenter to SEPARATE from the government ; but where the evils are fundamental and constitutional as they are, and as we have shown them to be, in the British nation, the consistent dissenter will carry his dissent the length of separation and refuse identification with the corrupt system of government. And such a position of separation or non-incorporation is assumed when the Christian

citizen refuses to vote in the election of members of Parliament, to accept any of the offices of the State, or to swear Oaths of Allegiance to the Crown and Constitution ; just as the doing of these things, on the other hand, identifies with the national body and involves in national sin. The sins of an association are the sins of its members ; and in a representative nation like ours, the sins of the nation, or corporate political body, are the sins of its members who continue in and exercise all the privileges of membership.

6. The Scripture argument for dissent and separation from sin is quite clear. A few passages bearing upon it may now be cited : "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation." Ex. xix. 6. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." Ex. xxiii. 2. "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?" Ps. xciv. 20. "For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy ; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid." Isa. viii. 11-12. "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you." 2 Cor. vi. 17. "Neither be partaker of other men's sins." 1 Tim. v. 22. "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Rev. xviii. 4.

7. It is a self-evident truth that the attitude of dissent and separation from moral evil is the attitude of power. Abraham did more for righteousness by staying out of Sodom than Lot did by going into Sodom, even though his righteous soul was vexed from day to day with the evils of the city. Moses had infinitely more influence for righteousness in refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter than he could have had on the throne of Pharaoh. When Martin Luther said, "I refuse to be counted a member of the Church of Rome," he shook the walls of the Vatican until they trembled. His efforts at reformation if he had remained within the corrupt Church would have been almost powerless. The attitude of dissent and separation has the advantage of consistency, and is much more likely to arrest the attention of others to the existence and magnitude of the evils protested against. No one is much impressed by any testimony that the moderate drinker gives in favour of temperance, because his life contradicts his testimony. The attitude of dissent and separation is, therefore, the one from which the best Reform work can be accomplished, and begets and sustains in the heart of the reformers the hope of ultimate success. Moreover, it is the attitude demanded by loyalty to Christ, and it is certain to secure His favour and blessing, without which success in Reform work is not possible, for He has said, "Without me ye can do nothing." John xv. 5.

8. Many OBJECTIONS have been raised against the position of dissent and separation from national sin occupied by Reformed Presbyterians. Some of these may be now briefly considered :



(1) "THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE WHICH YOU COVENANTERS REFUSE TO SWEAR YOURSELVES, OR EMPOWER OTHERS BY YOUR VOTES TO SWEAR, IS A MERE FORM AND DOES NOT COMMIT TO ANYTHING." The Oath of Allegiance is no mere form any more than any other lawful oath. The Confession of Faith (chap. xxii.) defines an oath thus :—"A lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein, upon just occasion, the person swearing solemnly calleth God to witness what he asserteth or promiseth ; and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he sweareth." The Oath of Allegiance, though now short and simple in form, is taken to the Sovereign as the Head of the Constitution, and pledges allegiance not merely to him in his person, but to him in all the prerogatives with which the laws have clothed him, including his headship over the Church of Christ, to which it undoubtedly commits the swearer. The late Professor J. S. More, of Edinburgh University, and a distinguished Advocate, was asked by a party who desired to have the Oath of Allegiance regarded as unobjectionable, to give a legal opinion on the character of the Oath ; and his deliberate opinion in writing was, "The Oath of Allegiance was undoubtedly intended to bind every person who swore it, to recognise and submit to the Constitution. Its chief meaning, and that which was in the view of its framers, is to recognise the Sovereign as the Head of the Constitution, and so to include the whole Constitution by this reference to its Head." How can a



Christian, in fidelity to Christ, swear an Oath of Allegiance which commits him to the acknowledgment of the king as the Head on earth of Christ's Church ?

(2) "YOU COVENANTERS ARE COMMITTED ANYHOW TO THE EVILS OF THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION AND LEGISLATION, AS YOU LIVE IN THE COUNTRY." This objection goes upon the wrong assumption that Christian citizens are so completely allied with the nation that there is no escape from responsibility for its sins by dissent or otherwise until reformation is effected, and that, therefore, it is vain to dissent. This assumption completely merges the individual into the political society, destroys individual responsibility, and conflicts with the moral law which requires separation from evil. Besides, the objection absurdly assumes an equality of guilt for national sins on those who dissent and separate from them and those who do not but associate themselves with them as closely as possible ! Moreover, God never places men under such conditions that they must OF NECESSITY sin, as this objection implies.

(3) "YOU COVENANTERS PAY TAXES BY WHICH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COUNTRY IS CARRIED ON. DOES THIS NOT COMMIT YOU TO THE SINS AGAINST WHICH YOU PROTEST" ? No, the payment of taxes is the discharge of a just and lawful debt for value received in the way of protection and security, and does not necessarily identify with the government or make a citizen partaker of the nation's sins. The alien, who is excluded from

any share in the government, has to pay taxes. Our D. and P. Testimony states, "When the government, though anti-christian, grants civil and religious liberty, Christians may, quite consistently with their testimony, pay their share of the common taxation in return for the protection and other advantages which they receive; but they may not pay taxes levied for an immoral purpose or exacted as a pledge of allegiance to an unscriptural constitution." (Chapter xii., Sec. 10.)

(4) "YOU COVENANTERS CLAIM THE PROTECTION OF THE GOVERNMENT AND APPEAL TO IT FOR THE REDRESS OF WRONGS." As we have seen, Covenanters pay their share of the common taxation and are entitled to the protection of the law. But even poor persons who pay no taxes have the right to protection on the ground that they are subjects born within the realm. On the same ground we claim the right to redress of wrongs. We recognise the rightful authority of the British Government, and are entitled to the same consideration as other peaceable subjects in its exercise. "Christians who live under an unscriptural constitution, and who, consequently, cannot consistently accept of membership in the governing society of the nation, are entitled to the protection of life, property, and liberty, so long as they are peaceable, pay their share of all just taxation, and, in their private capacity, promote good order and all the other ends of civil government. Christians who avail themselves of such protection, do not thereby become involved in the guilt of the constitution or administration." D. and P. Testimony, Chapter xii., Sec. 11.

(5) "THE CONSTITUTION PROVIDES FOR IT OWNS AMENDMENT ; WHY DO YOU COVENANTERS NOT VOTE FOR GOOD MEN AND ENDEAVOUR TO SECURE THE REFORMS YOU DESIRE IN A CONSTITUTIONAL WAY " ? We do not hold that voting under an anti-Christian constitution is the only way, or the best way, to secure the reform of national evils. No parliamentary candidates are "good men" according to the Covenanters' standard, even though professing or real Christians. And even if they were, we hold it to be an immoral thing for a man to become identified with evil in order to reform it. We are never to do evil that good may come. The end does not necessarily justify the means. Besides, the supposed "good men" when returned to Parliament must swear the Oath of Allegiance under a penalty of £500 ; and, as we have seen, Covenanters cannot swear that oath themselves, or commission others to swear it for them. No man may do by another what it is wrong to do by himself.

(6) "JOSEPH AND DANIEL WERE GODLY MEN, AND THEY HELD OFFICE UNDER HEATHEN GOVERNMENTS. WHY CAN YOU COVENANTERS NOT FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE" ? To this objection we answer : They were not constitutional or representative governments in which these men held office. The king's word was law ; there was no Constitution which Joseph and Daniel were sworn to support ; they did not really identify with the government, they were merely the king's servants ; and they obeyed the king's command in what was right, and disobeyed and went to prison and the lion's den when he commanded what was wrong.



(7) "WHAT'S THE USE OF YOUR DISSENT? WHAT INFLUENCE ARE YOU HAVING ON THE BODY POLITIC? YOU COVENANTERS ARE VERY FEW IN NUMBER." It were easy to retort, What have you objectors accomplished by your "putting your shoulder to the wheel," as you call it, in the way of reform? It is not fair to judge some policies by immediate results. Reforms of a far-reaching and moral kind are usually slow. Noah preached righteousness for 120 years, and at the end of that time only eight souls—his own family—were on his side. Was his work, therefore, in vain? This is not a question to be decided by numbers, although minorities have often been right and majorities wrong. If political dissenters have small influence on the government, they at any rate free themselves from complicity in the dishonour done by the nation to the exalted and reigning Messiah. They save themselves from participation in "other men's sins," and they bear testimony for Christ, the King, and His law, in national life.

(8) "YOURS IS A DO-NOTHING POLICY. YOU LET OTHERS WORK AND YOU ENJOY THE FRUITS OF THEIR LABOURS." Our attitude of dissent and separation is very far from, and very different from, a do-nothing policy in the work of reform. Where the conditions are such as to prevent a Christian's acceptance of membership in an association, it is right to protest and remain outside, however his action may be designated. Dissent, protest, and separation have often been greatly honoured as means in the bringing about of reforms in other



departments. But while the attitude of protest is one of power, the protester must labour for reform in all ways open to him. And Covenanters while dissenting and remaining separate from the evils of the nation use all other means consistent with their position for the removal of the evils. The insinuation that Covenanters are ready to enjoy the fruits of the labours of others in the national sphere, while, as alleged, they do nothing themselves, is cruel and unjust. Covenanters, as a rule, are good, peaceable, and industrious citizens and patriots, who seek the good of their country, and if they refuse, conscientiously, to identify themselves with the national sin, why should they be penalised? As subjects of the realm, as members of the national family, they are entitled to the benefits of good laws, however passed.

(9) "IF ALL MEN DID AS YOU COVENANTERS DO, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD PASS INTO THE WORST HANDS AND ANARCHY WOULD ENSUE." But there is a prior question. Is it right and Scripturæ to dissent and separate from the national society under present conditions? If so, Christians must "do the right," fearless of the consequences. Duty is ours, consequences are in the keeping of God. "Do right though the heavens fall," but we know that they never fall. It is not our business to take care of God's work at the sacrifice of conscience. Besides, if all would become dissenters and protesters, though anarchy might threaten for a time, the national evils would soon be removed and a glorious reformation be effected.

(10) "YOUR PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT WILL NEVER BE REACHED OR COME INTO OPERATION UNTIL THE MILLENNIUM." This objection implies that Scriptural and Christian principles of civil government shall yet be exemplified in the British nation and in all nations, and therefore it only strengthens the position of Covenanters instead of weakening it. The objector forgets that these principles WERE in operation for some years in Britain at the Second Reformation, and that they came to be in operation by the earnest protests and efforts of our forefathers. But granted that these principles will be exemplified during the Millennium, must Christians abandon all efforts towards that happy consummation meanwhile? Must they not, rather, as a sacred duty, earnestly labour for its realisation? And, if so, the dissent and protest and testimony of Covenanters against national sins are eminently opportune and necessary NOW.

9. In conclusion, let it be remembered that an attitude of dissent and protest and separation in relation to national sin is only a part of the duty of Christian citizens. They owe it to Christ and the nation—as we have incidentally observed already—to labour earnestly and strenuously for the removal of the evils against which they protest, and for the adoption of Christian principles of government, in other words, for the bringing of the Constitution and Administration of the nation into subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ. Covenanters have come far short in the past in their efforts to make their testimony against the national

sin effective, and a bold forward policy is very much needed. Covenanters have received from their exalted Lord a large and important trust, and He looks to them for their faithful and complete carrying of it out. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."—1 Cor. xvi. 13.

Stand where the old reformers stood !  
 Nor fear to take their station,  
 The cause for which they shed their blood,  
 Still needs our attestation.

---

## VI.—THE DIVINE LAW IN RELATION TO SECRET SOCIETIES.

1. Secret Societies may be defined as "human organizations existing by consent of the public, drawing their membership from the public, and concerning themselves with the public, yet concealing their principles and practices from the public, and refusing all right of investigation by, or responsibility to the public"—(Manual of doctrine of the R.P. Church of North America—Study 14, Section 1). A briefer

definition would be : Secret Societies are voluntary associations or artificial brotherhoods whose members are under an oath, or solemn affirmation, to secrecy, and whose meetings and internal arrangements are screened from public view.

2. The Reformed Presbyterian Church condemns Secret Societies of all kinds—their name is legion—and does not admit the members of such Societies to her membership. Some other churchès, more particularly in America, have the same rule ; but nearly all the Churches in the United Kingdom open their doors quite freely to the members of Secret Orders. This refusal of admission to membership by the R. P. Church is because of the unscriptural and anti-christian character of these Societies, as will appear as we proceed.

3. One claim made by Secret Societies is that they have been supported by the greatest and best men of all ages. This is one of the strongest arguments used to induce men to join. On the other hand, some very eminent men, instead of supporting them, have opposed them. Daniel Webster, Statesman and Orator, said, "In my opinion the imposition of such obligations as Free Masonry requires should be prohibited by law." Wendell Phillips, the famous slavery abolitionist, said, "Secret Societies are not needed for any good purpose, and may be used for any bad purpose whatsoever." D. L. Moody, the well-known evangelist, said, "I do not see how any Christian man can go into these secret lodges with unbelievers." John Quincy Adams, the sixth President of the United States, said, "I am pre-



pared to complete the demonstration before God and man, that the Masonic Oaths, obligations and penalties, cannot, by any possibility, be reconciled to the laws of morality, of Christianity, or of the land." These are weighty utterances, but we are to judge Secret Societies, not by the opinions of men, but by the infallible Word of God.

4. Speaking of Secret Societies, generally, we submit that they are contrary to the Word of God, or the Divine Law, in the following respects :—

(1) THE OATHS AND OBLIGATIONS, BINDING TO THE UNKNOWN, WHICH THEY REQUIRE OF ENTRANTS, ARE UNSCRIPTURAL. The members are pledged "ever to conceal" and "never to reveal" things that they are about to learn, things of which they are ignorant at the time of swearing. The Bible condemns such a pledge or oath. "Or if a soul swear, pronouncing with his lips to do evil, or to do good, whatsoever it be that a man shall pronounce with an oath, and it be hid from him ; when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty in one of these." Lev. v. 4. When Christ's most trusted disciples, James and John, sought to pledge Him to the unknown in the words, "Master, we would that Thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire," He enquired, "What would ye that I should do for you ?" Mark x. 35-36. On this point our D. and P. Testimony says, "All such societies, in requiring an oath of secrecy before the matters to be kept secret are known, require the candidate for admission to yield

up his own judgment and conscience to the keeping of the lodge, and to swear by God that he will keep secrets which he might afterwards, in the exercise of an enlightened judgment and conscience, feel solemnly bound to reveal. No man can come under such an obligation without sinning against God and against his own soul." Chap. xii. Sec. 15. Moreover, it is degrading to one's manhood. Drunken Herod took his oath to perform that which he knew not, surrendered his manhood, and it made him the murderer of John the Baptist.

(2) THEIR SECRECY IN GENERAL IS UNSCRIPTURAL. The business of the lodge is transacted behind closed doors, which are carefully guarded and through which no one is allowed to enter except members or candidates for membership. Nor is the secrecy of the lodge merely an incidental feature; it is a fundamental principle without which, it is admitted, it could not live. It arouses the suspicions of honest men that something is taking place within the lodge that is not consistent with the light. The common custom is for honest men to work in the light and for wrongdoers to work in the darkness. The very idea of secrecy is alien to the spirit of the Gospel and of the Church of Jesus Christ. It was neither the method nor the spirit of Christ or His Apostles. Jesus said of Himself while on earth, "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing." John xviii. 20. He compared His Church and His people to "a city set

on a hill" and "a candle set on a candlestick." And His direction to His people in all ages is, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. v. 16. Again He says, "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." John iii. 20, 21. Paul's instructions are: "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Eph. v. 11. Our D. and P. Testimony (Chap. xii., Sec. 15) further says, "Apart from the sinful oaths of initiation into the fellowship of such societies, the very secrecy is sinful. Associations that are honouring to God and truly philanthropic, and truly Christian, have no need of the darkness of secrecy, and do not admit of it. It is only something that is ungodly, something un-Christlike, something narrow and selfish, that fears the light." Indeed, not only is this secrecy unnecessary for any worthy cause, and unwarranted by Christ; it is actually dangerous and may become a menace to society.

It is no valid objection to say that families have their secrets or that Church Courts sometimes sit with closed doors. There is a very great distinction between privacy and secrecy; and though families have their private matters which they wisely keep to themselves, they are not secret associations with obligations to conceal, and with grips, signs, and pass-words of their own. Church Courts SOMETIMES have secret sessions



when delicate matters come up for adjudication, but even in such cases the decisions of the Court are always made public. There is, however, no HABITUAL secrecy. Indeed, when Church Courts meet IN CAMERA, it is because there is something wrong that could not be prudently or profitably discussed in open day. In fact, "public bodies, legislative and judicial, both in Church and State, have occasionally private meetings, the proceedings of which it is necessary in the public interests, and, therefore, lawful and right, to keep secret. But to organise a narrow brotherhood on the BASIS OF SECRECY, and to make everything about it secret, is different altogether."

(3) THEIR USE OF THE OATH IS UNSCRIPTURAL. The Confession of Faith, Chapter xxii., says, "A lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein, upon JUST OCCASION, the person swearing solemnly calleth God to witness what he asserteth or promiseth. . . . to swear VAINLY OR RASHLY by that glorious and dreadful name (of God), is sinful, and to be abhorred. Yet, as, in MATTERS OF WEIGHT AND MOMENT, an oath is warranted by the Word of God under the New Testament, as well as under the Old, so A LAWFUL OATH, BEING IMPOSED BY LAWFUL AUTHORITY, in such matters, ought to be taken . . . Neither may any man bind himself by oath to anything but what is good and just. . . . A vow is of the like nature with a promissory oath, and ought to be taken with the like religious care." Our D. and P. Testimony, Chapter xiii., Sec. 2, says, "Oaths are to be sworn only for weighty reasons, and with due solemnity and reverence.



Those who administer and those who take an oath unnecessarily, or on trifling occasions, or in connexion with unscriptural associations, are guilty of profaning the name of God. Secret brotherhoods, being in themselves unscriptural associations, are sinful, and, having no right in any case to administer oaths, are, consequently, guilty of additional sin in assuming this right ; and, in addition to its being sinful to join such associations, it is sinful to take an oath administered by them." "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain ; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain," Ex. xx. 7. Secret Societies have, therefore, no right to administer an oath to, or to require an oath of, their members ; and their doing so is a profanation of God's ordinance of the oath and contrary to the Word of God. The officers of the State and the Courts of the Church of Christ, acting in the name and by the authority of Him, Who is the fountain of all power, alone have the right to administer oaths, and even they only when the object to be served is one of seriousness and importance.

The sin of Secret Societies, in the matter of the oath, is still further aggravated by the character of many of the oaths which they administer—oaths utterly blasphemous, barbarous, and inhuman. "Even a cannibal would be ashamed of them," said President J. Q. Adams.

¶ (4) THEIR SELFISHNESS IS UNSCRIPTURAL. Secret Societies have been called "organised selfishness." The lodge has been designated "a system of compulsory

selfishness," whose doctrine is : "Help those only who are able to help us, and compel them to take an oath that they will do it." Christ inculcates the spirit of unselfishness and love to all men, as the parable of the Good Samaritan clearly shows. "As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Gal. vi. 10.

The Masonic Order, especially, boasts of its charity. Mackey, one of the best authorities on the Order, says, "Charity is the chief corner-stone of our temple." Yet, those who are likely to need it, the aged, the infirm, and the cripple, are refused admission. Help is promised only to members, and none will be received as members except those who seem able to take care of themselves. When a member becomes sick, or dies, help may be given to him or his widow, provided only that his standing is good and his dues are paid in full. Insurance societies do the same, but they call it BUSINESS.

(5). THEIR BINDING TOGETHER IN A COMMON BROTHERHOOD THE GODLY AND THE UNGODLY IS UNSCRIP-TURAL. The Church of Christ binds together in a common brotherhood all who make a credible profession of faith in the Saviour, but Secret Societies bind together, under oath, not only Christians, but Jews, Mohammedans, Buddhists, agnostics, sceptics, and infidels ; and not only the morally good but the morally bad, the godless and profane. Such a heterogeneous association is contrary to the Word of God, and ought

to be shunned by every professed servant of Christ. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers ; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? and what communion hath light with darkness ? and what concord hath Christ with Belial ? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel ? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols ?" 2 Cor. vi. 14-16. "O my soul, come not thou into their secret ; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united." Gen. xlix. 6.

(6) THEIR CONFLICT WITH THE DIVINE INSTITUTIONS OF THE FAMILY, THE CHURCH, AND THE STATE, IS UNSCRIPTURAL. "When God created man He determined his relationships and the duties arising therefrom. There is the relationship of the family—parent and child, brother and sister ; there is the relationship of the Church—pastor and people, office-bearer and member ; there is the relationship of the State—rulers and ruled, legislators and people. And there is the relationship of man to his fellow-man in the brotherhood of our common humanity and in pursuance of the golden rule laid down by Christ Himself. All these relationships are Divine, and the duties arising out of them are Divinely ordered. Love, sympathy, help—these are the ties that ought to bind men together everywhere." ("Alethes" in "R. P. Witness," 1901.) But "Secret Societies are an attempt to form new and artificial social relations among men, and to make these relations the basis of moral obligations between man and man. They are, therefore, a presumptuous in-

vasion of the prerogatives of the Creator. . . Six brothers out of a family of ten have no right to organise an artificial brotherhood—not an organisation of specific and limited ends, but a brotherhood—and to bind themselves to be more to each other and to do more for each other than for the other four. Neither have a portion of the members of one Church, nor a part of the citizens of one nation, the right to organise into a narrower circle of brotherhood, for the practice towards each other in this narrow circle, of the virtues which they owe equally to all. To do so is not to promote but to restrict the exercise of these virtues, not to widen but to narrow the circle of their operation.” Rev. Dr. T. P. Stevenson, U.S.A., in R. P. Convention Volume, 1896. All this is contrary to the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures. Our D. and P. Testimony says, “A Mason is bound by his oath to help a brother Mason who is in difficulties, before, and in preference to, a Christian believer who is in difficulties. Such obligation is in direct collision with the law of Christ.” Chap. xii., Sec. 15.

(7) THEY PROFESS TO BE RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS, BUT THE RELIGION PRACTISED BY MANY OF THEM IS NOT THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, AND IN THIS RESPECT, TOO, THEY ARE MOST UNSCRIPTURAL. In the lodges of Secret Societies, a prominent piece of furniture is an altar which is used for so-called religious ceremonies. A prominent book is the Bible ; and a creed, and ritual, and printed prayers have also a place ; and they have



their own burial ceremony. But, notwithstanding all this, the religion of Secret Societies is false, and unchristian, at least this is true of most of them. Mackey says, "The religion of Masonry is pure theism," that is, a religion which does not get beyond belief in a Supreme Being—it is a Christless religion. He says further, "If Masonry were simply a Christian institution, the Jew and the Moslem, the Brahman and the Buddhist could not conscientiously partake of its illumination. But its universality is its boast. In its language citizens of every nation may converse; at its altar men of all religions may kneel; to its creed disciples of every faith may subscribe." Such a religion cannot obviously be the religion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Lodge religion professes to save men, but it is not in the way taught in the Bible—it is without saving faith, without repentance, without Christ. Were there no other reason than this, that an institution professing to be religious, is Christless, has no place for the Mediator and Saviour, it ought to be sufficient to condemn it in the eyes of all professing Christians. Doubtless there are many true Christians in these societies, but they are in them, not because of their Christianity, but in spite of it. Our D. and P. Testimony again says, "The Masonic Society is flagrantly anti-christian. With such a society the true follower of Christ can have no fellowship. Of course, all secret societies are not equally bad. But for the reasons stated above (such reasons as we have given for their being unscriptural) the Christian ought to shun them all; inasmuch as they all, in some way or other, interfere with his permanent obligations to God, to fellow Christians, and to fellow men." Chap. xii., Sec. 15.

5. We have in the above sections shown the unscripturalness of Secret Societies in general, and to the Christian who holds "the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice," and who reveres the Scriptures, there cannot be a stronger objection to any institution than that it is unscriptural or opposed to the Divine Law. But a word or two, more in detail, may be added :

(1) FREEMASONRY may at once be regarded as the most objectionable, from a Scriptural and moral standpoint, of all Secret Societies. It is the oldest of them, and is the mother of them all. All others partake of its fashion and mould to a greater or less degree. No doubt the professed aims of this Order are most excellent. "Its design is the highest good of man in all that concerns him, the reformation of the world by its erection into a brotherhood of the most perfect kind, in sympathy, morality, and love." But, however good, the ends and aims and designs of any institution may be, if they are sought to be realised by wrong means, the institution is morally, and so, fundamentally, objectionable. And when the principles and practices of Freemasonry are examined in the light of the Divine Law, they merit, as we have seen (for the above unscriptural features are found in this Order in a fuller degree than in any of the other Orders), the strongest disapprobation. Further grounds of strong disapprobation might be shown to exist, in its profanation of the worship of God in its temples, and in its irreverent treatment of the Word of God—some of the most solemn scenes and passages of the Word of God being scandalously caricatured.

(2) GOOD TEMPLARISM is sometimes called Teetotal Freemasonry, as its grand, and, admittedly, most worthy object is the overthrow of intemperance, which is one of the worst evils that has ever cursed humanity ; and because such is its declared object few Christians have the will or the courage to oppose it. But good objects ought to be prosecuted by means that are right and Scriptural. And, not to speak of the CHILDISHNESS AND VANITY which it encourages by its titles, costumes, and ceremonies, when it is remembered that Good Templarism is a SECRET society (strange that Temperance work should be wedded to secrecy) ; that it requires a SOLEMN VOW of its members amounting to an OATH ; that it is DEISTICAL in its creed, and binds together, as a brotherhood, on this broad basis, persons of the most diverse and most unscriptural principles ; that it is grossly RITUALISTIC in its lodge ceremonies and practices ; and that IT INTERFERES UNWARRANTABLY WITH THE LAW OF THE GOD OF FAMILIES—e.g., binding children not to reveal certain secrets or usages to their parents—it will be seen that such an Order, notwithstanding the worthiness of its professed aim, cannot claim and deserve the support and sanction of faithful disciples of Christ and of judicious Temperance advocates.

(3) ORANGEISM while resembling the previous two Orders in its SECRECY (it is denied by many that Orangeism is a SECRET society, but surely a Society that holds its meetings behind doors guarded against the entrance of the uninitiated, and that administers an oath binding to secrecy, and that has its peculiar



grips and secret signs and pass-words, cannot be termed anything else) and in its DISPLAY of grand titles and showy regalia, and in its imposing RITUALISM, does not possess SO MANY objectionable features, and is quite unlike them in this, that it assumes more of a POLITICAL character. Its professed object is the maintenance of PROTESTANT principles, and with this object all true Christians will sympathise ; but it is a most fatal objection even to a society with such a splendid object, that it has adopted the device of secrecy in the carrying on of its work. Besides, in the prosecution of the object in view, it gives its fullest support to the Crown and Constitution of the British nation with all its fundamental evils, to which reference has previously been made. And as Covenanters dissent, for good and valid reasons, from the Crown and Constitution of these lands, they also dissent from the political principles of the Order of Orangeism for similar reasons.

There are many other Secret Orders—e.g., the Oddfellows, and the Woodmen, etc., which need not be noticed here. They bear the family likeness and we witness against them.

6. To the objection that those who are outside these Orders cannot really know anything of their inner character and working, and are guilty of great presumption in attempting to discuss their merits or demerits, it may be answered that it is a mere device to attempt to disarm criticism, and is easily set aside. AS A MATTER OF FACT, many books have been issued



from the press dealing with the inner life and working of Secret Societies, and though many of these books were doubtless intended only for members of the Craft, it would be too much to suppose that no outsiders ever saw or read them. Besides, many members of Secret Societies have, with disgust, seceded from them and published their reasons for their secession.





D. IRVINE,  
WATERLOO PRINTING WORKS,  
LONDONDERRY.

1916.

