



HISTORICAL PART

OF THE

TESTIMONY

OF THE

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SCOTLAND:

CONTAINING

A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE CONTENDINGS OF THE WITNESSES, FROM
THE EARLIEST PERIOD TO THE PRESENT TIME.

“Ye are my witnesses.”—ISAIAH xliii. 10.

“And they overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their
testimony.”—REV. xii. 11.

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PREFACE.

THE Church of God is denominated in the Scriptures, “the pillar and ground of the truth.” This intimates, that the leading design for which she has been erected, and is permanently preserved in the world, is the exhibition of divine truth, and its preservation from age to age. A more important or beneficent design cannot be imagined. The manifestation of the divine glory, and the eternal salvation of immortal souls, are suspended on it, and inseparably connected with it.

This sublime office assigned to the church appears to include in it the following duties:—1st. That, having ascertained the genuine text of the Holy Scriptures, she adopt measures for obtaining exact and faithful translations of them into the various languages that are spoken among men, and for having them distributed among all nations. 2d. That she provide a constant supply of well-qualified preachers, by whom the doctrines of salvation may be fully and faithfully unfolded, and the ordinances of divine grace purely and regularly dispensed. 3d. That the truth of God be practically illustrated and recommended, by the deportment of her members. 4th. That in her united and public capacity, she present an exhibition of the truth in a written Confession and Testimony. We have thus a pillar of four sides, each having its own appropriate inscription. These different methods of displaying the truth cannot supersede one another, but, in their respective places,

do harmoniously co-operate; and nothing but prejudice or misconception can lead a Christian community to depreciate or neglect any of them.

The church's Confession of Faith implies an open and public avowal of revealed truth. It is a compend of scripture doctrines, presented in a systematic and orderly arrangement, and confirmed by a direct reference to the word of God. As a means of detecting error, it contributes to secure harmony of sentiment among the members of a church. By declaring the sense in which a church understands the Holy Scriptures—the supreme and infallible standard, and thus showing to the world what are the precise doctrines which she embraces, it is an invaluable help to inquirers, in their endeavours to discover what church adheres most closely to the inspired record. And it is useful for preventing those frequent changes of opinion, to which every church must otherwise be exposed, from the levity of the human mind, the love of novelty, and the craft and subtilty of plausible heretics.

In the public formularies of churches, it is not unusual to find a Confession and a Testimony substantially united. Yet each has its peculiar province. Both of them exhibit and defend divine truth; but the Testimony contemplates the truth as having encountered, and as being still exposed to opposition. In the Confession, the truths of religion are plainly written, as on a tablet erected in a public place, that all may peruse them. In the Testimony, truth is written as on a banner, which conveys the idea of moral warfare—of assault and defence. The truths which have been most vehemently denied or opposed, which learning and sophistry have laboured to obscure and pervert, or which cannot be owned without hazard or suffering, must obtain peculiar prominence in the Testimony.

Nor has the Testimony to deal with the truth only,

in the way of distinctly confessing, and fearlessly defending it. It is also its province to unmask and condemn error. It carries on an *offensive* as well as a *defensive* warfare. With its own appropriate weapon—the sword of the Spirit—it assails the enemies of true religion wherever they appear. Nor does it spare the errors and inconsistencies even of her sincere but mistaken friends. Every perversion of divine truth, every corruption of divine ordinances, every course of practical disobedience to the divine authority, must be fearlessly pointed out and condemned, by whomsoever they may be introduced or defended. In a world at enmity with God, it must very often occur, that talents, learning, and numbers, in formidable array, are leagued against the truth. Riches and honours may be the proffered rewards of unfaithfulness. Great temporal loss and reproach, and sometimes suffering and death, may be the inevitable consequences of fidelity. Hence it is, that only a small proportion, even of true Christians, are distinguished as faithful witnesses. Yet the exalted Redeemer never leaves himself without a company who, by his grace, are strengthened to plead his cause. They overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. And those who are faithful unto death receive, from the hands of their royal Master, the bright reward of a crown of life.

The first Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, after the Revolution, was published in the year 1761. In the lapse of three quarters of a century, many and great changes have taken place. Truth is immutable; but the forms of error and ungodliness are perpetually changing. That it may confront the varying forms of error, it is, therefore, indispensable that a Testimony be progressive. The times are not the same, the controversies are not the same, the parties are not the same, that they were

seventy-eight years ago. In a document published at so remote a period, there must be many things, which, however necessary and appropriate then, are inapplicable to modern times. The evolutions of Providence during the same period, bring into existence a long train of events, of which it is proper that the church should make some improvement. The necessity for a new exhibition of the principles of the church had, therefore, become evident many years ago.

The Testimony, as now published, consists of two parts, the one HISTORICAL and the other DOCTRINAL. In the *historical* part, there is presented a brief sketch of the contendings of the witnesses, from the earliest period to the present time. It was deemed important to show, that the duty and practice of witness-bearing have not been peculiar to any dispensation, nor confined to any one age.

In a work embracing so large a number of historical facts, unavoidably derived from a great variety of sources, it would be presumptuous to allege, that the utmost care and vigilance can effectually prevent all inaccuracy. The *inspired* history alone is absolutely free from error or mistake. It is an obvious inference, that when the church requires, of those admitted into her fellowship, an acknowledgment of a work like the present, the approbation expressed has a reference to the *principles* embodied in it, and *the proper application of them*, rather than to the perfect accuracy of the historical details. The history is given as affording an instructive exhibition of the principles for which the church lifts up a testimony, and a practical demonstration of the evil tendency of those doctrines which she condemns. Yet we could not presume to implore for the work the favour and blessing of the God of truth, nor commit it to the care of the faithful and true Witness, had we not the consciousness, that it has been

our earnest desire, and honest endeavour, to guard against every degree of error.

We are fully aware, that a work of this character is peculiarly exposed to censure. The nature and design of a Testimony are little understood in the present age. Laxity of principle, or indifference to divine truth, is unjustly extolled as a proof of liberality, and zeal for truth is stigmatized as uncharitableness. The office of a witness being frequently identified with that of a reprover, must inevitably incur reproach. The corrupt bias which commonly leads men to embrace erroneous opinions, also disposes them to feel offended, when their errors are pointed out and condemned. The Lord Jesus Christ himself, the faithful and true Witness, did not escape censure. He testified of the world, "that the works thereof are evil; therefore the world hated him."¹ Yet it is an office of genuine benevolence to reprove sin, and to detect and expose error. To "suffer sin upon a brother," is condemned in Scripture as equivalent to our bearing hatred against him.² "The wisdom that is from above" is indeed "peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated;" but it is "first pure," and also, "without partiality, and without hypocrisy."³

Should we have ascribed to professing Christians opinions which they do not entertain, or charged them with evils for which they are not responsible, we shall be ready, on its being pointed out, to retract the accusation, and to make due acknowledgment for our mistake. But should we give offence, or incur resentment, by the exposure of moral evils, or the condemnation of errors, whether they be found with individuals, churches, or civil communities, we shall regret this result for the truth's sake, and for the sake of those who dishonour it.

¹ John vii. 7.

² Lev. xix. 7.

³ James iii. 17.

Should we be mistaken in our views, in regard to those questions on which we differ from other divisions of the church, we are every way losers by our opinions. We have no political party or connexions to support; no secular interests to warp our judgment. Our errors are not lucrative errors.

May the Lord arise and plead his own cause! May the time to favour Zion—the set time—speedily come! May peace be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces! May the spirit of grace be poured out on all the churches which truly “hold the Head,” constraining them to renounce every error, to purge out every corruption, to abandon every sinful alliance, and to prepare for the solemn but joyful period of his coming! “His fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner, but the chaff he shall burn with unquenchable fire.”

“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Now, unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

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TESTIMONY

OF THE

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

INTRODUCTION.

THAT the Almighty Ruler of the universe should have suffered disloyalty and rebellion against himself, to predominate in the world for so many ages, is one of the deepest mysteries of divine providence. For a period of nearly six thousand years, he has beheld a wide-spreading conspiracy among his rational offspring against his righteous government; he has seen his authority despised, his law trampled under foot, and even his offers of reconciliation treated with insolent contempt. How can this consist with the glory of a Being absolutely perfect in wisdom and in righteousness?

The Scriptures furnish the answer to this inquiry. We are there informed that the present scene is only introductory, and that the glorious plan of Providence, of which we can trace but a very small part, has its final issues in the eternal world. For God "hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness;" then shall he render unto every man according to his works. In that day, the glory of the divine forbearance towards a rebellious world will be surpassed only by the still more transcendent glory arising from the

redemption of his chosen people. And it must exceedingly enhance the riches of redeeming love, when it is remembered, that in order to work out that deliverance for its objects which their circumstances required, it was necessary that the Holy One, who cannot look on iniquity, should bear with the impiety and scorn of so many ages, until the whole number of the elect should be gathered in.

Yet even during this long period of insurrection, in which the grand apostate and rebel, the Prince of Darkness, seems to have successfully usurped the authority of God, and the honour due to him from his own dependent creatures, the Almighty has by no means forsaken the earth, or left his cause without defenders.

There are several classes of WITNESSES whom he brings forward to deliver their testimony in this momentous controversy. 1st. The *works of creation* have, in every age and nation, exhibited a testimony for God, so clear and convincing, as to leave inexcusable those who disregard it. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." 2d. The *works of providence* confirm and amplify the testimony given by the works of creation. God leaves not himself without witness to his beneficence, in that he gives to men rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness. The deliverances which he has so frequently wrought for his people, and the terrible judgments which he has executed on the guilty, whether individuals or nations, have often arrested the attention of the most benighted and depraved of men, and extorted from them the confession, "Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth." 3d. The holy Scriptures may be regarded as principal wit-

nesses in this great cause. Wherever they are circulated, they testify to the nations the glory of the one true and eternal God, his sovereignty and majesty, the perfection of his nature, the wisdom and equity of his administration, and above all, the immeasurable greatness of his love, and the unsearchable riches of his grace. 4th. Another class of witnesses is found among the saints. It is one of the purposes for which God preserves his people for a time on earth, even after their union to Christ has secured their title to heaven, that they may plead his cause before the world. In a qualified sense, the whole number of true believers may be regarded as witnesses; yet this honourable title is commonly confined in Scripture to that class of believers, whose superior knowledge, zeal, and faithfulness, impart peculiar value to their testimony. In a judicial investigation before an earthly tribunal, the persons who come into court, and deliver their testimony, are denominated the witnesses, although the facts of the case may be known, and attested in private, by many others. In the days of Elijah, there were seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal, but they were too timid to give their testimony openly against the national idolatry, and were on that account unworthy of the name of witnesses. Whatever number of the seed of Abraham may have been in the plain of Dura, when idolatry was practised in obedience to royal mandate, the three youths who had been Daniel's companions, were the only witnesses there. Among the chief rulers of the Jews, many believed on Christ, but they feared openly to confess him.¹

The office of the witnesses is of transcendent importance. To hold fast and to publish all revealed truth, and to refute and condemn every error, to

¹ John xii. 42.

preserve the purity of all divine ordinances and institutions, to maintain the liberty and independence of the church, which is the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ, to assert and defend all the holy and righteous claims of God and of his Son—is a charge that might seem to demand angelic powers. Yet such is the office committed to the saints.

Intimation was given immediately after the fall, of the protracted and fearful contest that should be maintained in the world, between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, and of the ultimate triumph of truth and righteousness. The witnesses are represented as warriors, the Redeemer himself being the **HEAD** and **CAPTAIN** of the band.¹ He enlists them in the service, he inspires them with courage, he furnishes them with armour, he gives them a **BANNER**, “that it may be displayed because of the **TRUTH**;” he girds them with strength for the battle; and when, through his grace sustaining them, they continue faithful unto death, he bestows on them a crown of life.

But the weapons of the witnesses in this spiritual warfare, are not such as the world employs. On their part, violence is not met by violence, nor stratagem by deceit, nor injury by revenge. On the contrary, violence is baffled by forbearance and patience, fraud and falsehood by an open exhibition of the truth; blessing is returned for cursing, and prayer to heaven for pardon to the oppressor and persecutor is their substitute for revenge. The sword they wield is “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Their sharp arrows are drawn from the armoury of divine truth.—“By pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the

¹ John xviii. 37. Rev. i. 5, and iii. 14.

armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left," the faithful band of Christian soldiers prosecute their warfare, and the strong-holds of sin fall before them.

The testimony of the witnesses embraces the whole range of revealed truth. But it is their special province to make open confession of those truths, that are either ignorantly neglected in the world, or violently assailed by the advocates of error. Hence the peculiar testimony of one age or country, may be altogether unsuitable for another. The prophet Elijah was raised up to assert the supremacy of Jehovah, the God of Israel, and to protest against idolatry; but had John the Baptist done no more, his testimony would have been defective. And after the resurrection of Christ, the testimony given by the Baptist would have been incomplete. New events and discoveries required to be proclaimed, and new classes of opposers had risen up, whose errors required to be refuted.

5th. Organized communities, when constituted in conformity to the Scriptures, must also be regarded as witnesses. This office belongs pre-eminently to the church. To give a public and united testimony for the truth of God, and against the irreligion and idolatry of the nations, is one of the important purposes for which believers have been associated together in a church capacity. The concurrence of two or three intelligent and impartial witnesses, is deemed sufficient to establish the truth of any fact which has come under their cognizance. But when a large body of competent witnesses are united and harmonious in declaring the same truths, the weight and value of their testimony are exceedingly enhanced. The public confession of the church, judicially enacted, is avowedly a testimony for truth. The same object is effectually promoted by the full and faithful preaching of the doctrines of divine

revelation, by the joint observance of the Sabbath, as a day of holy resting in the service of God, and by the public administration of the Sacraments. When a church has become corrupt in her doctrines, or in her administration, the existence of a number of pious or enlightened men in her communion, can confer upon her no claim to be acknowledged as a witnessing church. On the other hand, a church constituted on Scriptural principles, and faithful in maintaining the doctrine, discipline, worship, and government, prescribed by the Redeemer, is fully entitled to this honourable distinction, although hypocrites and formalists may sometimes intrude themselves into her fellowship.

Even civil communities, in their own sphere, should fulfil the office of witnesses for God. When a nation, or commonwealth, favoured with the light of revelation, is careful to form its constitution and laws in accordance with the Scriptures; when the sovereignty of God, and the Mediatorial dominion of Jesus Christ, are publicly recognized; when the true religion is countenanced and protected, and all public countenance withheld from false religion; when Scriptural education is promoted, the church maintained in the full possession of her liberty and privileges, the Sabbath preserved from open desecration, public immorality discountenanced, and the righteous and pacific principles of the gospel scrupulously observed in all international intercourse, the glory of God, and the best interests of mankind are, by such means, exceedingly promoted. A nation acting in this manner would hold the same place among irreligious, anti-christian, and idolatrous nations, which an individual witness does in the midst of an ungodly community. It is a witnessing nation, whose testimony to the cause of God is of incalculable value. The history of the past supplies few examples of nations possessing this character;

but inspired prophecy gives the assurance, that this shall be the general character of the nations in the latter days. "The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

PERIOD FIRST.

FROM THE CREATION TO THE INCARNATION OF
CHRIST.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE CONTENDINGS OF THE WITNESSES BEFORE THE DELUGE.

1656 Years.

IN the first family constituted on earth, we observe the commencement of that contest which still continues. Adam's first-born presents a strongly marked specimen of the character of an ungodly world. Abel affords a pleasing example of a faithful witness for Christ. The absence of a bloody sacrifice in Cain's worship, indicates his haughty disregard of the divine institution, and his disbelief in the promise of a Saviour to make atonement for sin. Abel's offering was expressive of his own sense of guilt, of his faith in the promised Messiah, and of his obedience to the divine command. The manifest tokens of the divine favour vouchsafed to Abel, wounded the pride of Cain, and the enmity of his heart against the image of God being, at the same time, farther inflamed, probably by the serious admonitions addressed to him, he imbrued his hands in his brother's blood. It thus appears that the first redeemed

soul that passed to glory, was that of a faithful witness and a martyr.

However brief the history of Enoch, enough is told concerning him to secure for him a chief place among the witnesses. "Enoch walked with God," while surrounded by that generation whose increasing degeneracy involved the world in ruin. Unmoved by the derision of the scoffers and infidels of his day, he solemnly warned them of the approach of Christ to judgment, when all the ungodly deeds, and all the hard speeches of the wicked, shall receive an appropriate recompense.¹

The patriarch Noah spent six hundred years of his remarkable life in the old world. At the time when "the earth was corrupt before God, and filled with violence," "Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations." He descried the coming Saviour in the divine promise, and being fully persuaded of it, he embraced it, and became "an heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Nor did he confront the impiety of the world only by the silent testimony of his own shining example; he was also "a preacher of righteousness." His faith and obedience, manifested in preparing the ark, were calculated strongly to arrest the attention of men, and to give emphasis to his warnings and exhortations. Thus Noah "condemned the world." His efforts to reclaim his contemporaries rendered more inexcusable their headlong career of ungodliness, and served to vindicate the righteousness of God in that overwhelming judgment by which they perished.

Thus we can trace, in the contendings of the early witnesses, the most important doctrines of divine revelation. Their testimony manifestly embraced the doctrine of God's moral government over the world—of man's fallen and guilty condition—of his

¹ Jude 14, 15.

absolute need of an atonement for the removal of sin—of the appointment, and the promise of the Son of God, to accomplish the salvation of those who should believe—and of the certainty of a future state of retribution, in which the equity of the divine administration shall be displayed in the eternal destinies of the righteous and of the wicked.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE DELUGE TO THE GIVING OF THE LAW FROM
MOUNT SINAI.

A. M. 1656 to 2513.

FOR three hundred and fifty years after the flood, Noah lived to instruct the new world, of which he was the founder. When men began a second time to multiply on the earth, the force of human depravity was not long restrained by the recollection of the deluge, or by the traces of desolation which it left behind it. The efficiency of tradition, as a means of preserving and extending knowledge, was gradually impaired by the diminished term of human life. Long before the removal of those patriarchs who had witnessed the destruction of the old world, idolatry was established among their posterity, and ignorance and immorality had reached an alarming height. At this crisis the benevolent scheme, which the wisdom of God had arranged for preventing the universal spread of irreligion and ungodliness, began to be unfolded.

In two grand experiments, proof had now been given of the tendencies of fallen humanity, and of the fruits which it yields, both in families and in society at large. The first of these occupied a pe-

riod of 1600 years: the second about 400. In each case, the entire population of the world proceeded from a single family; and in each case provision was made for securing to this family a religious education. Yet, in both instances, as mankind were multiplied on the earth, the knowledge of God was gradually lost, and ignorance and impiety were speedily followed by superstition and idolatry. Even the family in which Abraham was brought up, was not exempted from these enormous evils.¹ As a means of preserving the followers of the true God, in a state of separation from the prevailing idolatry, it had now become necessary that the church should receive a more distinct visible organization.

The calling of Abraham, and the separation of his posterity in the line of Isaac, from the other families of the earth, were events of high importance in the evolution of the scheme of redemption. One grand result of these transactions was the preservation of a SUCCESSION of WITNESSES to the coming of Christ, the Faithful and True Witness. The three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were distinguished witnesses for Jehovah. Their frequent removals were made subservient to the wider diffusion of their testimony. To whatever tribe they came, they carried their religion along with them. Their worship was openly rendered to the ONE, LIVING, and TRUE GOD, the Maker of heaven and earth, whose covenant of promise they had cordially embraced. Their sacrifices prefigured the sufferings and death of Christ, as the true and only propitiation for sin. And while they professed their faith in the Messiah to come, their conduct gave practical testimony to the glorious character of the God whom they served. The uprightness of

¹ Joshua ~~ix.~~ 2.

their deportment attested the righteousness of his government, and the holiness of his law. Their reverence of him bespoke his awful majesty. Their punctual obedience, even to the most difficult commands, was a confession of his sovereign authority. Their steadfast reliance on his promises, whatever delays intervened, testified to his faithfulness. Their astonishing exploits afforded evidence of his power and superintending providence. Their supreme love to him was a reflection of his infinite excellence.

The importance of this era demands a few additional observations.

1st. The church of God now received a more complete organization than it had possessed hitherto. All true believers, in every age, have an intimate union with each other in Christ their Head; yet there was little of visible union among the scattered servants of God, until the time of Abraham. 2d. The church was then openly constituted a COVENANT SOCIETY. At no period, previous to this, was there given so clear a revelation of the covenant of grace. Nor was the church as a visible society, heretofore, so palpably separated from the world and brought into a peculiar covenant relation with God, on the basis of the covenant of redemption.¹ 3d. The peculiar privileges of the church of God, were secured to this society until the coming of Christ.

This special grant of church privileges to Abraham and his seed, did by no means limit the sovereign grace of God, so as to prevent the calling and salvation of individuals belonging to other tribes and nations. The Scriptures make known several instances of remarkable illumination and elevated piety, in persons not descended from Abraham. Some of these were contemporaries with

¹ Gen. xvii. 5-8; Ps. cv. 8-10.

that patriarch, and others posterior to him. In this class, Melchizedec, who was king of Salem, and priest of the Most High God, holds a conspicuous place.¹ The character of Lot is marred with some serious blemishes; yet the Lord who searches the heart, bears testimony to his uprightness. His residence in Sodom, although improper on his part, served to render the unbounded profligacy of the place more inexcusable, and to vindicate the righteous judgment of God, by which its guilty inhabitants are "set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Job and his friends must also be regarded as enlightened worshippers of Jehovah, and believers in the promise of a coming Saviour. To these may be added Jethro, the priest of Midian, who gave to Moses such excellent counsel respecting the government of the twelve tribes.² All these are with propriety placed among the witnesses. But as the Lord foresaw that the number of such characters among the nations would be continually diminishing, until they should almost disappear, he made provision for preserving the true religion, and for raising up a competent number of faithful witnesses to plead his cause, by separating the seed of Abraham, in the line of Isaac and Jacob, from all the families of the earth, and setting them apart for himself, as his peculiar people.

The sojourning of the Israelites in Egypt, brought the true religion very conspicuously into view in that kingdom. The renown of Joseph, combined with his exalted station, must have powerfully attracted the attention of the whole kingdom to himself and his religion. His views respecting the idolatry of that land, and the character and attributes of the TRUE GOD, could not fail to be extensively known throughout the nation. More than

¹ Gen. xiv. 18—20.

² Exod. xviii. 21—23.

ninety years of his life seem to have been spent in Egypt. The residence of the whole seed of Jacob there, for more than two hundred years, tended to diffuse still more widely the knowledge of God, and of the worship acceptable to him. Moses, another illustrious witness, was brought up in the court of Pharaoh. His exalted character, as well as his eminent learning and abilities, must have imparted great weight to his testimony, which his zeal and faithfulness would not suffer him to suppress. The deliberate choice which he made of poverty and contempt in fellowship with the people of God, in preference to the splendid prospects that opened before him in Egypt, was a sublime practical testimony for the truth. In conjunction with his brother Aaron, he was afterwards honoured to plead the cause of God before Pharaoh and his people by miracles, and a succession of plagues, each of which was an infliction of divine wrath on a nation that refused to be reformed. The obstinate attachment of Egypt to her degrading superstition, amidst so many displays of the being and attributes of Jehovah, together with her pride, and cruel oppression of the people of God, brought upon her finally two desolating judgments—the death of the first-born, and the destruction of Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea.

It may be here remarked, that as Egypt was a mart of nations, her inhabitants would acquire knowledge by the influx of commercial people from other countries, and particularly from Asia—twice the cradle of the human family. It was the opinion of a distinguished philosopher,¹ that the literature and astronomy of Egypt were imported from Asia. Whatever advantages the country afforded, they were enjoyed by Moses, who was “learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.”

¹ Sir Isaac Newton.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE GIVING OF THE LAW TO THE INCARNATION OF
CHRIST.*A.M. 2513 to 4004.*

THE transactions at Mount Sinai developed more fully the vast importance of the calling of Abraham, and the separation of his descendants from the other tribes of men. It was a new spectacle that was there exhibited, and one without any parallel from the creation of the world, when a whole nation, amounting in number to millions, was formally brought into solemn covenant with Jehovah. The covenant of grace was the basis of this national covenant. The sacrifices offered afford decisive evidence, that the friendship so solemnly ratified, was founded on the atonement of Christ, of which they were the appointed symbols.

By this transaction the seed of Jacob were incorporated into a church and a nation, and in these capacities became witnesses for Jehovah. And an attentive perusal of their history will show, that their national prosperity was inseparably connected with faithfulness in their public testimony.

The church erected among the seed of Abraham must be regarded as a witnessing society. The testimony of the church was exhibited in her divinely appointed ordinances; in her religious observance of the Sabbath; in her priests and sacrifices; in circumcision and the passover, the public seals of her covenant relation to God; and in the three great festivals, in which all the males were required to assemble at the tabernacle to worship Jehovah, dwelling among his people on a mercy-seat. These and other observances of their public worship, implied a declaration of their faith in the unity and

sovereignty of God, the holiness of his character, and the righteousness of his law. They contained an acknowledgment on the part of the worshippers of their own guilt, their need of a Mediator and an atonement, and an expression of their faith in the promised Messiah, by whom guilt should be expiated, the wrath of God averted, and the covenant of peace ratified.

By engaging one entire nation in the service of God, an opportunity was afforded of unfolding the principles of the divine administration towards civil communities, and of giving instruction to them in regard to the duties they owe to the Supreme Ruler. It is admitted that both in the ecclesiastical and political constitutions of the Hebrews, there were many things not intended nor calculated for other ages and nations. Yet, from the procedure of Jehovah towards that people, several most important principles may be clearly deduced, which both reason and Scripture demonstrate to have been neither local nor temporary in their character. Of these we may specify the following:—

1st. That nations or commonwealths, are subjects of the moral government of God, as well as individuals; that he asserts his supremacy over them; claims homage and submission from them; takes cognizance of their laws, and of their public national deeds; that he honours and exalts those which revere his authority, but will, sooner or later, execute punishment on every kingdom, however powerful, which resisteth his will, and trampleth under foot his law.¹

2d. That the just and lawful authority of civil rulers is derived from God, who is the supreme fountain of all power;² and that in ordinary cases, the

¹ Psalm xxii. 28, and lxxxii. 1—8. 1 Chron. xvi. 21. Jer. x. 7.

² Psalm lxii. 11. Dan. iv. 25. Rom. xiii. 1, 4. Deut. xvii. 15. Hosea viii. 4.

regular and proper channel through which it is conveyed to men, is the choice and appointment of the people.¹

3d. That in the election of rulers, a people possessing the Scriptures are bound to select men having those qualifications which God himself has prescribed.²

4th. That in lands enlightened by the word of God, civil rulers are bound to frame their laws, and regulate their whole administration, in strict accordance with that supreme standard.³

5th. That it is the duty and privilege of nations, favoured with the true religion, to do homage to the Most High, by making an open and public surrender of themselves to his service; and to confirm that surrender by solemn vow and covenant.⁴

6th. That although a bond framed for some specific object, ceases to be obligatory when its object is fully accomplished, a national covenant, embracing the permanent moral duties which the nation owes to God, cannot be annulled, either by the lapse of time, or by the apostacy of a nation.⁵

7th. By the divine appointment, the Jewish commonwealth exhibited to the nations a memorable example of an alliance between church and state, and of a civil polity so framed, as effectually to promote the interests of the church, without their being blended together, or the one invading the province of the other. The Hebrew church was manifestly distinct from the state. The proselytes of the covenant were admitted as full members of the church, and thus ingrafted into the stock of Abraham, but were not admitted to the same civil privileges as the

¹ Deut. i. 13. 1 Sam. xi. 15. 2 Sam. ii. 4; v. 1—3.

² Exod. xviii. 21. 2 Sam. xxiii. 2, 3.

³ Deut. xvii. 18. Isa. viii. 20.

⁴ Exod. xxiv. 7. 2 Kings xxiii. 3. Isa. xix. 18—21. Rev. xi. 15.

⁵ Deut. v. 2, 3; and xxix. 14, 15, 25. 1 Kings xix. 10. Jer. xi. 2—10; and xxii. 8, 9.

native Israelites. The proselytes of the gate were admitted to some civil privileges, but not to any participation of the benefits of the ecclesiastical covenant. The courts were also different. The sanhedrim and the synagogue, to judge of religious concerns, were perfectly distinct from the civil sanhedrim, and the courts of the gates, which judged of civil matters. The church had the power of settling controversies which respected the religious character, by the ceremonial law. And to the state belonged the decision of controversies respecting injuries and property, by the judicial law. The priests and Levites were the ministers of religion, acting with the assistance of the prophets sent, occasionally, by the Lord. The civil officers, judges, and kings, were magistrates; but not, as such, authorized to officiate in religious services. And although the civil constitution underwent many alterations during the existence of the Hebrew nation, the ecclesiastical system continued unaltered.

Although from the time of Moses, the custody of divine revelation was committed exclusively to the seed of Jacob, certain rays of divine truth breaking out from them, alleviated the darkness of neighbouring kingdoms. The power of David and Solomon, as well as of some of their successors, was felt and acknowledged by several of the nations lying contiguous to Judea. This led to intercourse between the Israelites and their neighbours, and to a mutual acquaintance with their religious systems, respectively. The same result was extensively and permanently promoted by commerce. To the people of the covenant this intercourse proved exceedingly ensnaring;—the source of frequent backslidings, which were followed by national calamities. Yet it served to exhibit a testimony for Jehovah very widely among the Gentiles;—such a reflection of the “true light,” as should have led them “to seek

the Lord," so as "to feel after him and find him."¹ In the days of Solomon, there was a very extensive intercourse between his subjects and other nations, for the purposes of trade and commerce. It is also recorded that there was a vast concourse at Jerusalem, of those among the nations, who were distinguished for wisdom or learning, that they might receive instruction from a prince so celebrated. Among the number who were attracted by his fame, the queen of Sheba came to Jerusalem "with a very great train." It is said, that "all the earth sought to Solomon to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart."² The occurrences recorded in the book of Esther, show to what an extent the knowledge of the Jewish people, and of their religion, was diffused throughout the provinces of the Medo-Persian Empire. Advantages still more abundant were afforded to the Chaldeans, and to the numerous tribes under their dominion, by the wide dispersion and long residence of the seed of Jacob among them; by the exalted and commanding position attained by Daniel and his companions, in the government of the empire; and by the astonishing displays of the omniscience and Almighty power of Jehovah, exhibited in Babylon,—the most conspicuous theatre in the world. Here, as in Egypt, resistance to the light, and an obstinate continuance in false religion and in crime, consummated the guilt of the haughty Babylonians, and in a short time brought upon them those desolating judgments which laid their magnificent city in ruins.

The precious treasure of revealed truth was enlarged, from time to time, by the contributions of inspired writers, for a period of more than one thousand years. Malachi was the last of the penmen of the Old Testament, who prophesied about four

¹ Acts xvii. 27.

² 1 Kings x. 24.

hundred and twenty years before the coming of Christ. The providence of God was remarkably displayed in the preservation of the sacred volume, during the darkest periods of the apostacy of the Jewish nation, and amidst all the convulsions and calamities through which they passed. From the time of Ezra the scribe, means were adopted for increasing the number of copies of the Scriptures, and for having them read in the synagogues and explained to the people every Sabbath day.

When the people of the Jews became so degenerate that they could no longer be recognized as a witnessing people, the Lord raised up individual witnesses to protest against the abominations of heathen lands, and the still more aggravated and provoking wickedness of his own covenant people. Of these witnesses some were distinguished for their rank, as well as for their zeal in the cause of God. Several of the kings of Judah were both witnesses and reformers. Under their direction the monuments of idolatry were destroyed, the public morals were corrected, the divinely appointed order of religious worship was restored, and the national covenant was several times solemnly renewed. All the prophets, too, must be recognized as distinguished witnesses. They were frequently sent to protest against the ignorance and impiety, and sometimes against the gross wickedness and idolatry of their brethren, the seed of Abraham. In many cases they were called to seal their testimony with their blood.

From Nehemiah and Malachi to the coming of Christ, the spirit of prophecy was suspended. Malachi intimated among the last of his predictions, that after himself no prophet should arise till the harbinger of the Messiah should appear. It was during this period, however, that the greater part, if not the whole, of the apocryphal writings sprung

up. Notwithstanding of this, the church of Rome, in the sixteenth century, pronounced the greater part of these writings canonical, and an integral part of divine revelation. They were never recognized as such by the Jewish church, by our Lord or his Apostles, or by the primitive Christians. They possess neither external nor internal evidence of divine authority. They are often childish and absurd, and at variance with themselves, with authentic history, and with the word of God.

During this period the Scriptures were translated into the Greek language, for the benefit, it is supposed, of the Jews in Alexandria and other parts, who had acquired a knowledge of that language, and were rapidly losing their own. This translation, called the Septuagint, was extensively read both in the Jewish synagogues and in the primitive churches. It was frequently quoted by our Lord and by his inspired Apostles, and thus we have their authority for the use of translations. Its existence and extensive circulation before the Christian era, furnish evidence of the antiquity of the Hebrew originals, and supply a powerful argument in confirmation of their genuineness and authenticity.

Nearly 170 years before Christ, the church was subjected to a severe and unprecedented persecution. Antiochus Epiphanes, one of the Grecian kings of Syria, issued a decree that the people within his dominions should conform to the heathen mythology, under the highest penalties, intending thereby to extinguish the Jewish religion, name, and nation. In pursuance of this terrible decree, the public worship of the true God was suppressed in Judea, and the worship of false gods set up in the very temple. The reading of the law in the synagogues was forbidden, and all who had copies of it were commanded to deliver them up, on pain of death, that they might be destroyed. Many bent to the

storm, and preserved their lives by criminal compliances; others refused, preferring death to the renunciation of their religion. The most distinguished martyrs were Eleazar, and a mother with her seven sons, to whom, with others, it is supposed, allusion is made in the epistle to the Hebrews.¹ Others rose in self-defence; and under the command of a remarkable family, known in history by the name of Maccabees,² maintained war with surrounding nations for many years.

Towards the close of Daniel's prophetic weeks, a general expectation prevailed respecting the advent of the Messiah. This expectation was not confined to the Jews, but extended to the Gentiles, both of the East and of the West. Messiah was "the Desire of all nations." Devout Simeon, and Anna the prophetess, were "waiting for the Consolation of Israel." Mention is made of others "who looked for redemption in Jerusalem." In all ages, from Abel to John the Baptist, the Lord preserved a company of witnesses to plead his cause. They testified their faith in the unity and supremacy of Jehovah, and in a Messiah to come, who should take away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and they testified against the polytheism and idolatry of an apostate and rebellious world.

¹ Heb. xi. 35—38.

² The motto on their standard, taken from Exod. xv. 11, was, "Who is like unto thee, O Jehovah?" The initial letters of the Hebrew words composing that motto, being combined, make the word Maccabi, whence, it is believed, the title Maccabees has been derived.

PERIOD SECOND.

FROM THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST TO THE
REFORMATION.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THE ADVENT TO THE TIME OF CONSTANTINE.

A.D. 1 to 313.

AT length the Son of God himself, who is the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, appeared in the world. In the whole of his public ministry, he must be regarded as sustaining the character of a witness. In his knowledge of the truth, and delight in it; in his zeal for the glory of God; in the wisdom with which his testimony was at all times adapted to the occasion, and to the character of those whom he addressed; in the combination of invincible courage with meekness and gentleness, and of a holy indignation against sin, with tender compassion for the most atrocious offenders, he alone was perfect before God. He taught the truth, and confuted error; he asserted the authority, and vindicated the excellency of the divine law, in his discourses, and by his example. He severely reprimanded the Jews for their manifold corruptions of divine ordinances, and especially for their blindness, hypocrisy, and unbelief. The world hated him, because he testified of it that its works were evil.¹ Before the judgment-seat of Pilate he appears as a CONFESSOR, asserting his kingly authority, and proclaiming his high office as a witness for the truth.² And on Calvary he becomes a MARTYR, sealing his testimony with his own precious blood.

¹ John vii. 7.² John xviii. 37.

The death of Christ upon the cross, as an expiatory sacrifice for sin, furnishes the most complete and comprehensive testimony to the character, and government, and attributes of Jehovah, which has ever been exhibited to mankind. The dispensations of divine Providence which preceded this event, may be viewed as preparations for it; the subsequent history of the divine government in the world is adapted to illustrate and explain it; and it will continue to afford throughout eternity, to the universe of intelligent beings, the most illustrious display of the glory of the Godhead, and of the harmony of the divine attributes.

Of those doctrines which constituted the chief ground of controversy between Christ and the Jewish people, we may specify the following:—1st. That he was the eternal Son of God, equal with the Father in the participation of all divine perfections, and one with him in his mighty works.¹ 2d. That he was the true Messiah,² the Saviour of the world. And, 3d. That in this character, as “God manifest in the flesh,” he was invested by the Father with universal authority, and had a righteous claim on the homage and obedience of all mankind.³ This doctrine our Lord asserted in the hall of the high priest, and before the judgment-seat of Pilate.⁴

After the ascension of Christ into heaven, the testimony of the witnesses was transferred from the Jewish church to the Apostles, and to the churches planted by them. Before his decease, the Redeemer delivered ample and varied instructions to his disciples in regard to this department of their work, exhorting and charging them to make open confession of his name, even at the hazard of their lives; and when he showed himself alive to them after his passion, he solemnly renewed the same injunction.

¹ John i. 18; v. 17—30; x. 30.

² John viii. 24.

³ Luke xix. 12, 27.

⁴ Matt. xxvi. 64. John xviii. 37.

Just before his ascension, he said to them, “Ye shall be *witnesses* unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”¹

Of the doctrines which entered into their testimony, we may specify the following:—1st. That Jesus of Nazareth, whom the Jews and the Romans conspired to nail to the cross as a malefactor, was the Son of the living God, the promised Messiah. 2d. That he rose again from the dead on the third day by his own power, and ascended into heaven. 3d. That the ceremonial law was now accomplished and abrogated, and a new dispensation established. 4th. That the sufferings and death of Christ constitute the only sacrifice by which guilt can be taken away, and his finished obedience in his life and death, the only righteousness through which a sinner can be accepted. 5th. That the blessings of the great salvation are, by divine appointment, now freely offered to the Gentiles of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, as well as to the Jews. 6th. That to the Messiah, now exalted to the right hand of God, the whole administration of the kingdoms of providence and of grace is committed; and that all creatures are bound to serve and obey him. 7th. That he will come again at the last day to judge the world, to confer eternal life on his people, and to punish with everlasting destruction all the unbelieving and ungodly.

The marvellous success of the gospel in the first age, calls for devout acknowledgment and fervent praise. The deplorable condition of the nations, in regard to religion and morality, at the time of the ascension of Christ, rendered this success the more conspicuous. The whole world was lying in wickedness. The kingdom of Satan was fortified on all

¹ Acts i. 8.

sides with consummate skill, and by the most powerful barriers. The systems of superstition and idolatry which every where prevailed, had become venerable in the eyes of men by their very age, and were upheld by all the prejudices and corrupt passions of the human heart. The civil governments of the nations, and an interested and crafty priesthood, were equally resolute in the defence of these systems. Even that nation to which had been committed the lively oracles, and in which the church of God had been so long preserved, had arrived at a degree of wickedness little inferior to that of heathen nations; and in malignant enmity against Christ and his gospel it surpassed them all.

The day of Pentecost was rendered memorable by the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples. The "cloven tongues, like as of fire," which rested on them, were emblematical of the gifts bestowed on them, and of the divine energy that accompanied the preaching of the word. They were instantaneously endowed with the gift of tongues, and with the power of working miracles. Their darkness and carnal prejudices vanished, and they were supernaturally and infallibly led to the knowledge of divine truth. Undaunted courage succeeded to their former timidity. Impelled by a holy ardour to preach the gospel to their fellow-men, they were not dismayed by the vastness of the enterprize to which they were summoned, nor by the consideration of their own weakness. Relying on the power and promise of their exalted King, they unfurled the banner which he had committed to them, and went forth to the contest against the ungodliness of the world. They dissipated ignorance by sound instruction; they combated error and sophistry by irresistible argument; and they exposed the viciousness of the world's morality, both by their doctrine and by the lustre of a holy life. The

hostility and violence with which they were assailed, were met and baffled by their meekness and patience under suffering. The weapons of their warfare proved mighty through God, to the pulling down the strongholds of Satan's kingdom. Churches were planted and multiplied with astonishing rapidity, and replenished with the influences of the Holy Spirit. The extraordinary gifts which were, for a season, granted to the disciples, qualified them to become evangelists, pastors, and teachers, independently of superior mental endowments, or of any previous preparation. The people and the teachers were cordially united in the momentous work of spreading the gospel. The same Spirit who sustained the ardour of missionary zeal in the breasts of the preachers, constrained the company of believers to consecrate to the Lord such a portion of their substance as his cause required. Even some of the poorest churches were most conspicuous for their liberality. When the church was subjected to persecution, the providence of God overruled this violence to the furtherance of the gospel. Those that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. And when the exalted Messiah restrained the enemy and granted rest, the churches "were edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

Yet even in the season of greatest prosperity, the experience of the church was by no means of a uniform, or unmingled character. The morning was bright, but dark clouds soon began to give indication of approaching storms. From various sources was the infant church exposed to danger;—from popular violence, inflamed by a bigoted and enraged priesthood; from the determined hostility of the secular powers; and from the breaking out of heresies and schisms within her own pale. The most

fatal injury arose from the last of these causes, which operated like a malignant distemper among the ranks of a victorious army, paralyzing the force which the enemy could not subdue. Yet in one respect it was a merciful dispensation, that most of those pernicious errors, which have so grievously afflicted the church of God, were suffered to make their appearance while there were yet inspired teachers to confute and condemn them.

Even at that early period, the apostles perceived and pointed out the working of those elements which, many ages after, introduced the grand apostacy. When the churches became numerous and wealthy, the office of the ministry began to be invaded by men whom the Lord had characterized as "hirelings," and the apostle to the Gentiles as "grievous wolves." The apostle Peter, too, in terms not less emphatical, predicts the rise of teachers, who would introduce "damnable heresies," and "through covetousness make merchandise" of immortal souls. Among this class of teachers, a most hateful ambition soon sprung up, which, in defiance of the Saviour's warning, renewed the strife about pre-eminence.¹ Thus was disclosed the first germ of that hierarchy which, in subsequent ages, became the most formidable and tyrannical of powers that ever existed on the earth.

Another of the early indications of the grand apostacy, was a growing disposition in the church to relax her discipline, especially in regard to the rich.² The terms of church-fellowship were laid down by the inspired writers, and especially by the apostle Paul in his epistles to the church at Corinth. In the seven epistles addressed by the Redeemer to the Asiatic Churches, the subject of discipline has peculiar prominence. And it deserves to be parti-

¹ Matt. xx. 20—28.

² James ii.

cularly remarked, that He “who walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks,” and who bears “the sharp sword with two edges,” has connected the subversion of these churches with the relaxation of their discipline.¹

Until the end of the third century, the church was subjected to frequent persecutions, which, for their extent and severity, were then without parallel. The most extensive empire which the world had ever beheld was then in the zenith of its power. Its symbol was the fourth beast in Daniel’s prophecy, “dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly,” which “devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it.”² Had not the Prince of the kings of the earth restrained this monster, both the woman and her seed must have perished. But He who shut the mouths of the lions, when his faithful servant was cast to them for a prey, wonderfully preserved his church in this period of extreme peril; and in less than three hundred years from the time that the gospel began to be preached at Jerusalem, the empire of Pagan idolatry was subverted.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE TIME OF CONSTANTINE TO THE REFORMATION
IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

A.D. 313 to 1517.

THE revolution effected under the Emperor Constantine, was one of the most astonishing events in the history of the world, and deserves to be com-

¹ Rev. ii. 14—16, 20.

² Daniel vii. 7.

memorated as a glorious display of the power of Zion's exalted King. It is very commonly believed that this revolution is predicted by the apostle John, in the last six verses of the sixth chapter of the Apocalypse, where images of amazing grandeur are employed to represent it. That the church did not properly improve the deliverance then wrought for her, does not detract from the value of that deliverance itself. Under Dioclesian, one of the most powerful and politic of the Roman Cesars, a sanguinary and dreadful persecution had been carried on for a period of ten years, the avowed design of which was the suppression of Christianity. At this crisis the Governor among the nations interposed. "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted."

It is the province of God to bring relief and deliverance to his church in her greatest extremities; but it is common for men to abuse the divine beneficence, as an occasion of more aggravated sin. When God rained down manna for his people in their distress, covetous Israelites hoarded it up, until "it bred worms and stank." It was so in the period of church history now before us. Constantine had few superiors as an intrepid and successful general, and he was an eminent instrument in the hand of divine providence in overturning the reign of Paganism; but he does not appear to have possessed those qualifications, without which, the exercise of civil power about religion must ever be attended with the most serious danger. Even before this period, very great defections from the purity of the primitive church had taken place; but the progress of declension became, henceforth, more rapid and extensive. The discipline of the church being grievously relaxed, multitudes crowded into her communion from corrupt motives, who, with equal alacrity, would have crowded into the heathen tem-

ples, had Paganism continued to be the religion of the empire. The wealth which was so incautiously and so lavishly poured into the bosom of the church from various sources,¹ proved an irresistible attraction to covetous men to intrude themselves into the office of the ministry; and their avarice and ambition were stimulated by the emoluments and honours of a hierarchy having no foundation in Scripture, and altogether incompatible with the simplicity of the New Testament church. The great impediment to the growth and progress of the apostacy—the pagan Roman empire²—was now removed, and the tide of error and superstition continued to swell and to extend itself, until the greater part of the visible church was ultimately overwhelmed by it. The holy Scriptures, which are able to make men wise unto salvation, began to be neglected, and human traditions were exalted. As the people progressively sunk in ignorance, they were the more easily duped and enslaved. The clergy, increasing in wealth and luxury, and neglecting the proper duties of their office, began to domineer over God's heritage, and became fierce and intolerant towards those who presumed to differ from them in their religious sentiments, or to impugn their usurped authority. And what seemed most of all inexcusably wicked, within the pale of the visible church, which had suffered so much from persecution, and by the almighty power of her Head, had been so marvellously delivered from it, contending parties began to persecute each other. The most powerful empire which ever existed had "taken the sword and perished by the sword;" yet the professed followers of Jesus, forgetting their own divine maxim, that "the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them," now began "to hate one

¹ Hallam's Middle Ages, chap. vii.

² 2 Thess. ii. 6, 7.

another, and to kill one another." Thus in the lap of ease and luxury, and by the injudicious and mistaken munificence, both of private individuals and of princes, was nursed into power that "Man of Sin and son of perdition," who in after ages became a terror to the whole earth, and exalted his usurped authority into blasphemous competition with the throne of God.

As the church had been seduced from her fidelity, and robbed of her independence, by an alliance with a state which was not itself reformed according to the scriptural standard, nor under the regulation of Christian principle, so in the providence of God, she was made to share largely in the extreme sufferings to which the empire was afterwards subjected. A period of about one hundred and fifty years from the close of the fourth century, is marked by historians as one of unexampled misery to the nations.¹ This misery was inflicted by the sword of the northern barbarians, who, by successive irruptions, poured their resistless torrents into the heart of the Roman empire, spreading carnage and desolation through its richest provinces, until at last, when all resistance was overpowered, the conquerors were content to settle down among the residue of the aboriginal inhabitants. By this means the vast empire was finally broken up, and divided into a number of independent kingdoms. In the lapse of time, those warlike and barbarous tribes, by whom the Most High had punished the wickedness both of the church and of the empire, adopted the religion of the vanquished, and contributed, by their ignorance and superstition, to increase the growing degeneracy, until the "MYSTERY OF INIQUITY" was fully revealed. The elevation of the bishop of Rome to the authority of universal bishop, and his

¹ Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, chap. xxx., *et seq.*; Robertson's *Charles V.*, vol. I, p. 8.

being constituted the supreme head of all churches, placed the top-stone on the New Testament Babylon. There is reason to conclude, that it was at this crisis, the ten horns of Daniel's vision, growing on the seventh head of the fourth beast, sprang up into existence.¹

From this period we are inclined to date the commencement of the prophesying of the two witnesses, who hold so conspicuous a place in the prospective history of the church.² For wise and holy purposes it seemed good to him, who is unsearchable in counsel, to suffer the mystery of iniquity—the profoundest of all the artifices which Satan ever imposed upon the world—to unfold itself for the long period of twelve hundred and sixty years. In the writings of Daniel, of Paul, and of John, the character and history of this apostacy are delineated with such accuracy, and the coincidence between the prophecy and the actual history of the Romish system, is so remarkable, as to leave no rational ground for hesitation in applying the one to the other. In prophecy it was foretold, that the most formidable opposition which the cause of the Redeemer should encounter in the world, would be made under a profession of Christianity;³ that the visible church would become heathenish in her doctrines, her rites, and her worship;⁴ that the homage and worship due to the only true God, would be rendered to an impious usurper, placing himself in the temple of God, and exalting himself, in his arrogant claims and pretensions “above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.”⁵ From the determined opposition made in this system to the gospel scheme of redemption, and to the authority and glory of the Saviour, protestant writers have commonly

¹ Daniel vii. 7, 24. ² Rev. xi. 3—12. ³ 2 Thess. ii. 3.
⁴ Rev. xi. 2. ⁵ 2 Thess. ii. 4.

applied to it the designation of Antichrist.¹ It is farther predicted, that during the continuance of this system, the apostate church should maintain an unhallowed connexion with the immoral secular powers of the nations;² that the secular and ecclesiastical powers should mutually support and strengthen each other;³ that by these two powers combined, the blood of the saints should be shed in vast profusion;⁴ that the true church which keeps the commandments of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, should stand in continual peril of total destruction;⁵ and that as a means of preserving her, the Lord would keep her in a state of poverty and obscurity, strongly contrasting with the magnificence and power of the apostate church.⁶ It is also expressly foretold, that during the whole period of Antichrist's reign, the Almighty Saviour should provide and sustain a succession of witnesses to give evidence in his cause, and to protest against the usurpation and rebellion of those powers that had conspired against him; that the number of these witnesses should be small, and their condition one of privation and suffering, but that their testimony should be of superlative importance, in vindicating the glory of God, reproving the nations for their guilt, and leaving without excuse the votaries of the apostacy.⁷ The preservation of the witnesses during this dreary period of profound policy and unrestrained cruelty,—of tyranny in the state, and of hypocrisy, impiety, and blasphemy in the apostate church, will be remembered through all ages, as a remarkable demonstration of the power and faithfulness of Zion's King.

The importance attached in Scripture to this period, and the fact that the mystery of iniquity, after having existed for more than a thousand years,

¹ 1 John ii. 18, and iv. 3.

² Rev. xvii. 1, 2.

³ Rev. xvii. 3, 7.

⁴ Rev. xvii. 6, 13.

⁵ Rev. xii. 3, 4.

⁶ Rev. xii. 6.

⁷ Rev. xi. 3—12.

continues to the present day the grand impediment to the coming of Christ's kingdom, involving the nations in guilt, and immortal souls in perdition, demand that we should state somewhat more fully the principal evils of the grand apostacy.

1st. When examined by Scripture and right reason, the system of Popery is convicted of the guilt of palpable idolatry. It teaches and enjoins the religious worship of angels, and departed spirits, and particularly of Mary, the mother of Jesus; and the giving a superstitious reverence to images, pictures, relics, and the figure of the cross.

2d. It is justly charged both with blasphemy and idolatry, in ascribing the titles and attributes of God to those priests who have in succession occupied the papal chair. Under this head may be ranked the pretended infallibility of the church, or of the Pope; his claim to absolute dominion over the consciences of men; his absolutions, indulgences, dispensations, by which he presumes to annul the obligation of the divine law, not excepting those principles of eternal truth and righteousness, which, consistently with his own character, God himself cannot change. In the same class may be placed the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation, according to which the priest who celebrates mass professes to convert a piece of bread into the body and blood, and soul and divinity of the Son of God, and adores the consecrated wafer which he afterwards eats.

3d. The church of Rome is guilty of most aggravated rebellion against God, by suppressing, to the utmost of her ability, the testimony of his word; prohibiting the perusal and study of the Scriptures by the people; giving corrupt translations of them; perverting their meaning; teaching that their authority is subordinate to that of the church, and that the interpretation of them by the church is to be implicitly received, however contradictory to reason and

common sense; and by placing uncertain human traditions and apocryphal writings on a level with the inspired records.

4th. Popery despoils the Saviour of the glory that belongs to him in the various offices he sustains towards his church. His prophetic office is invaded by the arrogant claims specified under the last head. His priestly office is virtually superseded by the priests and intercessors of the Church of Rome. His sacrifice is made of no account, by the numerous expedients prescribed in that church for the removal of sin. Of these we may mention auricular confession, penance, pilgrimages, masses, absolutions by the priest, fastings, alms and offerings to the church, holy waters, extreme unction, the fire of purgatory, and the prayers and masses which are offered up for the dead. The Pope and his clergy usurp the kingly office of Christ, by claiming a lordship over conscience; by presuming to absolve men from guilt; by instituting rites, ceremonies, and fictitious sacraments, which have no warrant in the divine word; and by exercising an absolute spiritual jurisdiction over the church, and, in so far as they have been able, an absolute secular dominion over the nations. This extensive and remarkable opposition to Christ, in his offices, his work, and the glory which belongs to him as the author of salvation to the redeemed, incontestably stamps upon the system the character of Antichristian.

5th. The office of the sanctifying Spirit is also dishonoured and virtually superseded by this system. The whole catalogue of external rites to which Popery ascribes virtue for purifying the soul, may be performed by an unregenerate man, without the aid of the Holy Spirit. The preparation for heaven which it demands is altogether irrespective of faith in Christ, repentance for sin, love to God, or charity

toward men. It makes no account of that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

6th. It corrupts the divinely appointed rites and ordinances of Christ's house, by a multitude of observances which are entirely of human invention, and for the most part unmeaning, superstitious, and absurd. Baptism is corrupted by the use of salt, oil, spittle, and the sign of the cross; the Lord's Supper, by the revolting blasphemy of transubstantiation, and by denying the cup to the people; ordination, by superstitious forms, and by the unwarrantable and wicked vows which are connected with it, of which the vow of celibacy has contributed to involve multitudes of the clergy of the Church of Rome in the deepest profligacy. And while the divinely instituted sacraments are corrupted, five spurious ones are added, which have no divine authority, namely, confirmation, penance, orders, marriage, and extreme unction.

7th. It brings the holy law of God into contempt, by presuming to dispense with its solemn obligation, by the paltry rites it prescribes as a satisfaction for sin, and by the doctrines taught concerning human merit and supererogation.

8th. The system is farther to be testified against, on account of its profound and cruel imposture, in deluding myriads of mankind, by false doctrines and false miracles, to neglect the salvation of Christ, and disregard the testimony of God in his word, while they give implicit credit to blind and deceitful men, and rest their hope of eternal life on their own paltry performances.

But the monstrous system of impiety and delusion delineated in prophecy, was not confined to the church. The divine ordinance of civil government, intended by its author for the advancement of his own glory, and for preserving the order and promoting the happiness of society, has been equally

corrupted. It hath pleased God to place the administration of the kingdom of providence in the hands of the Messiah, and to command the nations and their rulers to do homage to him, and to promote the interests of his kingdom. But it is the peculiar character of the grand apostacy, profoundly mysterious in iniquity, to engraft the most enormous and fatal errors on the most precious truths. By a dreadful perversion of the doctrine now stated, the secular governments of the nations became at first the allies, and afterwards the servile tools of the idolatrous and persecuting church. The revolting picture of the two united powers, is drawn by the pencil of inspiration.¹ In the graphic description of the apostle John, the woman is obviously the emblem of the apostate church, whilst the scarlet-coloured beast, with the seven heads and ten horns, symbolizes the Roman empire, divided into ten kingdoms, but actuated by one spirit. Her unfaithfulness to Christ, by the violation of her ecclesiastical covenant, and her unhallowed commerce with the kings of the earth, constitute her an harlot. The inhabitants of the earth are made drunk with the intoxicating cup of her delusions and indulgences. The immense wealth of the church, her worldly pomp and magnificence, are set forth by the gorgeous attire of the woman, "arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls." To show her power of seduction, she is painted as an abandoned woman, alluring the nations to drink of her deceitful and polluted cup. As the rider is supported by the beast that carries him, so has the church been by the Antichristian nations. As the beast is governed and impelled by the rider, so have these nations and their rulers been by the church. The woman and

¹ Rev. xvii. 3—6.

the beast are of the same scarlet colour, to denote that both are implicated in the guilt of persecution. But as the church has commonly been the prime mover and instigator in this impious work, the Spirit assigns to her the pre-eminence. She is "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." On her forehead she exhibits in conspicuous characters, her infamous title, "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." In short, the complex system is represented as comprehending and concentrating within itself, all that has been pre-eminent in wickedness, in all past ages;—the cruelty and oppression of Egypt; the impurity of Sodom; the luxury, idolatry, and despotism of Babylon; and the bigotry and rancorous enmity against Christ and his people, which distinguished the ancient city of Jerusalem.

Such is the system against which the witnesses of Jesus have been summoned to contend. And notwithstanding the scantiness of original records, during several hundred years, usually styled the dark ages, it is still possible to trace a succession of witnesses from the beginning of the seventh century—at which period, according to the judgment of the most approved expositors, the saints were given over to the power of the little horn—to the present time. There were not a few individuals, in different ages, distinguished by intelligence and piety, who, although they did not formally withdraw from the fellowship of the Church of Rome, protested with great boldness against many of her corruptions and errors; and the salutary impression made by their preaching and writing, was both extensive and permanent.¹

¹ Of this class we may mention the following highly honoured names; Vigilantius of Lyons, in Aquitaine; Paulinus, bishop of Aquileia; Claude, bishop of Turin; Peter de Bruys of Languedoc; Henry of Lausanne, with John Huss, and Jerome of Prague.

Nor were there wanting during the same period, whole religious communities, who deduced their faith from the scriptures, and who utterly renounced both the pretensions and the fellowship of the Romish Church. So early as the middle of the third century, the loose communion of the church had given rise to a sect of dissenters in Italy, who are said to have been the first that were distinguished by the name of Cathari, or Puritans.—Historians assert that the existence of this sect can be traced for a period of 200 years. In the fourth and fifth centuries, a still more numerous body of separatists existed, chiefly in Africa, under the name of Donatists. Their grounds of dissent were very similar to those of the Puritans. Another sect, greatly extolled for its simplicity, and for the patience and fortitude with which its members endured the most violent persecution, was the sect of the Paulicians.¹ In the seventh century it spread through Pontus, Armenia, Cappadocia, and the adjoining countries. It was finally suppressed by the Empress Theodosia, of whom it is alleged, that by the gibbet, fire, and sword, she destroyed of that sect not less than one hundred thousand persons. Another sect, which was very numerous in Italy itself in the eleventh century, was denominated the sect of the Paterines. These held no communion with the Romish Church.—They rejected many of the most renowned fathers—Jerome of Syria, Augustine of Africa, Gregory of Rome, and even Ambrose of Milan, as having contributed, notwithstanding their eminent piety, to promote the prevailing corruptions of Christianity. They termed the adoration of the cross the mark of the Beast; they neither frequented taverns nor places of public amusement; they were distinguished

¹ Milner's Church History, Century IX. Faber's History of the Vallenses, Book II., Chap. I.

for a meek and forbearing temper, and for their indifference to worldly aggrandisement.¹

It is not alleged that these sects were perfectly harmonious in their religious sentiments, or that the creed of any one of them was unexceptionable. For our knowledge of them, and of their opinions, we are principally indebted to popish writers, who denounced them as heretics, and from them an impartial account cannot reasonably be expected. But even the testimony of their enemies is sufficient to prove, that all of them had the honour of contending for many precious truths, during a most dreary period of the history of the church, and of raising a strenuous protest against the monstrous errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome.

Of all the communities raised up by the Messiah, to testify against the errors and corruptions of the Romish apostacy, the church of the Waldenses in the valleys of Piedmont, and in the south of France, is on many accounts the most remarkable. When the people of other nations drank with avidity the intoxicating cup of the mother of harlots, the inhabitants of these valleys drew water from the wells of salvation—the holy Scriptures. When other churches, generally, crouched beneath the yoke of the Man of Sin, the Waldenses asserted their freedom. Here in the wilderness, a place was prepared of God as a residence for the woman, who fled from the face of the dragon.² In the fourth century, a body of Christians was found in the Cottian Alps, in a state of separation from the church called Catholic, and protesting against prevailing corruptions. They detested the worship of images, of relics, and of saints; they offered up no prayers for the dead; their ministers were not forbidden to marry.³ It does not appear that there are sufficient records, from which a con-

¹ Jones' Church Hist. vol. i. pp. 497—500.

² Rev. xii. 6.

³ Gilly: and Faber's Hist. of the Vallenses.

nected history of this people can be drawn, during several centuries subsequent to this period; but it is remarkable that when the inhabitants of the same region attract public notice again, about the middle of the twelfth century, they are found to be still in separation from the Church of Rome, and holding the same sentiments which their ancestors held so long before. It is admitted by Romish writers who flourished at that time, that the origin of the sect was unknown, and that they claimed to be regarded as the true church, having held the doctrine of the Scriptures from the first ages of Christianity. All these circumstances render it highly probable, that they had never embraced the superstitions of the Church of Rome.

The creed of the Waldenses was decidedly evangelical; and their form of church government, and administration of discipline, were, in general, agreeable to the presbyterian model. In these churches the Lord not only preserved a seed to serve him, but provided a seminary for the instruction of ministers and saints, who were afterwards instrumental in shaking to its foundations the empire of the papacy. When scattered among the nations by frequent persecutions, they carried with them their knowledge, their piety, and their forms of religious worship. In the thirteenth century their numbers were so great that the Pope resolved to exert his utmost efforts to suppress them. They were found in Germany, Bohemia, Poland, France, and Britain. The frantic zeal which, for nearly two centuries, had moved all Europe against the Turks, and expended itself in fruitless efforts to recover the holy land from their control, was now directed against the Waldenses. It is computed that in France alone, one million of them suffered martyrdom. In the beginning of the fourteenth century, there were about eighty thousand of these witnesses in Austria, and the neighbouring territories.

Most of those illustrious men who, before the Reformation in the sixteenth century, were "as burning and shining lights" in the various countries in which they appeared, derived their knowledge of the truth from the Waldenses. The celebrated Walter Lollard, who suffered martyrdom in the year 1322, spread their doctrines through Germany. With him we may join the renowned John Wickliffe, who is justly termed the morning star of the English Reformation, not merely on account of his invaluable writings, but still more from his translation of the Scriptures into the English language. Having been sent on frequent embassies to the court of Rome, his eyes were opened to the corruptions of the church. He rejected the Pope's claim to supremacy, denounced him as Antichrist, and exposed the tyranny of the clergy. By means of his writings, his tenets were extensively spread, both in England and on the Continent. He died in the year 1384. One of his disciples was John Huss, a man of talents and erudition, in the famous university of Prague. He, and his companion Jerome, who was also a man of distinguished ability, revived the doctrines which Peter Waldo had long before taught in Bohemia. They vainly hoped to reform the apostate church. Their writings were more widely circulated, and their doctrines more eagerly embraced, from the heroic and triumphant manner in which they had maintained them before the council of Constance. By this council they were both perfidiously murdered, after a safe conduct had been granted to them by the emperor. Many of the Bohemians afterwards united themselves to the church of the Waldenses existing in that kingdom. The two churches adopted one confession of faith. They also agreed upon one covenant, adapted to the existing state of the church, which, according to the established usage of the Waldenses, was subscribed by all

the members of the society. Voetius asserts, that both the Waldenses of Thoulouse, and the Hussites of Bohemia, ratified their federal transactions with the solemnity of an oath.

Thus, while the papal power was at its height, and the kingdoms were of one mind to give their strength to the Beast, divine providence was preparing the way for that remarkable revolution, which took place in the beginning of the sixteenth century,—the PROTESTANT REFORMATION.

At this place it seems proper to observe, that besides the Papal, or western Antichrist, it has been customary to speak of a Mohammedan, or Eastern. The system so denominated had its rise near the commencement of the seventh century. Its adherents believe that there is one God, and that Mohammed is his prophet. It is therefore diametrically opposed to the faith of Christians, who have learned from divine revelation that “there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus,” who is also “the true God, and Eternal Life.” This unitarian, or rather anti-trinitarian system, is Antichristian in its character. “He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son;” and “Who-soever denieth the Son the same hath not the Father.” Mohammedans, while they admit that Jesus was a prophet, reject the doctrine of his divinity. Many writers on prophecy entertain the opinion that eastern Antichrist was foretold by Daniel, under the symbol of the little horn springing up out of one of the four horns of the third beast, or Grecian empire, as the western Antichrist was foretold by him, under the symbol of the little horn springing up among the ten horns of the western Roman empire. It is also commonly believed, that the prediction in the ninth chapter of Revelation relates to the rise and progress of the same imposture. And as prophecy is history anticipated, and history is prophecy accomplished, it

is a well known fact, that Mohammedanism supplanted Christianity in many parts in the east, and; ultimately, either suppressed it within the bounds of the eastern Roman empire, or rendered the professors of it tributary. Previously to this period, however, the church bearing the Christian name in those regions had become exceedingly corrupt, both in doctrine and in worship.

Of any succession of faithful or efficient witnesses within the territorial limits of the Mohammedan Antichrist, we have little or no knowledge. The *two witnesses* are not supposed to reside within these limits. They prophesy under the Romish Antichrist; yet they may be regarded as substantially bearing testimony against both, particularly after the Reformation. The eastern Antichrist is destined to destruction as well as the western; and as they were nearly contemporaneous in their rise, so, it is supposed, they shall be in their final overthrow.¹

PERIOD THIRD.

FROM THE REFORMATION TO THE REVOLUTION.

1517 to 1688.

CHAPTER I.

THE REFORMATION IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

THE Reformation from Popery in the early part of the sixteenth century, must ever be commemorated

¹ See Hetherington on the Fulness of Time. Faber and Keith.

by the church, as a glorious display of the power and goodness of God, and as a happy and sure prelude of the final triumph of the King of Zion over Antichrist. At that period, the usurped supremacy of the Pope over the churches, and his sovereignty over the nations of Europe, seemed established on the firmest foundation. However important the struggles of confessors and martyrs had been, in vindicating the glory of God, and rescuing immortal souls from the delusions of the Man of Sin, they had produced no perceptible effect in impairing the strength, or contracting the boundaries of the kingdom of the Beast. A series of violent persecutions had removed many of the witnesses by martyrdom, and the remainder were dispirited, and widely scattered throughout the nations. Yet, while Babylon was most secure, the exalted Messiah, by several arrangements in divine providence, was preparing for a more effectual assault upon her dominions than she had ever experienced. Two of these, on account of their immense and permanent importance, deserve to be distinctly specified,—the revival of learning in the west of Europe, and the invention of the art of printing.¹ The corruption of the church at the same time, became more gross and offensive by her security. However much the blinded nations admired and venerated the gorgeous fabric, yet the haughtiness, rapacity, and unbounded profligacy of the clergy, had created almost universal disgust.—Several of the illustrious men, whom it pleased God to employ as his instruments in commencing the work of reformation, had been for a time priests in the Romish Church. At first they contemplated only a reform of some gross abuses; but farther inquiries convinced them that the whole system was wicked and abominable—destined not to be reform-

¹ The first printed book of any importance was an edition of the Latin Vulgate Bible, printed in the year 1462.

ed, but to be destroyed. As the light gradually broke in upon their own minds, they fearlessly proclaimed the truth to others. The Lord poured out his Spirit upon them, and imparted to them an uncommon measure of zeal and intrepidity. He gave them favour with persons who had power to protect them from the subordinate agents of the Man of Sin.—When they were once sufficiently enlightened to understand and to embrace the grand truth, that the WORD OF GOD is the fountain of religious knowledge, the supreme arbiter in every controversy, the infallible criterion, by which every doctrine and every practice in religion must be tried, they had obtained possession of the lever, by which, in several kingdoms, the enormous fabric of Popery was in a short time entirely overturned. Other witnesses had struggled faithfully against Antichrist, but it was reserved for Luther, Calvin, Zuingli, Knox, and their fellow-labourers, to break the yoke of popish bondage from the necks of millions of their fellow-men.

Here we would record our grateful admiration of those arrangements of divine providence, by which the mutual hostilities of popish and persecuting powers, were made the means of preserving the infant reformation. The harlot church, already drunk with the blood of the saints, would have gladly replenished her cup by the martyrdom of the reformers. They were only at a short distance from the seat of the Roman Pontiff, whose powerful arm had hitherto dashed to pieces the objects of his wrath, even in the remotest nations of Europe. They were near to France, where so much of the blood of the saints had been shed, and whose monarch, Francis I., was then persecuting the same faith in his own kingdom. They were within the dominions of the emperor Charles V., a bigoted papist, under whose government it was computed,

that about fifty thousand persons were put to death for their religion. To any one of these powers, it would have been an easy matter to crush the German Protestants in the commencement of the reformation. Each of them gave the fullest evidence of its readiness to execute such a design. But the Lord made their mutual jealousies, and fierce contendings with one another, the means of protecting his church from ruin. When at length the emperor was in a condition to lead his armies against them, his success was but partial and temporary. An avenger was raised up on their behalf, where it could have been least expected;¹ and a portion of the very army that was raised to overawe them, and bend their necks again under the papal yoke, was, by a surprising revolution, made the instrument of their deliverance.²

The reformed churches of the Continent imitated the ancient and laudable practice of the Waldenses, in entering into public covenants. In the year 1530, the Lutherans framed the famous league of Smalkalde, which was solemnly renewed four years afterwards. On the 20th day of July, 1537, the capital articles of the Christian faith and discipline were sworn publicly by the senate and people of Geneva. As soon as the reformation had assumed a regular appearance, and the reformers had erected a separate communion, the Waldenses strengthened their hands, by uniting themselves to their churches. In regard to the grounds of separation from the Church of Rome, and the views entertained of the leading doctrines of the Christian system, there was a pleasing harmony among the

¹ Maurice of Saxony.

² Robertson's *History of Charles V.*, vol. ii., pp. 351, 376, 389, 395.

Protestant churches ;¹ yet those called *Lutheran* in general fell short of the attainments of those called *Reformed*. The latter included the churches of Switzerland, Geneva, France, the Low Countries, and different parts in Germany, Poland, and Transylvania.

In England the reformation was effected under great disadvantages. The capricious and cruel Henry VIII. was ill qualified for the office of a religious reformer. The reign of Edward was more propitious, but it was of short duration. The extent and the violence of the persecution, under the bloody Queen Mary, afforded unquestionable proof that the principles of the reformation were widely diffused among the people. On the accession of Elizabeth, the protestant religion was restored ; but the persons most competent to the task of organising a church, in conformity to the scriptural model, were not permitted to have any hand in the work. The queen, with her councillors and her parliament, usurped the right, and undertook the office of settling the religion of the nation by themselves. The gross erastianism of this proceeding merited condemnation, whatever might have been the personal character of the agents. But the great majority of them had displayed such profligacy of principle, in the course of the abrupt and repeated changes of religion which had taken place from the time of Henry, as to prove themselves pre-eminently incompetent and unworthy to have any share in such a work. Most of them had been Papists and Protestants, alternately, as interest seemed to dictate, and as the sovereign set the example.

A few leading errors entertained by those who

¹ The German reformers were first called PROTESTANTS, in consequence of a protest entered by them against a decree of the Diet of the empire, held at Spire in 1529, prohibiting the people from abolishing the mass, or making any innovations in religion. —Robertson's History of Charles V., vol. ii., pp. 87, 88.

reared the stately pile of the English Church, so marred and vitiated the whole structure, that it seems improbable that the evils of it can ever be rectified without its foundations being razed.

1st. The church was the mere creature of the state, framed and modelled according to the absolute will of the civil rulers. It is impossible to justify, on any pretence of expediency, a proceeding so repugnant to Scripture. It is competent to civil rulers, to excite and exhort ecclesiastical persons to effect a reformation in religion when it is required, and to remove civil barriers out of their way. But it is the province of the church, by her own rulers, to frame her confession of faith, and to regulate her worship, discipline, and government, in conformity with the word of God.

2d. That supremacy, which had recently been wrested from the Roman Pontiff, was usurped by the civil ruler, and without opposition on the part of the church, was declared by statute to be an inherent right of the British crown. This daring and impious usurpation of the authority and prerogatives of the Redeemer, has involved the throne of England in extreme guilt; and the consent of the church to that arrangement has rendered her an accomplice in it.¹ The royal supremacy has had the effect of placing that church in fetters. Scarcely a vestige of liberty is left to her in any thing that respects ecclesiastical government. Her creed has been prescribed to her by the state;² her form of church government,³ the order of public worship,⁴ the precise form of prayer to be used,⁵ and even the apparel of her ministers,⁶—all are determined and fixed by law, and ratified by the king; and she has no power to deviate from the prescribed rule in the smallest particular. For more than one hundred years there

¹ Canon 1. ² King's declaration prefixed to the Articles.

³ Canon 7. ⁴ Canon 14. ⁵ See book of prayer. ⁶ Canon 58.

has been no meeting of the clergy of the church in convocation for the transaction of business; without a royal license they have no power to meet even on the most urgent occasion; nor, if met, can they propound or determine any matter respecting the government of the church, without an express warrant under the great seal; nor are their decisions of the smallest ecclesiastical authority, until they have obtained the royal sanction.¹ The principal part of the discipline of the church, even as it respects the offences of ministers, is vested in courts kept by chancellors, commissaries, and other officials, who always may be, and commonly are laymen; and an appeal may be made to the king and council from the decisions of all ecclesiastical courts.

3d. The state assumed the right of compelling conformity to the established religion by civil penalties.² The royal supremacy laid a foundation for this daring usurpation. To concede to the civil magistrate a right to punish as rebels those who dissent from the national church, however inoffensive their deportment may be in other respects, is to invest him with that lordship over the conscience which is one of the most arrogant and blasphemous of the pretensions of the Man of Sin. The practical application of this doctrine in England, subjected the people of God in that kingdom to manifold sufferings for a period of one hundred and fifty years, and involved the government in the prevailing sin of Antichristian nations—the shedding the blood of the saints.

4th. The Antichristian hierarchy of the Church of Rome was retained in the Church of England. This term is employed to designate the long gradation of rank which exists among the clergy in these churches; namely, curates, vicars, deans, archdeacons, pre-

¹ King's declaration prefixed to the Articles.

² Canons 10, 11, 12, and the king's ratification of the Canons.

bendaries, bishops, archbishops, and primates. It may also comprehend those classes of persons who are styled proctors, chancellors, commissaries, and officials, who, although generally laymen, are admitted by the laws of the church to exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction. This stupendous fabric, which is entirely of human invention, has proved as injurious to the interests of religion as it is repugnant to Scripture. The secular engagements of the clergy, and particularly of the dignitaries who have seats in the high court of parliament, and preside in other courts of civil judicature, have withdrawn them from the discharge of ministerial duties. The enormous wealth of the church has fostered luxury and ambition among her ministers. The connexion between the church and the state has been of such a character as to place her preferments and splendid revenues at the disposal of the civil rulers. Unprincipled politicians have bartered the wealth of the church as the price of political subserviency. Hence the highest stations have been commonly occupied by men without religion, men holding heretical sentiments while solemnly subscribing an orthodox creed, men who spent their lives amidst the turbulent scenes of earthly ambition, squandering in the pursuit of worldly pleasure the wealth which had been appropriated to the spread of the gospel. The example of such dignitaries has been of most pernicious tendency, and the corrupt exercise of the high patronage they possessed, still more injurious to the interests of the church. That multitudes are appointed to the office of the ministry who are wholly unworthy of that office, is evident from the fact that they often abandon the work while they greedily exact the revenue; "they eat the fat and clothe themselves with the wool, but they feed not the flock."

It is also notorious that simony, or the buying and selling of ecclesiastical dignities and livings, although

pronounced in the 40th canon "a detestable sin and execrable before God," is of very frequent occurrence in the English Church. While the higher orders of the clergy are pampered, many of the most deserving and laborious of the ministers are left to struggle with penury, and vast multitudes of the people to perish for lack of knowledge. The manner in which church revenues are exacted in many instances, the very unequal and partial distribution of them, and the worldly pomp and luxury of the clergy, have concurred to excite prejudices in the minds of many not only against the church, but against Christianity itself. The tendency of these things to obstruct the progress of the gospel, has, for centuries, been practically demonstrated both in England and in Ireland. In the latter country, a branch of the English Church was erected, while the great majority of the people were enslaved by Popery, and was furnished with abundant means for prosecuting a missionary enterprize on a large scale. The experiment has been continued for two hundred years, but the cause of Protestantism does not appear to have been promoted by it. The numerous population connected with the Church of Rome in that country at the present day, are commonly represented as more bigoted in their attachment to Popery, and more rancorous in their enmity to Protestants and Protestantism, than any other people in Europe. These facts prove, that an Episcopal hierarchy is not the proper instrument for reclaiming a population held in the chains of a false religion, or for extending the boundaries of the kingdom of Christ.

5th. In the 20th article of the Church of England, it is asserted that the church has "authority to decree rites and ceremonies in religious worship," not enjoined in the word of God. If this claim were admitted, it would vindicate the greater part of that compound of superstition and absurdity, which de-

forms the worship of the Church of Rome. If the church has authority to decree and enjoin one rite or ceremony, not appointed by Christ, how can it be shown that she may not decree ten or a thousand? The fact is, that a large share of the superstitious or senseless pageantry of the Romish Church is retained in the public worship of the Church of England. Of this character we regard the following things, viz., the consecration of churches and church-yards, accompanied with a wicked prohibition from which the clergy are to the present day not fully emancipated, against preaching the gospel to perishing sinners, excepting on consecrated ground;¹ the sign of the cross in baptism, together with the use of sponsors, while the parents are forbidden to present their own children;² kneeling at the sacrament of our Lord's Supper; bowing when the name of Jesus is pronounced; the authoritative use of certain vestments in the celebration of public worship; and the stated reading in divine service of apocryphal writings, which impiously lay claim to inspiration.

6th. It is a fundamental defect in the constitution of this church, that no effectual provision has been made for the preservation of discipline. Hence it arises, that the scandalously immoral are not excluded from her fellowship, and that the most sacred privileges of the church are made an article of merchandise, while the most abandoned characters are frequently the purchasers. The penal laws against non-conformists compelled multitudes of irreligious persons to become communicants, that they might escape persecution. The test and corporation acts, which were passed in the reign of Charles II., and repealed only in the year 1828, involved an immense number of irreligious and ungodly men in the guilt of unworthy communicating, and a great proportion

¹ Canon 71.

² Canon 29.

of the clergy in the still more heinous guilt of deliberately desecrating the solemn ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

7th. In the services appointed for the administration of baptism, for confirmation, for the visitation of the sick, and for the burial of the dead, there are many things highly exceptionable and of dangerous tendency.

The language employed in dispensing baptism appears unequivocally to convey the doctrine that, when administered by a duly qualified person, it is *regeneration*, or is necessarily accompanied by that spiritual change. The words which the officiating minister is commanded to employ, are these: "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to *regenerate* this infant, with thy holy Spirit." A doctrine so repugnant to scripture, and disproved by so many millions of practical examples, is wholly indefensible.

The service of *Confirmation*, used in the Church of England, has no warrant in scripture. It is enjoined on sponsors to take care, that the children for whom they have unwarrantably become bound, "be brought to the bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as they can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and be further instructed in the church catechism set forth for that purpose." In answer to the second question of that catechism, the youth is taught to say, that in his baptism he was made "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." The prescribed knowledge may be easily acquired by any child of ordinary parts, whatever may be the state of the heart. Yet to all thus qualified, the church directs that confirmation be administered. In the service prescribed for the occasion, the following expressions occur: "Almighty and everliving God, who

hast vouchsafed to *regenerate* these thy servants, by water and the Holy Ghost, and *hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins.*" "We make our humble supplications unto thee for these thy servants, upon whom (after the example of thy holy apostles) we have now laid our hands *to certify them* (by this sign) *of thy favour and gracious goodness towards them.*"

In the service for the visitation of the sick, it is ordered, that "the sick person be moved to make a special confession of his sins...after which, the priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and heartily desire it) after this sort.....by his, (Christ's) authority committed to me, *I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*" The inspired apostles never assumed such authority as this.

The following office for the burial of the dead is to be used for all classes of persons, those only being excepted who "die unbaptized, or excommunicated, or have laid violent hands upon themselves." "Forasmuch as it hath pleased God Almighty of his great mercy, *to take unto himself the soul of our dear brother here departed,* we therefore commit his body to the ground.....*in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.*" Again: "we give hearty thanks, for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world:" "raise us from the death of sin into the life of righteousness, that when we shall depart this life, *we may rest in him, as our hope is this our brother doth.*" All this must be said publicly over each person committed to the dust, although he may have lived and died an infidel, or a profligate, or has been cut off in a fit of intoxication, or by the hand of the common executioner!

How flattering is all this, but how exceedingly ensnaring and perilous to the myriads of carnal and

ungodly professors who eagerly substitute it for that faith in the Redeemer, and that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord!" How long will spiritual physicians continue to heal the deadly diseases of the soul slightly, crying, "peace, peace, when there is no peace?" How long will the church herself join with Satan and the sinner's own deceitful heart, in rivetting the chains of spiritual delusion! By what gentler terms should we denounce formularies which hold forth, from age to age, to an ignorant, irreligious, ungodly world, that they are "regenerated" in baptism; "certified of the favour and gracious goodness of God towards them" in confirmation; "absolved from all their sins" by a priest on their sick-bed; and committed to the grave, whatever course of life they may have led, "in the sure and certain hope of a resurrection to eternal life?"

Amidst so much in the original constitution and subsequent history of the English Church, which we cannot but condemn, and against which we are constrained to enter our solemn protest, it is pleasing to acknowledge, that in some other respects, the history of that church furnishes ground of rejoicing and of thanksgiving to God. The separation of England from the faith and obedience of the Romish See, was an event of the greatest importance, and has been rendered of incalculable advantage to the cause of true religion. Even the imperfect reformation of England contributed to promote the reformation in other kingdoms, and especially in Scotland. By her influence and authority, England frequently spread a shield over the Protestants of other countries, and either screened them from threatened persecution, or mitigated its severity.—And in some instances divine providence employed her great power as a chief weapon, in breaking up those formidable combinations among Popish

states, by which the Protestant interest throughout Europe seemed brought into danger. It is also ground of thankfulness, that the persons who were selected to draw up a confession of faith, or articles of religion for that church, were of evangelical sentiments. The doctrinal articles of the English Church are, in general, scriptural, and in harmony with the creeds of other reformed churches. Among her clergy, too, there has been no inconsiderable number who, for learning, piety, zeal, and devotedness, deservedly stand in the foremost rank of christian ministers. Even among her dignitaries, there have been men whose praise is in all the churches; who earned for themselves the gratitude of the christian world, by the services which they rendered to the cause of our common Christianity, in illustrating and defending her doctrines, and in baffling the assaults of her most dangerous adversaries.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE STATE OF RELIGION IN SCOTLAND, IN THE PERIOD
PRECEDING THE REFORMATION.

WE desire gratefully to commemorate the sovereign mercy of God, in sending the gospel at a very early period to this remote island, where extreme ignorance and barbarism aggravated the miseries of the prevailing idolatry. It is not certainly known who first bore the glad tidings of salvation to Scotland. It is recorded that Donald, who was king of Scotland about the beginning of the third century, together with his queen and the members of his court, were publicly baptized; and that he exerted himself to promote the reception of the gospel

among his subjects. Cratilinth, another Scottish king, who swayed the sceptre towards the end of that century, is also represented as a christian prince, labouring to eradicate the idolatrous worship of the ancient Druids, a class of priests who had long held an absolute dominion over the minds of the people. The immediate successor of Cratilinth was Fincormachus, who zealously prosecuted the work of reformation. Under his reign, which lasted nearly half a century, the gospel is said to have flourished in purity and peace.¹

A great accession of strength appears to have been brought to the church about the beginning of the fourth century, by the persecution under Dioclesian, the last and most dreadful of all the persecutions that were conducted by the pagan Roman emperors. The name of CULDEES was commonly given to those primitive Christians. A most favourable account is furnished by historians of the simplicity of their manners, the sanctity of their lives, and their unwearied assiduity in diffusing the knowledge of the gospel. It is difficult to ascertain, with any precision, what proportion of the people, at that early period, had cast away their idols. But it is certain that the cause of Christianity encountered the same difficulties, and experienced the same vicissitudes in Scotland, as in other lands.

Until the beginning of the fifth century, it does not appear that there was any intercourse between the church in Scotland, and the church at Rome. Nor until the same period, was there such an officer as a diocesan bishop in the Scottish Church.² The first who assumed the pre-eminence assigned to that office, and whose name was Palladius, was sent by Celestine, bishop of Rome, for the ostensible pur-

¹ Stevenson's History, and David Buchanan's Preface to Knox's History of the Reformation.

² Stevenson's Church History.

pose of expelling the Pelagian heresy, about the year 432. But the result proved, that the introduction of Prelacy, and the subjection of the people in Scotland to the control of the church in Rome, were the ulterior objects of his mission. For several centuries, however, the church in Scotland maintained her independence; nor could she be induced, by any efforts, to bend her neck to diocesan episcopacy, for one thousand years after Christ.¹

The age of Columba forms an era in the history of the Scottish Church. Having ascertained the destitute and miserable condition of the western Isles, where ignorance and barbarism still prevailed, he removed from the scene of his former labours in the north of Ireland, accompanied by a few friends, and arriving in Scotland, in the year 563, fixed his residence in Iona. A remarkable blessing from the Lord attended his efforts; and being strengthened to labour for more than thirty years, he saw the wilderness converted into a fruitful field. The rulers of the people sat at his feet to receive the gospel from him. The seminaries which he established for the instruction of youth, furnished a supply of pastors and missionaries for ages after his death. The effects of his labours were not confined to Scotland. The northern counties of England also received a succession of ministers from the Scottish Church. It is evident from the testimony of ancient and most respectable historians, that not only the inhabitants of Northumberland, but the Middle Angles, the Mercians, the East Saxons, all

¹ The terms *bishop*, and *presbyter*, are, in the New Testament, applied without distinction to the same persons.¹ Every pastor of a congregation is a bishop, in the Scriptural sense of that term. When ambition and avarice had introduced a gradation of rank among the ministers, unknown in the days of the apostles, the term *bishop* came to be employed as a name of distinction and pre-eminence.

¹ Acts xx. 17, 28. Tit. i. 5, 7. 1 Pet. v. 1, 2.

the way to the river Thames, were converted to Christianity by Scottish missionaries and their disciples; and for a time acknowledged subjection to the ecclesiastical government of the Scots.¹

In process of time the influence of the Church of Rome began to prevail. The Scriptures were neglected. The power of godliness declined. Superstitious rites and empty forms were multiplied. In the eleventh century diocesan episcopacy, and the Pope's supremacy were fully established; and the church in Scotland became as grossly corrupted, and as deeply enslaved, as the other churches of the nations. Yet although the people basely and criminally crouched down under the yoke, there was ONE who beheld their misery and their oppression, and was preparing to work for them a marvellous deliverance.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE REFORMATION FROM POPERY IN SCOTLAND, COMMONLY TERMED THE FIRST REFORMATION.

A.D. 1527 to 1592.

SCOTLAND was among the latest of the nations in submitting to the sway of the Church of Rome. At length, however, the enchantments of the old sorceress prevailed, and, like the people of other lands, her inhabitants "wondered after the Beast." From the beginning of the eleventh century, the history of the Scottish Church supplies but few honoured names of witnesses against Antichrist, for a period of several hundred years. In the early

¹ Dr. Jamieson.

part of the fifteenth century, the fires of persecution began to blaze, affording sure evidence that the light of truth was beginning to penetrate the dismal gloom.

The first individual mentioned in history who suffered death in Scotland for his opposition to the Romish apostacy, was James Resby, an Englishman by birth, who is said to have derived his opinions from Wickliffe.¹ Towards the end of the fifteenth century, under the reign of James IV., we meet with an account of a prosecution for heresy, carried on by the Archbishop of Glasgow, before the king and his council, against a number of persons in the district of Kyle, who openly condemned the leading errors of Popery. The body of Christians raised up at that period to plead the cause of truth, are commonly designated the LOLLARDS of Kyle. Yet the first person whose preaching and martyrdom made any extensive or permanent impression on the public mind, was Mr Patrick Hamilton, who was burned at St. Andrews, on a charge of heresy, by Archbishop Beaton, on the last day of February, 1528. Having resided for some time on the Continent, he had thoroughly imbibed the sentiments of the German Reformers. At the hazard of his life, he returned to his native country to unfurl the banner of truth. His high birth contributed to awaken attention, as he was connected, not very remotely, with the royal family; and the ardour and boldness with which he confuted the false doctrines of the Romish Church, condemned the scandalous lives of the clergy, and denounced the Pope as Antichrist, excited astonishment. His lamented death, in the twenty-fourth year of his age, seemed to leave the nation again in darkness. Yet the banner which he was honoured to lift up,

¹ Spottiswood, and David Buchanan's Preface to Knox's History.

was not again suffered to fall. A spirit of inquiry was awakened, which the violent proceedings of the clergy tended only to stimulate. The conversion of several individuals of their own order, and their patient endurance of sufferings, afforded decisive evidence of the power which accompanied the truth. About ten years after the death of Hamilton, George Wishart was obliged to escape to England from a prosecution for heresy, and after pursuing his studies for several years, both in England and on the Continent, he returned to Scotland in the year 1544. He was a man whom learning, piety, and devoted zeal, eminently qualified for promoting the work of reformation. After a brief period of arduous but very successful labour, he suffered martyrdom at St. Andrews on the 1st of March, 1546.

The doctrines of the reformation had now spread widely on the Continent, and many who resorted thither from Scotland, either in the prosecution of commercial pursuits, or in quest of a liberal education, became enlightened there, and carried back with them to their native country the faith and the writings of the reformers. Even the partial reformation effected in England under Henry, had a beneficial effect on the state of religion in Scotland; and when the Scottish nobility visited that kingdom, or were carried thither by the vicissitudes of war, a degree of light was imparted to them, by which their veneration for the Roman See was greatly abated. The state of political parties, too, was overruled by divine providence for the promotion of the reformation. It was a fixed principle in the policy of James V., to retrench the power of the nobles, who, for ages, had exercised a preponderating influence in the government of the kingdom. In the prosecution of this design, his strongest reliance for support was on the wealth and influence of the Romish clergy. At

that period, it was not unusual to fill the highest offices of state with ecclesiastics. The jealousy and resentment of the nobles were strongly excited, when they beheld their own degradation attempted, chiefly through an order of men, whose boundless avarice and ambition were the more detestable that they were clothed in the garb of religion. Thus was averted the most formidable danger to which the reformation could have been exposed, namely, unity of purpose among the chief powers of the nation—the king, the nobility, and the clergy. In the year 1542, under the regency of Arran, a petition to Parliament, by those who favoured the Reformation, for permission to the people to read the Scriptures in the English language, was successful, of which public intimation was given throughout the kingdom. The name of Robert Lord Maxwell, who introduced this proposal, deserves to be recorded among those of the greatest benefactors to Scotland.¹ From this time, copies of the Scriptures were freely imported from England, and the knowledge of the truth increased very rapidly. The rod of Christ's strength went forth over the land, and "a willing people were gathered to him in the day of his power." The violent persecution under Mary, queen of England, brought a number of the English Protestants, and among them some excellent ministers, into Scotland, by whose exertions the work of God was much promoted.

But the Reformation was much more extensively advanced, by the remarkable blessing from on high which attended the labours of the renowned JOHN KNOX. He was a burning and shining light, whose qualifications as a minister, would have rendered him conspicuous in any age or country, but who was wonderfully adapted for the particular crisis at

¹ Stewart's History of the Reformation, p. 35.

which he was raised up in his native land. During the latter years of the regency of Arran, who became hostile to the cause which, for a time, he had cherished, the work of reformation seemed to languish. Persecution was carried on with rigour. Numbers were fully convinced of the horrible corruption of the Church of Rome, yet they wanted courage to forsake her religious assemblies. Knox had been residing for some years on the Continent. A visit which he paid to Scotland in the year 1555 was attended with happy results. The friends of truth formed themselves into fellowship societies for mutual edification. Several of the nobility and gentry were greatly confirmed in their attachment to the truth. At first the preachers exercised their ministry among smaller assemblages of the people, under the character of chaplains to such of the nobles as afforded them an asylum in their houses. In a brief space congregations began to spring up in all parts, making open profession of the reformed religion. Even some of the priests were honoured to promote, by their preaching and their sufferings, the faith which they had previously sought to destroy. The last person who suffered martyrdom at this period was a converted priest—the aged Walter Mill, who having renounced Antichrist, and devoted himself to the service of the Redeemer, witnessed a good confession before the bishops, and was committed to the flames on the 28th of April, 1558, at the age of eighty-two. The advanced state of public sentiment was demonstrated, by the general detestation awakened by his death, and it pleased the Lord from this period to tie up the hands of the murderers.

Mary of Guise, the queen-dowager of Scotland, had been advanced to the regency of the kingdom in 1554. For a time she found it expedient to connive at the proceedings of the reformers, and to

court the alliance of those of the nobility who had espoused their cause. When her plans were matured, and she was prepared to enter into a closer conjunction with the clergy, for the entire suppression of the Reformation, she found the effort to be beyond her strength. The few Protestant ministers then in the kingdom were summoned to stand their trial at Stirling, in May, 1559. Such a body of the nobility and of the people accompanied the ministers, that the purpose of their adversaries was baffled. At this critical juncture Knox returned from Geneva to Scotland, where he continued during the remainder of his life. The progress of the Reformation was henceforth rapid and decisive; and in a short time the dominion of Popery in Scotland was overturned.

In conformity to the example of the ancient Waldenses, and of other Protestant churches, the Scottish reformers frequently entered into religious covenants. This practice can easily be shown to be perfectly consonant with both reason and Scripture. And it would be difficult to imagine any purpose to which it could be more appropriately applied, than for the advancement of the glorious enterprise in which the reformers were embarked. The first instance of covenanting which we meet with in their history, was in the year 1556, when a number of the nobility and gentry entered into a bond, in the house of a gentleman in West Lothian.¹ Similar bonds, accommodated to the occasions on which they were made, were sworn at Edinburgh, at Perth, and at Leith, in the years 1557, 1559, 1560-62.

The year 1560 is long to be remembered by the church and nation of Scotland. In that year the authority of the Roman Pontiff and of his clergy was renounced; Popery was abolished; a Confession of

¹ M'Crie's Life of Knox.

Faith, containing an admirable summary of Scriptural doctrine, was compiled; and a Book of Discipline, fixing the order and government of the church according to the Presbyterian plan, was drawn up and adopted;—and all this with the general concurrence and consent of the great body of the people, as well as of the nobility and gentry. Well might the church adopt on that occasion the song of Moses and of the Israelites, when recently escaped from centuries of oppression and suffering in Egypt:—"I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation."

We may contemplate this revolution, first, as a mighty effect of divine power; and, secondly, as a work accomplished by the agency of man. In the former point of view, it supplies a theme for devout thanksgiving and fervent praise. The deliverance of a nation, in so short a time, and by instruments apparently so feeble, from the power of a false and idolatrous religion, from the degradation of moral and spiritual darkness, from the double despotism of ecclesiastical and civil domination, demands the devout acknowledgment,—“This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.” When we examine the work as the result of human agency, we may discern in it, amidst much that is admirable, and in entire accordance with Scripture, those imperfections from which nothing human can claim absolute exemption. Some of the defects of the system then introduced arose from the peculiar circumstances of the church. The use of superintendents and readers was avowedly a temporary expedient, designed for the diffusion of religious knowledge, until an adequate supply of qualified ministers could be obtained. Neither should it be too severely charged against the infant church, that patronage was not then abolished, especially as the

reformers did exert themselves to escape from that yoke, and boldly *asserted* the *right* of the Christian people to choose their own pastors. Of some Acts of Parliament, passed at this time, for punishing the adherents of the abjured system of Popery, we are not called on to undertake the defence. In judging, however, of the public conduct of the Scottish reformers, it is but fair to take into the account the very trying circumstances in which they were placed, the persecutions they had endured, the plots which were frequently contrived for the subversion of religion and liberty at home, and the formidable combinations established among the Popish powers on the Continent to overthrow the Protestant interest throughout Europe. When these things are duly considered, it will be conceded by every candid mind, that measures might have been necessary, in their peculiar circumstances, which would be unwarrantable in a more tranquil state of society. Yet, that we may guard against all danger of being misunderstood, we deem it proper to state distinctly, that we neither give ourselves, nor require from others, a universal or unqualified approbation of all the Acts of Parliament or of Assembly during the reforming period.¹

¹ See Doctrinal Part of the Testimony, Note, pp. 162, 163.

As a *specimen* of Acts of Parliament to which we cannot give unqualified approbation, we mention four.

Act 5, Parliament 1, James VI., by which "the sayers and hearers of mass" were rendered liable to confiscation of goods for the first offence, banishment for the second, and death for the third.

Act 47, Parliament 3, James VI., by which those who refused to profess the true religion were declared rebels against the Government, and punishable as such.

Act 164, Parliament 13, James VI., according to which, obstinate contemners of the decrees of the Kirk were to be denounced as rebels, and made liable to letters of horning, &c.

Act 17, Parliament 16, James VI., which ordains that his Majesty's subjects shall communicate once a year, or be subjected to certain fines. One reason assigned for this law in the Act itself was, that some abstained from communicating "under pretext of deadly feud, as a cloak to cover their popistry."

Although we are far from justifying these Acts, yet many things

The happy effects of the Reformation were speedily felt throughout the land. The little stream swelled into a river; the wilderness became fruitful; and the dead sea of Popish ignorance and superstition was healed. Under the fostering care of the Regent Murray, "the churches enjoyed rest, and, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." But the period was not yet come when such tranquillity could be permanent. In a short time, the ambition and corrupt worldly policy of the civil rulers began to make encroachments on the liberties of the church.

The leading reformers were, from the beginning, strenuously opposed to the hierarchy, as essentially unscriptural and Antichristian; and it was their steady aim to erect the Presbyterian form of church government, in all the parts of it, as soon as the circumstances of the church would admit. The temporary offices of superintendents and readers were,

might be justly and truly said in extenuation of them. No person can form an impartial judgment of them, who does not consider them in connexion with the circumstances in which they were enacted. For this purpose it is particularly necessary to know the principles and history of Popery and Papists, the hostility they cherished towards the reformers, and the institutions which they had established, both in church and state; their plots and conspiracies at home and abroad to undermine and overturn all Protestant churches and governments; their uniform intolerance; and their avowed disregard of oaths and promises, when made to those whom they accounted heretics. For these and similar reasons the reformers regarded them as being not only enemies to true religion, but as dangerous to the state; and also on account of their allegiance to a foreign power. They regarded Popery as a political system as well as a religious one, and inimical to the best interests of civil society. To have granted to Papists the same measure of liberty which they now enjoy, might have proved dangerous to all the Protestant institutions in the kingdom. And notwithstanding the severity of the enactments specified above, we are not aware of any well-authenticated cases in Scotland, of persons having suffered death on account of their religion, by the application of these laws. It seems reasonable, therefore, to conclude, that some of them had been intended rather for intimidation than for being carried into execution. The number of Protestants, however, that have suffered death under Popish governments, purely on religious grounds, defies calculation.

therefore, in a few years set aside. The Second Book of Discipline, containing a full exhibition of the Presbyterian model, was compiled and adopted by the General Assembly. In the prosecution of these measures, the judicatories of the church were greatly fettered and harassed by the civil powers. Under Popery the clergy were represented in Parliament, a certain number of the dignitaries being always present as an essential part of the legislature. During the minority of James VI., when there was much confusion in the state of public affairs, those who administered the government seemed apprehensive that the absence of the clergy from Parliament might invalidate their public measures. This was the first pretext for introducing a few of the Protestant ministers into the legislature, having the title of bishops. It was with much reluctance that the reformers yielded to this arrangement, providing at the same time, with the most scrupulous care, that in the church those ministers thus distinguished, should have no higher authority than their brethren. From the accession of James to the government in 1579, there was a strong and unceasing effort on the part of the Court to impose the order of bishops upon the church, which was met by a no less strenuous resistance. In his earlier years, the king himself took a pleasure in being present in the meetings of the General Assembly, to witness the proceedings and hear the discussions. This contributed to introduce the practice of having a royal commissioner at every meeting. In process of time, the presence of a commissioner was regarded by the government as essential to the lawfulness of an Assembly,—a principle wholly inconsistent with the independence of the church. Yet, amidst the vacillating policy of the king and his parliament, by whom salutary measures were, alternately, promoted and resisted, the church advanced in her reformation attainments.—

In the year 1580, a General Assembly held at Dundee, condemned the authority claimed by the bishops as an Antichristian usurpation, and declared it void and unlawful, as having neither warrant nor foundation in the word of God. The same Assembly ordered the Second Book of Discipline, then finally settled, to be engrossed in their records.

In this year also the short Confession of Faith, commonly called the National Covenant of Scotland, was compiled. It was drawn up at the desire of the king, by Mr John Craig, one of the ministers. The strenuous efforts made at that period to revive the cause of Popery in Scotland, and the apprehensions awakened by an influx of Jesuits and priests from the Continent, furnished the occasion for this important measure. The Covenant, as then adopted, consisted only of the first division of the deed, as it now stands in the Westminster Confession. It contains a declaration of faith in the gospel, and of adherence and attachment to the public confession of the church in Scotland; and particularly an explicit renunciation and condemnation of the errors and corruptions of Popery. In the beginning of the following year, the Covenant was sworn by the king and his council, and also throughout the kingdom. Some of the leading propositions in the Second Book of Discipline, relating to the power of church judicatories, were ratified in Parliament in the year 1592.¹ This period is usually referred to as the meridian of the first Reformation. The external order of the church being now happily settled, her efforts were employed in effecting such internal reforms as seemed requisite. The Assembly which met at Edinburgh, 1596, set the example to the church in this work, by a very remarkable humiliation among themselves. Upwards

¹ M'Crie's Life of A. Melville, pp. 318, 320.

of four hundred ministers, with elders, and a few eminent Christians, devoted a day to solemn religious exercises,—to prayer, the confession of sins, with many tears, and mutual exhortations; and concluded the work by renewing their covenant with God, with their hands lifted up to heaven. By order of this Assembly, the same work was performed in the different Synods and Presbyteries of the church, and in general throughout all the parishes of the kingdom, with singular marks of the divine presence, and the happiest effects in promoting a general revival of religion.

CHAPTER IV.

INTERVAL BETWEEN THE FIRST AND THE SECOND REFORMATION IN SCOTLAND.

1592 to 1638.

FOR a period of forty years the church had now been labouring with great zeal and judgment, in advancing the Reformation. For a part of that time she had to contend against the whole power and policy of the Popish clergy, aided by a Popish government. Subsequently, her efforts were obstructed by the arbitrary interference of Protestant civil rulers. Yet thus far she was, upon the whole, successful. The blessing of the Lord made her stronger than her enemies. But from the same point we must date another period of nearly forty years of decline. King James had been in many instances offended with the strictness of the church's discipline, and with the fidelity of her ministers, in reproving his own vices and those of his court; and, notwithstanding a memorable declaration in favour

of Presbyterianism, and of the Church of Scotland, in the General Assembly of 1590, he had given unequivocal proofs of his strong partiality for the Episcopalian form of church government. He found it to be much more in unison with the arbitrary maxims of civil government which he had adopted, and he knew it to be more acceptable to the people of England, where he expected in a short time to ascend the throne. He afterwards avowed his belief, that Episcopacy was essential to the safety of monarchy. He held firmly that most despotic maxim, which he handed down as a pernicious legacy to his descendants, that it is the prerogative of kings to dictate to their subjects in matters of religion, and to mould the church according to their royal will and pleasure. He felt no scruple, therefore, about adopting the resolution to overturn Presbyterianism, to restore Episcopacy, and to impose on the Church of Scotland the whole system of superstitious and fantastic rites, which was at that time observed in the English Church. This scheme was pursued with astonishing pertinacity, by himself, his son Charles I., and his two grandsons Charles II. and James II., for a period of about ninety years.—It was the prolific source of extreme and extensive suffering to the nation, and led to the effusion of much of the blood of the saints. James appears to have been strengthened in his purpose, and stimulated in his efforts to accomplish it, by his correspondence with the dignitaries of the English Church, who at that period were carrying on a violent persecution against the non-conformists at home, and were actively employed in increasing the amount of Popery which had been left in that church at its first erection.

To promote his favourite project, the king had recourse to craft, or violence, as the occasion seemed to require. The first part of his plan was to remove

from the church as many as possible of those ministers, whose zeal, and talents, and influence, were most likely to rouse a formidable opposition. Pretexts were soon found for such a proceeding. His arbitrary measures called forth animadversion and protests from many pulpits. For this exercise of ministerial freedom, ministers were summoned to stand their trial before the Privy Council. The freedom of the General Assembly was also invaded. Meetings of that court were summoned, adjourned, and dissolved, by royal proclamation, in the most arbitrary manner. The Assembly which met at Holyrood House, in 1602, obtained the king's permission that the next meeting should be held at Aberdeen, in 1604. By a new order from court, that meeting was adjourned to July, 1605. Before this period arrived it was again adjourned, without any time being named for a meeting. A number of ministers apprehending a design to suppress the General Assembly, held a meeting at Aberdeen in 1605, but the meeting was discharged in the king's name, under pain of rebellion. Six of the ministers were brought to trial before the Court of Justiciary, and pronounced guilty of high treason for having attended that meeting. The sentence of death, to which they became liable by this iniquitous decision, was commuted into one of perpetual banishment. John Forbes and John Welsh, two of this number, were afterwards much distinguished by their honourable and useful labours on the Continent.¹

Shortly after this period, eight other ministers were summoned to London, on account of their opposition to the arbitrary measures of the court.—Six of them were afterwards permitted to return to Scotland. James Melville, who was one of the number, died in exile at Berwick. And the

¹ Calderwood, pp. 514, 516.

justly celebrated Andrew Melville, to whom the cause of Presbyterianism in Scotland was so much indebted, after three years' confinement in the Tower of London, was permitted to go into exile, and spent the remainder of his life in France.¹ By these violent measures the more resolute ministers were removed from the church, and others were intimidated. When the Assembly was at length permitted to meet, the utmost care was taken that it should consist only of such members as were most likely to sanction the measures proposed by the king.

The accession of James to the throne of England, in 1603, exceedingly increased the power of the monarchy. Both the nobility and the Scottish Parliament were, by that means, more completely subjected to the will of the court. First, a number of Presbyterian ministers were introduced into Parliament, to occupy seats as the ancient prelates had done. Then the order of bishops was restored by Act of Parliament. Yet such was the resistance made to these encroachments, by a body of faithful ministers supported by the people, that it was with the greatest difficulty a certain number of these bishops could be admitted as perpetual moderators, in some of the judicatories of the church. Welsh and Melville were banished to return no more; but the spirit by which they were actuated still burned in the breasts of many of the ministers.

New measures of aggression were devised. High Commission Courts were erected, composed of bishops and laymen—the creatures of the court, to which undefined and unconstitutional powers were committed.² Their chief employment was to harass, sus-

¹ Calderwood, pp. 518, 537.

² The Court of High Commission appears to have been instituted in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. It was composed of forty-four members, twelve of whom were ecclesiastics. Their juris-

pend, depose, and banish those ministers, whose zeal and faithfulness made them most conspicuous. At length, in 1618, an Assembly at Perth, composed of members chosen according to directions from court, passed certain acts for the introduction of a few of the English ceremonies. These have been usually termed the Five Articles of Perth; viz., kneeling at the sacrament; the private administration of baptism; private communicating; the observation of holidays; and confirmation. These articles were afterwards ratified in Parliament, not without a formidable opposition. They were enforced with rigour; and a number of excellent ministers were subjected to great hardships, and not a few driven from their flocks, for refusing to submit to them,

diction extended over the whole kingdom, and over all orders of men; while three of their number were authorized to exercise the whole power of the Court. They were empowered to take cognizance of, and reform, all opinions and practices at variance with the established religion, and to punish every breach of uniformity in the celebration of public worship. They had instructions to conduct their inquiries not merely according to the settled forms of law and justice, but by all other means that could be devised. If their suspicion rested upon any person, they might administer to him an oath, binding him to answer all questions which might be put, and thereby, perhaps, to inculcate himself and his most intimate friends; and a refusal to swear that oath incurred the penalty of imprisonment. Inquisition and torture were employed to accomplish their object. The fines imposed were quite arbitrary, and often occasioned the total ruin of the offenders; and the imprisonment to which the delinquent was condemned, was limited by no rule but the pleasure of the judges. In short, this Court was a real *Inquisition*, attended with the iniquities and cruelties inseparable from that horrid tribunal. It is important to remark, that it was founded on a clause in a statute vesting the ecclesiastical supremacy in the Crown, and empowering the sovereign to appoint Commissioners for the exercise of that prerogative. This Court continued in the exercise of its exorbitant and arbitrary powers during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I., notwithstanding a petition against its proceedings in 1584, and a remonstrance in 1610, by the Commons of England. In the reign of Charles I. its authority was exercised in the most cruel and tyrannical manner, till it was at length unanimously abolished by Act of Parliament in 1641, the assent of Charles having been reluctantly given to the Bill.

In the reign of Charles II. this Court was virtually revived, both in England and Scotland, and for some time exercised its unrighteous powers with oppressive violence.

or to acknowledge the lawfulness of the Perth Assembly.

As in the first age of Christianity, those who were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word, so, at this crisis, the Lord was pleased to provide in other lands spheres of distinguished usefulness for these eminent lights of the Scottish Church. Some of them were welcomed as esteemed ambassadors of Christ, by the reformed churches on the Continent. Others found refuge in the north of Ireland, where in the happy experience of thousands, that scripture was verified in them; "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

The Protestant Reformation made little progress in Ireland during the sixteenth century. By an act of the Irish Parliament, the supremacy of the Pope was abolished so early as the year 1536, in the reign of Henry VIII. But this did not result, as in Scotland, from the diffusion of the doctrines of the Reformation throughout the kingdom, nor from the general consent of the nobility and of the people. The change was little more than a nominal one, effected by the arbitrary will of the monarch, whose government was a pure despotism. The frame-work of a church establishment, similar in its character to that of England, was introduced, and supported by civil authority; and the revenues of the church were generally bestowed on those who, either in reality or by profession, espoused the new system. But no effective measures were adopted, either under Henry or Elizabeth, for enlightening the people by education, or providing for them a sound Christian ministry. The ecclesiastical supremacy of the sovereign, and the absolute control over church revenues and dignities, were sedulously guarded; but the deplorable and almost universal destitution of the people, in respect to religious privileges, was view-

ed with apparent indifference for more than fifty years. The Romish religion was summarily condemned by Acts of Parliament; the profession of the reformed faith was enforced under severe penalties; and the people were compelled to attend public worship celebrated in a language which the great majority of them did not understand. With a few individual exceptions, however, scarcely an effort was made to convince them of their former errors, or to enlighten their minds in the knowledge of divine truth. Hence the deepest moral darkness continued to cover the land. The people generally were not only the slaves of error and superstition, but full of hatred against the new faith, which had never been exhibited to them but as clothed in the garb of injustice, tyranny, and oppression.

In the good providence of God a salutary change was effected in the northern province of the kingdom, in the early part of the seventeenth century. Several of the northern chiefs having risen in rebellion against the government, their estates were confiscated, and placed at the disposal of the crown. A scheme of colonization was adopted, which proved in its results exceedingly advantageous to Ireland, and to the cause of the Reformation there. Both from England and Scotland, but particularly from the latter, many thousand people emigrated to the north of Ireland, and permanently settled in that country. A few godly ministers from both kingdoms accompanied or followed the settlers. The efforts made by king James to establish Prelacy in Scotland, and the rigid enforcing of conformity in England, compelled many faithful ministers to resign their charges in these kingdoms; and a number of them found a sphere of usefulness in Ireland.

In the year 1615 was held the first convocation of the Irish Protestant Church. At this period a

Confession of Faith, or Articles of Religion, compiled by Dr. James Usher—then professor of divinity in the college of Dublin, but afterwards an archbishop—having been approved by both houses of the Convocation, and by the Parliament, was published by authority. The articles were decidedly Calvinistic in doctrine, and in several particulars more in accordance with the Confession afterwards compiled at Westminster, than the formularies of the Church of England are. No authority was claimed for framing or enforcing ecclesiastical canons, or decreeing rites and ceremonies; nor was any allusion made to the mode of consecrating the higher orders of the clergy;—the disputed distinction between Bishops and Presbyters being thus kept out of view. The Confession was closed by a decree of the Synod forbidding the public teaching of any doctrine contrary to the articles now agreed on.

This important measure proved in many respects favourable to the cause of religion in Ireland.—Although the same forms of worship which prevailed in the Church of England, were for the most part observed also in the Irish Church, yet those who entertained scruples of conscience respecting these forms, had thus far met with little disturbance. The basis on which the church was now placed, held out farther encouragement to ministers whose principles would not allow them to conform to the English ceremonies. And, in the providence of God, several of the men who were advanced to authority and dignity in the Church of Ireland at this period, were disposed to interpret in its utmost latitude the liberty allowed by the Articles. Archbishop Usher who had framed them, and a few others like-minded with him, having more love to religion than to the forms of the English Church, used their best endeavours to encourage and protect Non-conformist and Presbyterian ministers, who sought an asylum

in the north of Ireland. Hence their numbers gradually and steadily increased; and their zeal and diligence in the service of the Redeemer were such as might be expected of men who, for conscience sake, had cheerfully renounced flattering prospects at home. It pleased God abundantly to bless their labours; and within a period of eighteen or twenty years, more was effected in promoting the cause of true religion in the north of Ireland, than had previously been accomplished from the commencement of the Reformation.

A few eminent individuals who had either been ministers in Scotland, or educated for the ministry there, bore a conspicuous part in this important work. We gladly render a tribute of honour to these self-denied and laborious men;—to Cunningham, Blair, Hamilton, Dunbar, and Livingston, who, along with their associates and fellow-labourers, were, under God, the founders of Presbyterianism in the province of Ulster, whence it has never since been eradicated, and where, we rejoice to say, it exists in great vigour and efficiency at the present day.

To these men was farther granted the exquisite but rare privilege of being instrumental in producing a very powerful revival of religion, which continued and extended for some years, and was productive of the most excellent fruits in several of the northern counties of Ireland.¹

¹ Mr Blair, an active agent in advancing this work, speaks of it in the following terms:—"The blessed work of conversion, which was of several years' continuance, spread beyond the bounds of Antrim and Down, to the skirts of neighbouring counties; and the resort of people to the monthly meetings and communion occasions, and the appetite of the people were become so great, that we were sometimes constrained, in sympathy to them, to venture beyond any preparation we had made for the season. And indeed, preaching and praying were so pleasant in those days, and hearers so eager and greedy, that no day was long enough, nor any room great enough to answer their strong desires and large expectations."

Dr. Reid's Hist. of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Vol. I.

The accession of Charles I. to the throne, in 1625, brought no mitigation, but rather an increase of the sufferings of the people of God, in the three kingdoms. The maxims of government which he had adopted rendered him a tyrant from principle, even more than from natural disposition. From his father, and his other instructors, he had imbibed these doctrines,—that monarchy and hereditary succession are sacred and inviolable—that the king is the sole fountain of power in church and state—that by his coronation oath he is bound to God only, but not to his subjects—that the king's violation of law is not to be restrained by force, but that subjects are bound actively to obey, and passively to submit, without any other resource than *prayers* and *tears*. His ideas of the royal prerogative in civil matters, and of the royal supremacy in religion, were alike extravagant. In the choice of counsellors, and high officers of government, the men best qualified for ruling on these despotic principles were promoted.

Under the administration of Laud, the sufferings of the Puritans in England were manifold and severe. There were several distinct grounds of testimony for which the witnesses in that kingdom were then called to suffer. They had to contend against a flood of Arminian and Pelagian errors, combined with a mass of Popish rites, which Laud and his clergy laboured strenuously to propagate throughout the kingdom. They had also to struggle against a frightful growth of irreligion and immorality, which were partly sanctioned and commanded by the higher authorities. The civil law was prostituted to uphold and extend this complicated system of iniquity. To write or preach against Arminianism—to oppose, or refuse to practise the Popish ceremonies—or to decline the king's injunction to publish from the pulpit on the Lord's

day his majesty's recommendation to the people to spend a part of the Sabbath in sports and revels—were all punished as rebellion. Thus the enemy came in like a flood; yet the Lord preserved an honourable company of witnesses to “lift up a standard against him.”

In Scotland the aspect of public affairs was gloomy in the extreme. For a period of twenty years the General Assembly was not suffered to meet, and there was only one meeting of Parliament in eighteen years. Many of the nobility, and not a few ministers, were seduced from their allegiance to Zion's King, and others made shipwreck of the faith. The bishops sat as constant moderators in the provincial Synods. All intrants to the ministry were required to bind themselves by solemn oath to strict conformity with the existing order, and to practise the Articles of Perth. As death removed the pious and faithful ministers, who had not been driven from their parishes by persecution, their places were filled with young men of more pliant principles. Hireling shepherds began to increase, who sought preferment by preaching the doctrines of Arminianism and passive obedience, and even by palliating the errors of the Church of Rome. And the High Commission Courts, in the several dioceses, armed the bishops with power to harass, and punish, all who presumed to censure their tyrannical proceedings. But man's extremity is God's opportunity. The Lord looked on the afflictions of his church, and wrought deliverance for her when it was least expected.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE SECOND REFORMATION IN SCOTLAND, AND THE
COMMENCEMENT OF DEFECTION FROM IT.

1638 to 1660.

THERE was still in the land a numerous band of ministers, who, although for a time they shrunk from the storm, which had broken with violence on the heads of their bolder brethren, were yet enlightened men of God. The abject state of the church, and the growing insolence of her oppressors, filled them with sorrow. The Lord poured out his Spirit upon them, and their labours were accompanied with remarkable power. The contrast between the character of these ministers, and that of the prelates by whom they were oppressed, made a decisive impression. The frame-work of Episcopacy was restored; but neither the prelates, nor those who by violence imposed them upon the church, had done any thing calculated to convince the judgment, or gain the esteem of the people.—The affection of large numbers throughout the nation to their Reformed, Presbyterian, Covenanted church, remained unshaken. They had recourse to fasting and prayer,—the only resource which Charles could allow to the oppressed.¹ To announce a public congregational fast, without the appointment of the bishops, would have been accounted a crime. It was the practice of a number of the ministers, to give private intimation to those persons in their congregations most distinguished for piety and public spirit, once every quarter, or more frequently as occasion required, requesting them to concur in observing special seasons of fast-

¹ See page 80.

ing and prayer on behalf of the church. There was, besides, an interesting band of faithful ministers, whom the oppressor had separated from their flocks, but could not shut out from the throne of grace, who lamented their silent sabbaths, and joined importunately in the prayers which the church offered up for deliverance.¹ Their cry came up before God into his temple; and “by terrible things in righteousness” he gave answer to these prayers. A few years only had elapsed until the stately fabric, which kings and prelates had toiled in rearing on the ruins of the church’s liberties, was overturned to its foundation; and in the course of divine providence, the three chief tyrants, Strafford, Laud, and Charles, who had conspired to oppress the people of God in the three kingdoms, were all removed by the hand of the common executioner!

A desire had long been entertained at court, to bring the Church in Scotland into the nearest possible conformity with the Church of England. At the same time, the measures pursued by Laud, seemed to indicate a no less vehement desire, to bring both into the nearest possible conformity with the Church of Rome. The success which had attended the efforts of Laud and Strafford, to rob the Protestant Church in Ireland of every vestige of liberty, emboldened the king and his councillors to adopt a similar line of policy towards the Church in Scotland. A book of ecclesiastical canons, and a liturgy, intended for that church, had been long under consideration; and, being completed, they received the royal sanction in the end of the year 1636. By the former of these, the whole structure of ecclesiastical polity hitherto observed in the Church of Scotland, and ratified by many laws solemnly made in the su-

¹ Among this number were Messrs Robert Blair and John Livingston, with Mr Samuel Rutherford, afterwards a member of the Westminster Assembly.

preme court of the kingdom, was at once overturned: sessions and presbyteries were classed among conventicles, and all ecclesiastical causes were restored to the tribunal of the bishops. The Service Book was virtually a transcript of the liturgy of the Church of England, with a few alterations bringing it into nearer conformity to the Breviary, or Romish prayer book. It was proposed to introduce these impious innovations by royal proclamation alone, without deigning to consult either the church or the nation. The report of the intended overthrow of the church spread dismay and sorrow throughout the kingdom. It was well known that those who had forged these chains for Scotland, had been for many years compelling the people of England, by excessive violence, to drink a mingled cup of Arminianism and disguised Popery. Many who had borne without reluctance the yoke of a modified Episcopacy, were roused from their apathy by these outrageous innovations. The conduct of the people fully proved what a clear perception they had of the crisis to which they had come. They felt it to be a solemn alternative—to resist their king, or to rebel against God. There were still sufficient patriotism and piety in the land to guide them to the proper decision. They believed themselves to be bound by their duty to God, by their love to the church, by their regard to posterity, and by their solemn vow and covenant, to refuse to bend their necks to a yoke so grievous. The very first attempt made by the bishops to drag a few of the ministers into the High Commission Court, for declining to introduce the liturgy into their churches, placed the greater part of the nation in a posture of resistance. The nobility, the gentry, the ministers of the gospel, were actuated by one sentiment. Even those who had previously submitted to the bishops, and without scruple had conformed to the Articles of Perth, now took their stand with

the old Presbyterians. They held frequent meetings for consultation. These meetings, which were often very numerous, embraced a great majority of the leading men of the nation. Yet there was no violence nor bloodshed; no attempt to retaliate, even on the bishops, who, for many years, had oppressed the church, banished the most distinguished and beloved of her ministers, and troubled the nation at large. They proceeded in a calm and regular way, by complaint, remonstrance, and petition,—sometimes addressed to the executive government at home, and sometimes transmitted to court, giving the most earnest protestations of their desire to live in peace, and to yield such obedience to their king, as consisted with the preservation of their religion and liberty. Meetings to petition were prohibited as illegal, and pronounced conspiracies against the public peace. This attempt to rob the people of the last vestige of liberty, strengthened their conviction that the most vigorous measures in their own defence had become indispensable, and increased the multitudes that repaired to the capital. On one occasion, when it was computed that about sixty thousand people from all parts of the kingdom were assembled in Edinburgh, the resolution was adopted to seek preparation for the crisis that seemed impending, by renewing the National Covenant. This was done on the 28th of February, 1638, with prayer and fasting. There were mingled emotions of joy and sorrow in that vast assembly, but all merged in one deep feeling of solemnity. Throughout the kingdom the people entered into this bond with the greatest cheerfulness, the Papists and a few adherents of the bishops being excepted.

It was at this period the National Covenant was enlarged, and received the form which it now bears, as usually bound up with the Westminster Confession. It obviously consists of three parts. The first is the ori-

ginal covenant, without alteration, framed and adopted in 1580, and several times renewed afterwards. The middle division consists of a specification of Acts of Parliament made in favour of the reformation.—The measures which the Covenanters were compelled to adopt for the preservation of their religion and liberty, were stigmatized as rebellion. They felt it to be incumbent on them to refute this charge, and protested that they were unanimously and cordially disposed to yield subjection to their king, in the exercise of legitimate and constitutional authority. But they had the fullest conviction that the recent measures of government were stretches of arbitrary power, not warranted by the constitution; and whatever forbearance they might have exercised had their civil rights only been invaded, their duty to God would not suffer them to submit to the loss of their religious liberty, and the degradation and corruption of their church. The ablest lawyers in the kingdom were consulted, and gave it as their opinion that the proceedings of the Covenanters were strictly legal. To demonstrate to the world that the claims they were defending were explicitly recognized in the constitution, and secured to them by the standing laws of the kingdom, they insert a specification of Acts of Parliament, extending over a period of more than sixty years, by which these rights had been fixed and established. We do not understand this specification as homologating the laws enumerated; in other words, as binding those who embrace the Covenant to an approbation of these laws themselves; but as a refutation of the charges of disloyalty and rebellion brought against the Covenanters, by the supporters of Prelacy and arbitrary power in both kingdoms.

The concluding division of the Covenant, beginning with the words, “We noblemen, barons, gentlemen,” &c., was an additional bond, framed at the

period now under review, and adapted to the circumstances of the church and nation. In it the Covenanters solemnly bind themselves to adhere unto and defend the true religion, as expressed in the National Covenant, and in the Confession of the Scottish Church, and to forbear the practice of the late innovations, both in the worship and in the government of the church. They declare their belief that these innovations were without warrant in the word of God, contrary to their Confession, and to the Acts of Parliament enumerated in the body of the deed; that they tended "to the re-establishing of the Popish religion and tyranny, and to the subversion and ruin of the true reformed religion." They swear by the great name of the Lord, "to continue in the profession and obedience of the foresaid religion, to defend the same, and resist all contrary errors and corruptions, to the uttermost of their power." They renew their vows of allegiance to the king, "in the defence of the true religion, liberties, and laws of the kingdom;" and promise that "in public, in their families, and in their personal carriage, they would endeavour to keep themselves within the bounds of Christian liberty, and to be good examples to others of all godliness, soberness, and righteousness, and of every duty which they owed to God and man."

The renovation of the Covenant proved, by the divine blessing, eminently beneficial. The ministers were stirred up to an uncommon degree of energy and faithfulness in preaching the gospel, and reproving sin. Religion revived throughout the church.—The Covenanters felt strong in their sacred union, and in the firm conviction that the cause they had espoused was the cause of God. Every attempt that was made to divide, intimidate, or divert them from their purpose, proved ineffectual. They persisted in their demands for a free and full General Assembly to redress the grievances of the church; and for

a meeting of Parliament to inquire into the civil affairs of the nation. With both these demands the king was ultimately obliged to comply; but not until, by a course of shuffling and deceitful negotiation, he had entirely forfeited the confidence of the Covenanters.

The General Assembly met at Glasgow on the 21st of November, 1638;—an Assembly which, on many accounts, was one of the most memorable in the history of the Church of Scotland. The whole kingdom awaited its decisions with intense anxiety. The abuses of forty years required to be redressed; but they were abuses which Charles was disposed to defend as essential rights of his crown. Alexander Henderson, whose name is scarcely less illustrious in the history of the second Reformation, than that of Knox in the first, was chosen moderator. For several days the king's Commissioner¹ continued with the Assembly, to embarrass its proceedings as much as possible. But finding his efforts ineffectual, he dissolved the Assembly in his master's name, just as the court was about to enter on the trial of the bishops. A protest being entered on the records in behalf of the *intrinsic* power of the church, derived from the Lord Jesus Christ, her sole King and Head, to hold her own Assemblies independently of the civil power, and the members being encouraged and animated by the moderator, in a seasonable and powerful address, the court proceeded deliberately with the business before it. Neither the departure of the Commissioner, nor a proclamation on the following day prohibiting the Assembly from proceeding farther under pain of treason, could deter them from the duty which they owed to a higher authority. The Assembly went on to sweep away the rubbish of the late innovations, by which the

¹ The Marquis of Hamilton.

house of God had been so much deformed. The Five Articles of Perth, the Service Book, Book of Canons, Book of Ordination, the civil places and power of churchmen, the High Commission Court, and Episcopacy itself, as opposed to the word of God, and abjured by their Covenant, — were all condemned; together with those packed and corrupt Assemblies by which they had been sanctioned. The trial of the bishops was conducted in a very solemn and deliberate manner. They were all convicted of usurping an office which the Church of Scotland had utterly renounced, as “without warrant or foundation in the word of God;” and of practising tyranny in their High Commission Courts. Against many of them, charges of gross error in doctrine, and of scandalous immorality, were fully established. Sentence of deposition was therefore passed upon the greater part of them; and several of them were laid under the greater excommunication. The Presbyterian form of church government was restored in all its various judicatories. The intrinsic power of the church to convene in her General Assembly once every year, or more frequently as occasion might require, was explicitly asserted. To these were added many other excellent acts, for preserving order and discipline, for promoting education, for preventing the intrusion of ministers against the will of the people, and for carrying forward the work of reformation, now so happily begun. With joy and gladness, and many thanksgivings to God, was the work of this most important Assembly brought to a conclusion.

Whatever indignation these bold measures excited at court, the enemies of the church had at this period no power to overturn them. On two several occasions an army was brought down from England to crush the Covenanters; but, by the good providence of God, both expeditions were ineffectual, although one of them was led by the king in per-

son. What was done in this Assembly was fully confirmed by subsequent Assemblies, and subscribed by his Majesty's Commissioner, who was present in them; and it was ratified by Parliament in 1640, with the concurrence of the king, who was personally present at the last session of that Parliament in 1641.¹ It is admitted that the king's

¹ Objections have been urged against the Act of Parliament, 1640, enjoining the subscription of the National Covenant "under all civil pains." We distinguish between the Covenants themselves, and the means employed for securing their subscription. We are pledged to the former, but not to the latter. We conceive it due to the reformers, however, to subjoin the following remarks:—

1st. The renovation of the National Covenant by the people of Scotland was voluntary. That the zeal which was displayed in Edinburgh, at the commencement of this work, spread through the kingdom with amazing rapidity, is attested by some leading Covenanters of that period. "In this day of the Lord's power," say they, "his people have most willingly offered themselves in multitudes, like the dew of the morning.....No threatenings have been used, except of the deserved judgments of God, nor force, except the force of reason,—from the high respects which we owe to religion, to our king, to our native country, to ourselves, and to posterity."¹

2d. Subscriptions in many cases were refused, both in Scotland and in Ireland. Of the former country, some of the leading men of the Covenant remark: "Others of no small note have offered their subscriptions, and have been refused, till time should try that they join in sincerity, from love to the cause, and not from the fear of man." When some ministers were sent to Ireland a few years after, to administer the Solemn League to the Presbyterians there, the only complaint was that they were "over-scrupulous" as to those whom they admitted to swear and subscribe. The General Assembly, 1649, Sept. 19th, enacted, that those who had violated the Covenant should not be admitted to renew it, until they had given evidence of their repentance after "exact trial."

3d. The Covenants were employed as tests of attachment to the Reformation, and of admissibility to offices. At the present day it is judged proper to administer certain oaths to persons who are admitted to places of power and trust. It is altogether incredible that the men who passed the law usually termed "the Act of Classes," excluding the enemies of their religion and liberties from places of power, should have forced them to qualify for these places by imposing the Covenants on them "under all civil pains." We are not aware that it has been proved that, in the administration of the Act 1640, any persons suffered by competent authority, any thing farther than exclusion from places of power and trust, purely for refusing to subscribe the Covenant.² Nor does the case

¹ Life of A. Henderson, p. 259; and Stevenson's History, vol. 2d, pp. 294—296.

² M'Crie's Unity of the Church, p. 162.

consent was the fruit of detestable duplicity, and designed to subserve a political object. Yet the hand of the Lord was not the less conspicuous in this surprising revolution. Thus the complex yoke of Prelacy and Erastian supremacy was broken. Many exiled ministers were recalled: the ordinances of religion were faithfully and regularly dispensed throughout the church; and many souls were gathered to Christ. To the Scottish Zion it was said, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

The happy effects of the deliverance wrought for Scotland were in a short time extended to neighbouring nations. It has been already stated, how remarkably the cause of the Reformation prospered in the north of Ireland in the early part of this century. This good work, however, was in a great measure arrested about the year 1634; and, for some time after, the small band of witnesses there was called to endure a great fight of affliction, by the oppression of the bishops, under the administration of Strafford. All the more faithful Presbyterian ministers were chased from their flocks. But, in the adorable providence of God, the people who were left were appointed to pass through a fiery trial of a still more tremendous character, by which multitudes reached the crown of martyrdom. This was the indiscriminate massacre of the Protestants by the Papists, in 1641, who, under the instigation of the priests, and without any provocation from most of those who became victims of their fury, prosecuted

seem to have been different in regard to a similar Act, passed in 1644. The Commission of the General Assembly, in a remonstrance dated April, 1648, against a large declaration of the Parliament, remarks, "It would be inconsistent to desire the English Parliament to hold all refusers of the Solemn League as enemies to religion and their country, while no such penalty *has ever been executed* against the shifters of it in Scotland."¹

¹ See also Stevenson, vol. 3d, p. 1246.

the work of slaughter, with frantic ferocity, for several months, and to an extent which has few parallels in the annals of history. In this dreadful emergency, the Scottish Parliament offered to send an effective force into Ireland, to assist in stopping the effusion of blood; but, from the misunderstanding between the king and his English Parliament, the execution of this benevolent design was unhappily delayed. The tardiness or reluctance of Charles, in every measure proposed for the suppression of that rebellion, or the punishment of the murderers, had a decisive effect in alienating from him the minds of multitudes of his subjects.

In England, the tyranny and misrule of the king and the bishops were becoming every day more intolerable. Men of the most despotic principles were preferred to the highest dignities in the church, and these, by degrees, gained possession of the most important offices in the state. Practical religion was discountenanced. Sports and revels on the Lord's day were authorized by royal proclamation, and recommended by the clergy from the pulpit. For testifying against these enormities, many excellent men were not only stripped of their property, and thrust into prison, but maimed and mutilated in their persons, in consequence of sentences of the High Commission Courts and Star Chamber. From the beginning of his reign, Charles had evinced the strongest dislike to meetings of Parliament, on account of their tendency to limit his own authority. When an exhausted treasury compelled him to convoke that Assembly, his only design seemed to be to obtain pecuniary supplies. But when the Parliament showed a determination to inquire into the grievances under which the nation groaned, it was repeatedly and abruptly dissolved. The crisis at length arrived. The English Parliament being met,

voted itself permanent, until the grievances of the nation should be redressed. A civil war between the king and the Parliament speedily followed.—This was a critical conjuncture to the Scottish nation. Their whole history proves that their attachment to a limited monarchy, and to the house of Stuart, was excessive. Yet on this occasion, their love to religion and liberty predominated. Their first effort was to effect a reconciliation between the king and his Parliament, on equitable terms. Commissioners were dispatched to England for that purpose. But the temper of the king was too inflexible, and the aspect of his affairs at that time too flattering, to admit of their mediation. They were soon convinced, that, should he prove successful in the struggle with his Parliament, his former violent measures would be resumed, and that the first use he would make of his recovered power, would be to wrest from his Scottish subjects those precious privileges they had so long laboured to secure.

In proportion as the knowledge of the Scottish Reformation was diffused throughout England, the number of those who longed to see a similar Reformation in that country was increased. The English Parliament, from its first sitting down, manifested a determination to employ every legitimate means for effecting a substantial reform in the church. At first they earnestly sought the king's concurrence in this design; but when the breach became wider, they prosecuted this important work themselves, with much energy. The High Commission Courts and Star Chamber¹ were abolished; the bishops

¹ The same authority exercised by the Court of High Commission in ecclesiastical affairs was possessed by the Court of Star Chamber in civil matters; and its methods of proceeding were equally arbitrary and undefined. The origin of this court is said to have been derived from very remote antiquity; and at no time was its power controlled, or its mode of procedure directed by

were expelled from the House of Lords, and their power to oppress the people was extinguished. Wherever the authority of Parliament extended, the public profanation of the sabbath, and the Popish rites recently obtruded on the churches, were interdicted. Immoral and scandalous ministers were ejected, and their pulpits assigned to those ministers who had been silenced for non-conformity, or to other qualified persons. It was also explicitly avowed to be the design of Parliament to remove the hierarchy, "as offensive and burdensome to the kingdom, and a great impediment to reformation;" and to substitute such a government in the church, as should be "most agreeable to God's holy word," and calculated to bring the church into "a nearer conformity with the Church of Scotland, and other reformed churches abroad." For the better effecting of this design, it was resolved to convene "an Assembly of learned, godly, and judicious divines, to consult and advise of such matters and things—touching the premises—as should be proposed to them by both, or either House of Parliament, and to give their advice and counsel therein—when required." The ordinance of Parliament provided, that the Assembly should consist of one hundred and twenty-one divines, and thirty lay assessors, who had an equal power of debating and voting with the divines.—

any precise law or statute. It possessed an unlimited discretionary authority, of fining, imprisoning, and inflicting corporal punishment; and its jurisdiction extended to all sorts of offences and disorders that lay not within the reach of the common law. It consisted of members of the Privy Council, and the Judges; and when the Prince himself was present, he was sole judge, the rest being permitted to interpose only with their advice. By this court the severest restraints were laid upon the press, and the most wanton and shocking cruelties exercised upon offenders.—Calculated at all times to prove an instrument of terrible oppression in the hands of a tyrant, its power was exercised under the infamous administration of Laud to an extent which could no longer be endured; and, along with the Court of High Commission, this tribunal of cruelty and terror was abolished by Act of Parliament in 1641.

The assistance of Commissioners from the Church of Scotland was also sought with much importunity. This assembly met at Westminster on the first of July, 1643. It was evidently not a national synod, nor invested with any ecclesiastical authority, but a council summoned by civil authority alone, to give advice and assistance to Parliament in effecting that religious reformation which the state of the kingdom, and the desires of good men, so urgently demanded.

These auspicious beginnings having been made in England, a most important step was taken for uniting it in a closer conjunction with Scotland, and for establishing the religion and liberty of both kingdoms on a more solid basis. In the month of August of that year, a Commission was sent into Scotland, consisting of members of both Houses of Parliament, and of the Assembly of Divines. These Commissioners were instructed to represent to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and to the Convention of Estates, both of which were at that time sitting in Edinburgh, the various steps of reformation which had been already effected in England, with the earnest desire of the Parliament to advance that work; and the extreme danger that existed, unless prompt assistance were afforded from Scotland, that the good work would be arrested, and the full tide of former corruptions and oppressions rolled back upon both kingdoms. Committees were appointed both by the Convention of Estates, and by the General Assembly, to consult and treat with the Commissioners from England. The result of their deliberations was a unanimous agreement, that the most effectual means for preventing the dangers of the present crisis, was, that both nations should enter into a mutual league and covenant, embracing the interests of the three kingdoms. The draft of "the Solemn League and Covenant, for re-

formation and defence of religion, the honour and happiness of the king, and the peace and safety of the three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland," prepared by Alexander Henderson, passed the General Assembly, and Convention of Estates, on the same day. Being dispatched to England, it was deliberately examined and debated in the Westminster Assembly, and with some slight alteration, it was adopted. In the church of St. Margaret's, Westminster, both Houses of Parliament being convened, and the Assembly of Divines, with Commissioners from Scotland, the Covenant was read over, article by article, and each person standing uncovered, worshipping the great name of God with his right hand lifted up to heaven, swore to the performance of it.¹ The bond was afterwards subscribed by both Houses of Parliament, by the Assembly of Divines, and, generally, by persons of all ranks throughout the kingdom, with the exception of those who had espoused the cause of the king. In Scotland, the Covenant was received with every demonstration of religious joy, and cordially subscribed by the great body of the population. In Ireland, too, although from the disorganized state of the government, and the lamentable distractions of the country in general, it could not possibly obtain the same sanction which it received from the legislative assemblies in England and Scotland, yet it was welcomed by many Protestants in the south, and almost by the whole body of the Protestant population in the northern counties. It was ratified by Act of the Scottish Parliament in 1644, and afterwards renewed in Scotland, with an acknowledgment of sins and engagement to duties, in 1648, and by the Parliament in 1649. By these measures Scotland declared that she regarded the deed as a national one, and permanently binding on her, however others

¹ Baillie. Aikman, vol. 4th, p. 117.

might act who were originally brought under the same bond.

The object of the Solemn League was to promote uniformity in the profession and practice of the true religion in the three kingdoms, and to unite them in the maintenance and defence of all their civil and sacred privileges and institutions. A foundation was laid for this important measure in a treaty between the kingdoms of England and Scotland, begun at Ripon in 1640, and concluded at London in the following year. The ninth article of this treaty expressed the earnest desire of Scotland for "unity in religion, and uniformity of church government, as a special means for preserving of peace betwixt the two kingdoms." The answer given by the king, in conjunction with the English Parliament, cannot fairly be interpreted otherwise than as a virtual assent to this article: "That his Majesty, with the advice of both Houses of Parliament, doth approve of the affection of his subjects of Scotland, in their desire of having conformity of church government between the two nations; and as the Parliament hath already taken into consideration the reformation of church government, so they will proceed therein, in due time, as shall best conduce to the glory of God, the peace of the church, and of both kingdoms." The treaty was fully ratified by the king, with the consent of both Houses of Parliament, in August, 1641.¹

The Solemn League was in perfect accordance with the provisions of this treaty, and may be viewed as an advancing step in the prosecution of the objects of it. Many entertain the opinion that the English would have been satisfied with a civil league; but the Scottish Reformers, ever zealous for the interests of Christ's kingdom, were anxious that the nations should enter into a Covenant having a

¹ See JENSON, book iii., Chap. 5.

religious as well as a civil character; and in this they were successful. The parties who embraced the Solemn League bound themselves, “in their several places and callings, to endeavour the preservation of the reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government; the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, according to the word of God, and the example of the best reformed churches:—the extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, superstition, heresy, schism, profaneness, and whatsoever shall be found contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness:—the preservation of the rights and privileges of the Parliaments, and liberties of the kingdoms, and of the king’s person and authority, in the preservation and defence of the true religion, and liberties of the kingdoms.” The fourth article respects the discovery and punishment of incendiaries; the fifth, the preservation of peace among the three kingdoms; and the sixth contains an engagement to union, steadfastness, and zeal in prosecuting the ends of the Covenant. The calumny sometimes circulated against this Covenant, that it sanctioned persecution, requires no other refutation than a reference to the language of the deed itself, by which it appears very distinctly, that it is principles, not persons, which the Covenanters engaged to extirpate.

The Commissioners from the Church of Scotland, so earnestly desired in England, took their seats in the Westminster Assembly in November, 1643.—Of the eight individuals who had received a commission, five were ministers, and three ruling elders.¹

¹ Their names were, Alexander Henderson, of Edinburgh; Robert Douglas, of Edinburgh; Samuel Rutherford, of St. Andrews; Robert Baillie, of Glasgow; George Gillespie, of Edinburgh.—*Ministers* John, Earl of Cassilis; John, Lord Maitland, afterwards Duke of Lauderdale; Sir Archibald Johnston, of Warriston.—*Ruling Elders*.

In all the more important labours of that Assembly, for a period of nearly five years, they deservedly held a very conspicuous place. Their eminent abilities, their intimate acquaintance with church order, and above all, their extensive and accurate knowledge of the Scriptures, rendered them an invaluable accession to the Assembly. They appear, moreover, to have been instrumental in diffusing throughout England, and particularly in the city of London, more correct views of the independence of the church, as the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ, and of the Presbyterian form of church government, than had hitherto prevailed in that country.

In conformity with the engagements entered into between the two kingdoms, an effective military force was sent up from Scotland, about the beginning of the following year, to assist the English Parliament in their struggle with the king. In mercy to the three kingdoms, it pleased God to crown the efforts of the united armies with success. In a series of decisive engagements, the troops which the king had raised for the overthrow of the constitution, and the establishment of an arbitrary despotic power, were wholly discomfited.

In prosecuting the design of the Covenant, the Westminster Assembly continued their endeavours, with unceasing prayers and labours, to construct the platform of religious reformation and uniformity for the three kingdoms. They compiled a Confession of Faith; a Larger and Shorter Catechism; Propositions for Church Government; and a Directory for Public Worship. The metrical translation of the Psalms of David, commonly used in Scotland, was principally composed under the superintendence of that Assembly. In these works they have left imperishable monuments of their own piety, discrimination, and fidelity; and furnished the church with

the most admirable summaries of religious doctrine, which uninspired men were ever honoured to inscribe on the pillar of truth. All these were received and approved of by the Church of Scotland, as parts of the covenanted uniformity of the three kingdoms. To guard, however, against a construction being put on certain passages, which might seem to question the intrinsic power of the church to manage her own affairs, independently of the civil power, the General Assembly, in their Act, 27th August, 1647, approving the Confession, accompanied the reception of these passages with an explanation of the sense in which they were adopted. And as the Presbyterian form of church government is not specifically laid down in the Confession, they insert in the same Act the following declaration:—"That the not mentioning in this Confession the several sorts of ecclesiastical officers and assemblies, shall be no prejudice to the truth of Christ in these particulars, to be expressed fully in the Directory of Government."

The interval between 1638 and 1649, has been commonly styled the period of the Second Reformation. We deem it proper to specify here some of the grounds on which we declare our approbation of, and adherence to, that Reformation.

1st. Care was taken to recover and restore the valuable attainments of the first Reformation, many of which had, for a time, been buried under a mass of unscriptural innovations.

2d. We admire and approve of the ready homage which was constantly rendered by the Reformers to the authority of Scripture, in rearing their ecclesiastical structure. In regard to doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, it was their fixed principle, to make human authority, antiquity, and apparent utility, to bow to the supremacy of the inspired record.

3d. Another great principle asserted and main-

tained by the Reformers at this period, was the supremacy and exclusive headship of the Lord Jesus Christ over the church. They contended that by virtue of her intrinsic right, derived from her divine Lord, the church has power to convene her assemblies, and exercise her spiritual jurisdiction, independently of the permission or appointment of the civil ruler. Although sincerely desirous to obtain the countenance and protection of their earthly king, in propounding and adopting measures for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, they were far from regarding his presence or sanction as necessary to the lawfulness of their proceedings.

4th. This period is distinguished by the efforts made to preserve and establish the Presbyterian form of church government, and by the successful resistance made to the usurpations of Prelacy. At the famous Assembly held in Glasgow in 1638, the censures of the church were inflicted on those who had usurped or exercised Episcopal authority. Nor was Presbyterianism embraced and defended merely on the ground of expediency, as being more agreeable to the feelings and habits of the Scottish people than any other form of church government, and, on that account, better adapted to the circumstances of the Church in Scotland; but it was held to be possessed of divine right, inasmuch as its leading principles are inculcated in the word of God, and its rules exemplified in the conduct of the Apostles and primitive Christians.

5th. The sedulous care employed at that period to obtain for the church an efficient and well qualified ministry, demands our approbation. Salutary regulations were enacted and enforced, in regard to a course of preliminary study at the University; and it was required of expectants not only that they should give proof of their talents, learning, and

soundness in the faith, but that they should be apt to teach, skilful in controversy, prudent and circumspect in their deportment, and ardently devoted to the great objects of the gospel ministry—the advancement of the cause of Christ, and the salvation of immortal souls. Special injunctions were laid on each minister, to be diligent and regular in visiting and catechising his flock, as well as in preaching the word; and Presbyteries were required to exercise a vigilant superintendence over their respective members, and call them to a strict account, for error in doctrine, remissness in the discharge of pastoral duties, or irregularity in their personal deportment.

6th. The Reformers of this period were equally zealous in their endeavours to promote Scriptural education. The establishment of schools in every parish, for the education of the young, had always been regarded by them as an object of primary importance; and vigorous measures were now adopted for the accomplishment of that scheme. It was ordained, that the schools should be placed under the management of able teachers, and that the children should be instructed in the grounds of religion, as well as in the elements of a secular education. To the successful efforts then made, we must, no doubt, chiefly ascribe the fact stated by a contemporary historian, when speaking of the period immediately antecedent to the restoration,—that in almost every part of the country, all the children of the proper age, were able to read the Bible. Care was also taken to have the different Chairs in the Universities filled with men not less distinguished for their piety, and soundness in the faith, than for their learning.

7th. We testify our high esteem of that Reformation, on account of the superlative importance which it attached to practical religion, and its singular efficiency in promoting it. That the power of god-

liness was at that period extensively prevalent throughout the kingdom, and the grosser immoralities which now abound in society of comparatively rare occurrence, are facts attested by well-informed and impartial historians. This was no doubt owing, in a great measure, to the diligence, fidelity, and zeal, with which the duties of the pastoral office, in general, were discharged, and particularly to the earnestness and assiduity with which the exercises of secret and family worship were inculcated; and to the faithful exercise of discipline toward those who neglected these duties, as well as those who were convicted of overt acts of immorality.

8th. We avow our adherence to the Scottish Reformation, because it extended to the State as well as to the Church. According to the measure of their knowledge, the Reformers applied the standard of God's word to the civil institutions of the nation, as well as to the ecclesiastical. With most scrupulous care they laboured to fence the throne, the legislative assembly, and the bench of justice, with wholesome laws, excluding from places of power and trust the enemies of religion and liberty. It was their lofty aim, and in Scotland, at least, they were to a great extent successful in it, to render the civil authority at once effective for preserving the peace and external order of the community, and subservient to the interests of true religion; that the nation, as such, might do homage and yield allegiance to him who is "the Governor among the nations," and "the Prince of the kings of the earth." This principle was distinctly recognized in the National Covenant of Scotland, and in the laws which were made for the maintenance and defence of the true religion.

Many of the Acts of the Scottish Parliament during the Reformation period, were, in our judgment, eminently calculated to promote the interests

of true religion. As being of this character we would specify the legal sanction given to the Reformation in the year 1640 ; the cordial concurrence of the State with the Church in Scotland, and with the Parliament of England, in the Solemn League, and in the various steps of reformation in both kingdoms, which were consequent on that deed ; the entire removal of the heavy yoke of lay patronage from the Scottish Church, in 1649 ;¹ with a variety of Acts passed in that year for suppressing vice and profaneness, for excluding from places of power and trust, both in the civil and military departments of the State, men of immoral lives, or who were known to be inimical to the reformed religion. No relaxation of this rule was admitted even in regard to the supreme civil magistrate. Agreeably to the law then in force, no person could be advanced to the throne, whatever might be his claims or pretensions in other respects, who was not avowedly and cordially attached to the true religion.

To guard ourselves against misconstruction, we subjoin the following observations :—

We disclaim all design to represent the Scottish Reformation as free from blemish or defect. No-

¹ "Considering that patronages, and presentation to kirks, is an evil and bondage under which the Lord's people and ministers of this land have long groaned, and that it hath no warrant in God's word, but is founded only on the common law, and is a custom *Popish*, and brought into the kirk in times of *ignorance* and *superstition* ; and that the same is contrary to the Second Book of Discipline, and unto several Acts of General Assembly ; that it is prejudicial to the liberty and planting of kirks, and to the free calling and entrance of ministers into their charges ; . . . that every thing in the house of God may be ordered according to his word and commandment," the Estates of Parliament "do therefore discharge for ever hereafter all patronages and presentation of kirks, whether belonging to the king, or any lay patron, *presbyteries*, or others within this kingdom, as being unlawful and unwarrantable by God's word, and contrary to the doctrines and liberties of this kirk ; and that no person nor persons shall, either on behalf of themselves or others, procure, receive, or make use of any presentation to any kirk within this kingdom."—Act of Scottish Parliament, 9th March, 1649.

thing could be more remote from the thoughts of the excellent men who were the principal instruments in effecting it, than such an unwarrantable claim:—a claim which forms so large a part of the impiety of the Church of Rome.

We do not declare our approbation of all the Acts of Parliament or Assembly, which were passed in that period, in reference to religion. Some of the Acts of which we cannot approve, were, in fact, never carried into execution; and although much may be said in extenuation of their severity, from the very peculiar circumstances in which the Reformers were placed, and from the character of the enemies with whom they had to deal, we admit that some of them were unjustifiable.¹

¹ The formula of questions proposed to ministers at their ordination, in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, requires of them an acknowledgment of the Acts of Assembly between 1638 and 1649, *ratifying and approving the work of reformation*; but this is not understood by the Church in Scotland as implying an unqualified approbation of these Acts individually. We desire to cherish a proper sense of the obligations we owe to the church judicatories of the Second Reformation, and particularly to the General Assemblies of that period, for their noble struggles against arbitrary power, and their successful endeavours to promote education and true religion; and more especially because their proceedings were stigmatized in language of strongest contempt, and, in so far as could be done by civil authority, were entirely cancelled at the Restoration: and also, because they were passed over in silence, and left under a load of obloquy, at the Revolution. Yet we would not be understood as regarding the proceedings of either Church or State, during the reforming period, as free from blemish. We refer to some Acts of Assembly during that period, as specimens of Acts of which we do not approve:—

Assembly 1638, Session 23d, Act 11th, in which it was enacted, “that all persons, of whatsoever state and condition, be obliged to swear and subscribe the Confession of Faith,.....and to frequent the word and sacraments in the ordinary diets and places.”

Assembly 1642, Act entitled, “Overtures against Papists and non-communicants.”

Assembly 1643, Act “concerning an order for using civil execution against excommunicate persons.”

The Reformers lived in turbulent and trying times. The general character of their measures was *defensive* not *offensive*. Popery, Prelacy, and arbitrary power, were in close conjunction against them. The massacre of the Protestants in Ireland, in 1641, shocked and inflamed the minds of Protestants throughout the three kingdoms. In that year, the English Parliament, in a remonstrance addressed to the king, employ these expressions: “Seeing

We shall only add here, that as some have, from ignorance, or from more unworthy causes, reproached us as holding persecuting principles, we meet the charge with a calm but firm denial. We do not indeed exalt conscience to be a rival of the most High, nor recognize those presumptuous claims for it, which tend to abrogate his authority. But we distinctly teach, that God only is the Lord of conscience; and that to have recourse to a system of pains and penalties,—to employ civil coercion of any kind, for the purpose of inducing men to renounce an erroneous creed, or to espouse and profess a sound scriptural one, is incompatible with the nature of true religion, and must ever prove ineffectual in practice.

It has been urged, as an objection against the Westminster Confession, that certain passages in it are favourable to persecution, and would invest the civil magistrate with power to punish good and peaceable subjects for their religious opinions and practices. As this is a doctrine we disavow and detest, we beg to offer a few observations explanatory of the sense in which we understand those passages on which the charge has been founded.

the religion of Papists has such principles as certainly tend to the destruction and extirpation of all Protestants, when they have opportunity to effect it,—it is necessary to keep them in such a condition that they may not be able to do us any hurt.” In 1642, England was involved in civil war. It was understood that the king had given commissions to several eminent and known Papists to raise forces in his cause. Multitudes of them were in arms both in England and in Ireland. A plot of a very atrocious complexion was detected and baffled, which had been concerted by some of those desperate characters who then surrounded the king, the object of which was to cut off the leading Covenanters, and suppress the Reformation; and the plan proposed for effecting this project was, to bring over an army of Irish Papists, and unite them with the barbarians of the north. It was also fully ascertained, that before the end of the year 1643, the king had given his consent to the introduction of 10,000 Irish Papists in arms, of whom a considerable number were actually transported into Scotland, and composed part of that army which, under the Marquis of Montrose, spread slaughter and devastation through different parts of the kingdom for many months.

The twentieth chapter of the Confession treats "of Christian liberty, and liberty of conscience." In the second section it is asserted, that "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it in matters of faith." The third and fourth sections are designed to define the bounds of Christian liberty, and to guard against the abuse of it,—to distinguish between liberty and licentiousness. "To practise any sin, or cherish any lust," is no part of Christian liberty. "And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church, they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church, and by the power of the civil magistrate." The object of this section is to define the bounds of liberty of conscience, in relation to public authority. The Lord of conscience has instituted authorities in Church and State, and it were absurd to suppose that he has given to men a liberty to resist or condemn them, when they are exercised in accordance with his word. It is not asserted that good and peaceable subjects may be punished by

the civil magistrate, on account of their religious opinions or practices; but such as, under the imposing but hollow pretence of liberty of conscience, "oppose lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it." And who will deny that there are opinions and practices so contrary to the light of nature, and the known principles of Christianity, and so injurious to society, as fully to warrant magistratical coercion and punishment?

Another passage that has been supposed liable to the same objection, is contained in Chapter xxiii, section 3d, where it is said, that "the civil magistrate hath authority, and it is his duty to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, and all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed." But how is he to effect these ends? Not by coercion, or any direct exercise of civil authority; for "the Lord Jesus, as king and head of his church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of church officers, distinct from the civil magistrates." In the section from which the quotation is made it is expressly said, that "the civil magistrate may not assume to himself the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven," that is, authority in the church of Christ; and the close of the section indicates how he may lawfully endeavour to accomplish the important ends specified; namely, by the "calling of Synods," and using the influence of his high station, that through their instrumentality, disorders in religion may be rectified, and the interests of truth promoted.

Certain passages have also been objected to as conceding to the civil magistrate an Erastian power over the church. It is known that a few individuals in the Westminster Assembly held Erastian sentiments, and defended them with great learning

and ingenuity. But their arguments were promptly and triumphantly refuted, and it is certain that their sentiments never acquired an ascendancy in that house. It is also a well known fact, that the two Houses of the English Parliament, although exceedingly favourable to the Reformation in general, were disposed to retain in their own hands a control over the proceedings of the church, which was incompatible with her entire freedom and spiritual independence; and that, on this head, they were strenuously opposed by the Assembly. These facts render it highly improbable that the Assembly, after fullest deliberation, and the utmost freedom of debate, should have given their sanction to Erastian principles. The section last quoted from the 23d chapter, with the view of obviating an objection of a different nature, has been supposed liable also to the charge of Erastianism. Let the following principles, elsewhere laid down in the Confession, be duly considered. "There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ."¹ He "hath therein appointed a government in the hand of church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate. To these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed."² "It belongeth to Synods and councils ministerially to determine controversies of faith, and cases of conscience; to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and government of his church; to receive complaints in cases of mal-administration, and authoritatively to determine the same."³ And even in the section to which the objection is made, it is distinctly asserted "that the civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven;"⁴ that is, power or authority in

¹ Chap. 25, sec. 6.² Chap. 30, sec. 1, 2.³ Chap. 31, sec. 3.⁴ Chap. 23, sec. 3.

the church. We cannot conceive a more explicit or unequivocal condemnation of Erastianism than is contained in these quotations. Let the passage objected to be viewed in connexion with these statements: the civil magistrate "hath authority, and it is his duty to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, and all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed."—But what is the order he may lawfully take for effecting these purposes? He may not do it by his own proper authority, for "Christ, the head of the church, has appointed therein a government in the hands of church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate." It is, therefore, only by the instrumentality of proper church courts that he may lawfully seek to accomplish the objects here specified. "It belongeth to Synods and councils ministerially to determine" such matters. It is farther said, in the passage objected to, that he "hath power to call Synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God." This, however, cannot mean, in any consistency with the principles quoted above, that he may in his official character, or by the exercise of civil authority prescribe or dictate to Ecclesiastical Assemblies, or sustain himself as judge of their decisions; because this would imply a palpable assumption of the keys—an express usurpation of the government, which the Head of the church hath placed in the hands of church officers.

In respect to the authority conceded to him both in this section, and in the second section of Chapter xxxi., that he may lawfully call Synods, or Ecclesiastical Assemblies, it may be remarked: 1st, that the Confession determines the purpose for which he may convene them, namely, that he may "con-

sult and advise with them about matters of religion;" and, 2d, that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, in their Act, 27th August, 1647, adopting and ratifying the Confession,—an Act to which we adhere,—laid down the following limitation:—"It is further declared, that the Assembly understandeth some parts of the second article of the thirty-first chapter *only* of kirks not settled, or constituted in point of government: and that although, in such kirks, a Synod of ministers, and other fit persons, may be called by the magistrate's authority and nomination, without any other call, to consult and advise with about matters of religion: and although, likewise, the ministers of Christ, without delegation from their churches, may of themselves, and by virtue of their office, meet together Synodically in such kirks not yet constituted, yet neither of these ought to be done in kirks constituted and settled."

The time was not yet come when the lofty purposes, and the sanguine hopes of the British Reformers, could reach their consummation. The deceiver of the nations was not yet bound in his appointed prison. The Man of Sin retained his ascendancy in most of the nations of Europe. It was not yet the fit season for the Woman to leave her retreat in the wilderness, or for the witnesses to lay aside their sackcloth. For wise and benevolent purposes, the Supreme Ruler of the world had raised to temporary power and influence a number of most enlightened and pious men, both in England and in Scotland. The result was extremely happy. The outbreakings of ungodliness were restrained; the interests of true religion were greatly promoted; and there is the best evidence for believing, that large numbers, individually, as well as socially, joined themselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant not to be forgotten. But the events which

speedily followed, in both kingdoms, gave sad demonstration that the profession of multitudes had been insincere.

The first steps of defection from the solemn engagements lately entered into, must in justice be charged against England. In the day of her distress, she appeared very earnestly to inquire after the Lord; but when the danger which threatened her civil liberty was averted, her apparent zeal for religious reformation rapidly declined. She had felt the yoke of the bishops to be heavy; yet, from the extensive prevalence of irreligion, the yoke of Christ seemed to be regarded by her as more intolerable. The tide of ungodliness had, indeed, been wonderfully rolled back for a time, but the reflux soon became irresistible.

Even in the Westminster Assembly, and in the Parliament with which it was associated in the work of reformation, it is easy to discover, from an early period, the working of those elements which were calculated to defeat the design of a covenanted uniformity. There was a general harmony of sentiment among the members of the Assembly, in regard to the great fundamental doctrines of the Christian system; but in reference to the government and discipline of the church, the house was divided into three parties. The majority of the members were decidedly, and from the fullest conviction, attached to Presbyterianism, as founded in the Scriptures, and manifestly calculated, above every other system, to secure the unity of the church, the Christian liberty of her ministers, and the efficiency and purity of all religious ordinances.

A few of the members had embraced the doctrines of Erastianism. They held that there is no precise form of church government of divine authority, and that it belongs to the civil magistrate alone to construct such a government as expediency,

or the peculiar circumstances of the church may require. In this section of the Assembly, there were men of eminent talents and most extensive learning, who greatly embarrassed and retarded the proceedings of the house. They also exerted a most injurious influence on the two Houses of Parliament, and, in conjunction with the Independents, ultimately succeeded in preventing the establishment of the Presbyterian church government in its purity, and in its own divine authority. For a few years that government had the sanction of public authority in England; but the church courts were fettered with Erastian restrictions, and the Parliament reserved to itself a remnant of that supremacy of which it had divested the king.

There was also in the Assembly a small number of divines, who strenuously maintained the doctrines of Independency. They held that each congregation constitutes a church, having the power of government within itself; and that there is no warrant in Scripture for Presbyteries, Synods, or any other Ecclesiastical Assembly, exercising judicial authority over several congregations. They differed, however, from modern Independents, inasmuch as they acknowledged the office of ruling elder; and, in common with the Erastians, they were disposed to concede to the civil magistrate a control over the discipline of the church, inconsistent with her proper spiritual independence.¹ The divines of this class were at first few in number, but much respected for their talents and piety. By degrees their sentiments were propagated very extensively in the army, partly through the influence of a few popular leaders who had adopted them, and partly from the lay preaching which, from the want of a well-qualified ministry, greatly abounded in it. Throughout

¹ Neal's History of the Puritans.

the country, also, new sects and heresies sprang up incessantly, many of which were extravagant and pernicious in the extreme; and, by the wild anarchy which they produced, they shocked and alarmed the sober part of the nation, and prepared the way for Prelacy and arbitrary power to recover their lost sway, and to renew all their former oppressions with increased vigour.

When, in the progress of the war between the king and the Parliament, the royal forces were finally vanquished and driven from the field, and the troops from Scotland had returned home, the English army, being decidedly hostile to the religious system which was now introduced, refused to comply with the order of Parliament requiring them to disband; and, under the direction of Cromwell, who had acquired a wonderful ascendancy over the troops, they proceeded by degrees to usurp the authority and the functions of the supreme civil government of the nation. They expelled or secluded from the House of Commons, those members who were most capable of counteracting their designs, and deprived the House of Lords of all share in the government. Having brought the king to London, they instituted a court to try him on a charge of high treason; and, in disregard of the most earnest remonstrances, both from Scotland and from multitudes of all ranks in England, they hurried on his trial and execution. They finally vested the supreme direction of affairs in Cromwell, under the title of Protector. The extreme irregularity and violence of these proceedings were the more reprehensible, that the principal persons by whom they were conducted, had deliberately, and with apparent cordiality, entered into the Solemn League, the whole design and provisions of which they now so unscrupulously subverted.

In Scotland, too, a series of unhappy errors in

the management of public affairs combined to disunite the two kingdoms, and to obstruct the work of reformation, at the time when its progress seemed most encouraging. In the year 1648, the majority of the Scottish Parliament determined on sending an army into England, under the command of the Duke of Hamilton, with the professed design of rescuing the king out of the hands of the sectaries. The more enlightened part of the church and nation disapproved of this proposal. They considered it indispensable that the king should give security for the religion and liberty of the nation, before any measures should be adopted for restoring him to power. They suspected the fidelity of those who were the chief promoters of this expedition; and they condemned these hasty hostilities against England, as a breach of the Solemn League. The Commission of the General Assembly laboured strenuously to prevent the war. Many of the nobility entered their protest against the resolution, when it was carried by a majority in the Parliament. The Duke's engagement was subsequently condemned by the Assembly which met in the same year, and by the Parliament in the year following. The enterprise issued in the defeat and ruin of its projectors.

But an error far more grievous, and in its consequences proportionally disastrous, was committed with the general consent of all parties, in the following year. Six days after Charles I. was beheaded, the Scottish Parliament proclaimed his son, Charles II., King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, promising their fidelity, and pledging themselves to the defence of his person and authority, according to the National Covenant and Solemn League. The culpable rashness of this step did not pass unpunished. They could scarcely be ignorant that, according to the contract made at the

marriage of his father with a princess of the house of Bourbon, it was stipulated, that all the children of Charles by that marriage, should be brought up in the principles of the Popish religion, until they should be eleven years of age.¹ They had abundant cause to know, that if he adopted maxims of government from his father, he would not fail to insist on absolute authority, both in Church and State, as an inherent right of his crown.—In addition to these reasons for extreme caution, their own Commissioners, whom they sent to treat with him, first at the Hague, and afterwards at Breda, had palpable evidence of his disaffection to the great cause in which they were embarked, if not also of his duplicity, before he took ship for Scotland. To rely on the efficacy of oaths and promises to bind a man about to be invested with supreme power, of whose integrity, piety, or principle, they had no sufficient evidence whatever, was an error which cannot be too severely reprehended.

It was the earnest desire of Charles to reach the throne of Scotland without being fettered by any conditions. With this view, he protracted the negotiation with the Commissioners sent to treat with him, and secretly encouraged the Marquis of Montrose to hasten a project which had been concerted between them, for establishing the prince's authority by the sword. But when the insurrection raised for that purpose in the north of Scotland was crushed, and Montrose had suffered the punishment of a traitor against his country, Charles consented to give the securities for religion which were required of him.² Just before his landing in Scotland,³ and in presence of the Commissioners, he solemnly declared his adherence to the Covenants, and, with his right hand lifted up to heaven, bound himself by oath to

¹ Stevenson's History, vol. i. p. 8. Rapin, Book xix.

² Aikman, vol. 4th, Book xi. ³ June, 1650.

prosecute the ends of them, to the utmost of his power. The more effectually to lull suspicion, he, some time after, issued a declaration from Dunfermline, in which he publicly lamented the opposition made by his father to the work of reformation, the idolatry of his mother, and his own former enmity to the cause of God. He protested his perfect sincerity in taking the Covenants, and his fixed purpose to abide by them "really, constantly, and sincerely, all the days of his life." This career of deliberate perjury was consummated a few months after, at his coronation. On the first of January, 1651, in the presence of the Parliament, the Commissioners of the General Assembly, and a numerous congregation, the Covenants were again administered to him,¹ in the same solemn manner, and afterwards the coronation oath, according to the eighth Act of Parliament first, James VI. The horrid impiety, perfidy, and cruelty of his subsequent reign, would have wanted their darkest finishing, had not his course begun in such heaven-daring hypocrisy.

And here we must record a third unhappy error of this period, which displays very forcibly the danger incurred by the church, when she contracts an alliance with unprincipled and ungodly civil rulers. The recent invasion of England, under the Duke of Hamilton, and still more, the conduct of Scotland in espousing so rashly the cause of young prince Charles, naturally led to a war between the two kingdoms. In the month of September, 1650, an English army, commanded by Cromwell, gained a decisive victory over the Scottish forces at Dunbar. This seemed to the king and his favourite counselors, a happy opportunity for obtaining the repeal of two Acts of Parliament, which had been passed in the preceding year. By one of these Acts, persons

¹ At Scoon, in the neighbourhood of Perth.

who had incurred the censures of the church, by the scandalous immorality of their lives, or by their manifest hostility to the Reformation, were debarred from important stations in the army; and by the other, the same classes of persons were rendered incapable of any office of trust or power in the State, until they should afford satisfactory evidence of their repentance. Through the solicitation of the king and Parliament, the Commission of the General Assembly, by two several resolutions, virtually gave their consent to the repeal of these Acts; and their decision was approved of by a majority of the members of the next General Assembly. And here may be dated the first serious and decided departure from her own avowed principles, by the Church of Scotland. There was a numerous body, however, in the church, both of ministers and others, who condemned these resolutions, as unjustifiable and dangerous, and protested against the deed of Assembly by which they were confirmed. In the vehement controversy which ensued, the majority, who approved of the conduct of the Commission, were styled *resolutioners*; the minority, who condemned it, were named *protesters*. A lamentable division was created, at a time when increasing danger pre-eminently required the most cordial union. The result was every way gratifying to the king. He was pleased to see the Covenanters enfeebled by their mutual contentions, and he rejoiced to have obtained the consent both of Church and State, to gather around him men of his own spirit and character. After a most disgusting scene of mock repentance on the part of the malignants, in order to their being absolved from church censures, they were crowded into the most important stations, both in the army and in the civil government. When it is recollected, that the cause for which Scotland had been struggling for a period of

twelve years, was that of religion and liberty, and that the men who, by means of the public resolutions, were now called to power, were the most dangerous enemies to both that were in the kingdom, the extreme impolicy and sinfulness of these resolutions must appear obvious. It is matter of history, that the very men into whose hands Charles now put the reins of government, became his ready instruments, ten years afterwards, in virtue of the authority with which they were now invested, both in the outrages which were committed on civil liberty, and in overturning the work of Reformation.¹

At this juncture, the efforts of Charles to force his way to the throne of England were unsuccessful. The army which he led into England was totally routed; and, as Cromwell still kept possession of the capital of Scotland, there was no alternative left for the king, but an inglorious flight. With much difficulty he escaped to France, and, during the ten years which he spent on the Continent, gave ample proof of his hypocrisy in those engagements which he made in Scotland.

To the church and people of Scotland, the protectorate of Cromwell was less acceptable than the government of Charles, yet it was immeasurably less injurious. In the means which he employed to raise himself to power, he does not appear to have been scrupulous. It must be admitted, however, that the energy of his government repressed disorders at home, and made the power of Britain be respected abroad. His prompt and effectual interposition, to save the persecuted Waldenses from extermination, was a splendid achievement, which should not be buried in oblivion.²

Different causes conspired to render the government of Cromwell somewhat more rigorous in Scot-

¹ Wodrow, Vol. I., Book i, Chapter 1.

² Jones' Church History.

land, than in other parts of the empire. The people of that country were almost unanimous in proclaiming their attachment to the exiled king, and their decided hostility to the authority of Cromwell, which they denounced as a usurpation. They ascribed to him, too exclusively, the blame of having defeated the Covenanted uniformity. He was jealous of their ecclesiastical judicatories, as capable of exercising an influence on the nation, which might endanger the stability of his government. The meetings of the General Assembly were for several years interdicted,¹ and other injurious restraints on ministerial freedom imposed. Cromwell very improperly assumed, and exercised, the right of appointing days of fasting and thanksgiving, by his sole authority. Endeavours were also made by his agents, to propagate in Scotland the principles of Independency, to which he himself was warmly attached. Yet he never offered the violence to the church to which she had been accustomed, for forty years, under the house of Stuart—by silencing, suspending, and banishing the best of her ministers, on account of their faithfulness.² There seems to be good ground for believing, that notwithstanding the impediments which arose to the progress of the Reformation, particularly in England, the system of church polity which had been partially introduced into that country, and fully established in Scotland, continued to produce abundant and excellent fruit in both kingdoms during the greater part of the Pro-

¹ When the Assembly was met, at its usual time and place, in July, 1653, one of the officers of the English army at that time in Edinburgh, repaired to the Assembly house, attended by a company of horse and foot, and immediately after the court had been constituted by the Moderator, informed the members that he had orders to dissolve the meeting; and having led them out of town, he discharged them from holding any farther meetings without the consent of the English Parliament.—Baillie, Vol. ii., Letter 193.

² Aikman, Vol. iv., pp. 446, 456. Kirkton, p. 56, *et seq.*

tectorate. The fact that at the close of this period, there were found occupying the pulpits in England about 2000 ministers, who, for conscience' sake, deliberately exposed themselves and their families to poverty and reproach, by relinquishing their livings, and what they prized more highly, the privilege of exercising their ministry for the edification of their flocks, furnishes a testimony to the power of principle scarcely surpassed in the annals of history. Of the state of religion in Scotland at that period, we may give one testimony from an historian, who was a minister of the Church of Scotland in the time of which he writes. "I verily believe there were more souls converted to Christ in that short period of time, than in any other season since the Reformation, though of treble its duration; nor was there ever greater purity and plenty of the means of grace than was in that time."

CHAPTER VI.

FROM THE RESTORATION OF CHARLES II. TO THE REVOLUTION.

A. D. 1660 to 1688.

DURING a period of twenty years, appearances seemed to justify the sanguine hope of the Reformers, that the sway of Antichrist in Britain was at an end. About the beginning of that period, the raging monster had given an appalling display of his power and cruelty, in the massacre of the Protestants in the north of Ireland. And in England, too, the efforts made to maintain his ascendancy, by the first Charles and his adherents, composed of Roman

Catholics, cavaliers, and malignants,¹ led to the effusion of much blood. Yet during the time specified, the principles of social order which prevailed, were more in accordance with Christianity than they had formerly been, and the cause of true religion was, upon the whole, progressive. But the advancement of Charles II. to the throne of Great Britain, in the year 1660, made it evident, that the scarlet-coloured Beast had not been dead, but merely overpowered; and by the violence with which he then arose "to devour, break in pieces, and stamp the residue with his feet,"² he seemed anxious to be avenged for the temporary restraint which had been imposed upon him. It would be puerile to ascribe to Charles alone, or to the few men of Belial who were the chief instruments of his despotism, the enormous mass of crime, which, under the name of government, was perpetrated in Britain and Ireland during that period. Had there not been a multitude to whom the government of Charles was acceptable, just because it gave vent and indulgence to their unhallowed passions; and, perhaps, a still larger number, who were criminally and sordidly lukewarm, in regard to the best interests of their country, the prosperity of the church, and the righteous claims of the Redeemer,—the two royal brothers had not been suffered, during a period of twenty-eight years, to trample so proudly on the civil and religious liberties of the nations, and to make havoc in the heritage of God. The spirit of Antichrist was still among the people, and Charles and his government were merely the instruments by which it displayed itself in active operation.

We have specified some of the errors, by which

¹ The persons known to be enemies to the Reformation, and favourable to the exorbitant claims of the civil rulers, were, in that period, commonly denominated Malignants.

² Daniel vii. 7

even the people of God in Scotland had exposed themselves to divine correction. Nor were their brethren in England, at the same period, blameless. They were, as a body, excessively and blindly desirous of the king's return, and concurred, actively and passively, in his restoration, without insisting on any stipulations whatever. And now the king, for whose sake they put such weighty interests at hazard, was the principal instrument in their sufferings. It may also be remarked, that a large number of them, who had either been brought up as Presbyterians, or had embraced that form of church government, seemed inclined, at the Restoration, to entertain a proposal for a compromise with the Episcopalians. They would have submitted to a modified Episcopacy, according to a model supplied by the venerable Usher. But this unwarrantable and dangerous concession brought them no advantage; and it deserves to be remarked, that throughout the whole protracted period of their sufferings, the bishops were their unwavering and implacable enemies.

As soon as Charles found himself securely seated on his throne, had tried the temper of his Parliament, and filled his court with men, most of whom would shrink from no villany, he laid aside all restraint. His former declarations and promises, especially to the Presbyterians, were violated without scruple. The ancient hierarchy was restored, without modification. The surviving Episcopal clergymen, who had been ejected by the Parliament, many of them for gross error in doctrine, and notorious immorality of life, were indiscriminately restored, and the Presbyterian ministers expelled to make room for them. The Act of uniformity soon followed, by which about 2,000 ministers in England, were driven from their flocks in

one day,¹ and discharged from the exercise of their ministry. When they ventured to preach in the fields or in private houses, they were apprehended and cast into prison, where not a few of them perished. Oaths and declarations were imposed, requiring, under severe penalties, the renunciation of the Solemn League, as an unlawful bond, and an acknowledgment that it was unlawful to resist the king, under any pretence whatever. By the conventicle Act, in 1664, the people who countenanced their ministry were subjected to heavy penalties. At any meeting for religious exercises, not in accordance with the rules of the established church, and where more than five persons were present above sixteen years of age—in addition to the members of the family, at whose house the meeting took place—each individual became liable, for the first offence, to three months' imprisonment; for the second, to six months; for the third, to transportation for seven years; and should the offender return before the expiration of that term, the offence was pronounced a capital crime. This was followed by another Act, which exceedingly aggravated the sufferings of the ejected ministers, forbidding them to approach within five miles of any city, or borough town, or of any place where they had at any time statedly exercised their ministry. This had the effect of removing them to a distance from those friends whose kindness would have alleviated their extreme destitution. And as we have deemed it proper to make explicit mention of their errors, which exposed them to chastisement, we feel ourselves equally bound to express our conviction, that the cause for which they contended was supremely worthy of the most arduous struggle, and to record

¹ 1st August, 1662.

our admiration of their patience and constancy under all the hardships they were called to endure. Driven, as they were, from place to place, stripped of their property, and of the means of earning a subsistence, their families broken up and dispersed, surrounded by spies and informers, who swarmed in every quarter, like the foul carrion bird in the field of recent carnage, harassed by incessant law-suits, mocked and brow-beaten by the minions of power who occupied the bench of justice—they bore all, not only with patience and firmness, but with a meekness and gentleness which often confounded their persecutors, and which nothing but the mighty power of divine grace could have inspired.

In the meantime, the unbounded profaneness and profligacy of the court, were diffused throughout the country. The salutary laws against vice and open profaneness, which were passed in the former period, were annulled, or became a dead letter. The magistrates and public functionaries very frequently took their model from the court. The change made in the pulpits was lamentably for the worse. The most effectual restraints upon the out-breakings of human depravity, were removed or broken down, and a tide of ungodliness and debauchery overspread the nation.

The reign of terror in Scotland during the same period, was even more fierce and bloody than in England. The Committee of Estates, appointed in 1651, was instructed by Charles, at his restoration, to assume the government until the meeting of Parliament.¹ The members of this committee had all professed zeal for Scotland's Reformation, and sworn the Covenants. Yet on the very first day of their meeting, they committed ten ministers to prison,

¹ Wedrow, Vol. i., Book 1, Chap. i.

whom they found in the act of drawing up an address and supplication to the king; and, by a proclamation issued on the following day, prohibited all such meetings as unlawful, unless held by the king's special authority, and all petitions and remonstrances, as tending to sedition. These were the first fruits of the public resolutions.

At this crisis the notorious James Sharpe returned from London, where he had been playing a game of profound and successful treachery, which has seldom been equalled. When the proposal to recall the king began to be generally agitated, in both parts of the kingdom, a few of the leading ministers of the Church of Scotland, being favourable to that proposal, resolved to send up to London one of their own number, in whose prudence and fidelity they had the fullest confidence, to be a medium of intercourse between them and their brethren—the Presbyterian ministers of England, to watch the progress of public events, and to give to his friends at home prompt and explicit intelligence of every thing as it occurred. Sharpe was chosen for this delicate and very important business. The main design of his mission was evidently to take care that, in the arrangements made for settling the government of the empire, either by restoring the king or otherwise, the interests of religion should be secured, and especially the liberties and privileges of the Church of Scotland. But Sharpe was covetous, unprincipled, and ambitious, and eagerly embraced an opportunity which presented itself of securing his own personal aggrandizement, by betraying his country, and the church of God. Having entered into the scheme of a political faction, who, from selfish views, desired to have the king restored without any conditions whatever, he managed, by consummate address and duplicity, to keep his brethren in ignorance, and so effectually to

delude them into the belief, that the safety of the church consisted in confiding all to the justice and generosity of the king, that no single step was taken in Scotland to guard against the impending danger. The protesters alone appear to have understood the king's character, and to have formed a just conception of the inexpressible folly and wickedness of placing the destinies of three kingdoms so rashly in his hands. But it was a part of Sharpe's policy to vilify the protesters, to fasten on them the charge of being factious and turbulent, and to cause their strong expressions of alarm to be treated with contempt. By these means the Church of Scotland was placed at the king's mercy, before any suspicion of danger was generally entertained. When the craftiness of the fox was to be superseded by the ferocity of the lion, then this apostate and traitor appeared on the stage, to guide the movements of the executive government, as yet unpractised in the work of persecution. As it was still desirable, however, to preserve, for a short time, the delusive security of the church, he brought with him a letter from the king, addressed to the Presbytery of Edinburgh, in which Charles declares his determination "to protect and preserve the government of the Church of Scotland, as it is settled by law, without violation."¹ The fulfilment of this promise consisted in the speedy restoration of the bishops, by virtue of the royal supremacy alone, and in the appointment of the perfidious Sharpe to be Archbishop of St. Andrews. A higher testimony of the estimation in which his services were held by the king, could not have been given, than in the fact, that when he himself usurped the popedom of the churches in his dominions, Sharpe was advanced to the primacy of the Church in Scotland.

¹ Wodrow, vol. 1, p. 80.

The Parliament met in January, 1661, and proved every way qualified for the infamous work which its master intended it to perform. The king's Commissioner found little difficulty in obtaining its sanction to all the measures which the court chose to prescribe. After reviewing what was achieved by the Scottish nobility and gentry during the twenty years immediately preceding, it is a humiliating and melancholy spectacle to behold the members of this Parliament, almost all of whom had come under the sacred bonds of the National Covenants, most of whom had witnessed, and many of whom had shared in the magnanimous struggle of their country for her rights, now so utterly degraded and apostate, so reckless of their own solemn engagements, so recreant to their country's dearest liberties, so eager to sacrifice the church at the shrine of avarice and ambition, so complaisant and servile to royalty, so haughty, oppressive, and inexorable to their fellow-countrymen.

The first work of this Parliament was to annul and overturn, with every mark of contempt, those venerable institutions and wholesome laws which their royal master, as well as most of themselves, had solemnly sworn to maintain inviolate. After the Commissioner had made sufficient trial of the character and principles of the Parliament, first, by substituting, at the commencement of the proceedings, an oath of allegiance and disguised supremacy, instead of requiring the members to subscribe the Covenant, as, by the standing laws of the kingdom, they were bound to do; and next, by passing a few Acts in which hostility to the Reformation was more cautiously displayed, he immediately introduced the measure which may be regarded as the main work of that session. 'This was what has been usually termed the ACT RESCISSORY,¹ by which

¹ Act 15th, Parliament 1st, Charles II.

all the meetings of Parliament which had been held since the year 1640, were condemned as illegal, and all the Acts of these Parliaments declared null and void. The second session of this Parliament, held in May, 1662, declared, in its first Act, that "the ordering and disposal of the external government and policy of the church, doth properly belong unto his Majesty as an inherent right of the crown, by virtue of his royal prerogative and supremacy in causes ecclesiastical;" and, in the exercise of this assumed right, the king and Parliament restored the "state of bishops" to their "ancient places and undoubted privileges in Parliament; and to all their other accustomed dignities, privileges, and jurisdictions." They next proceeded to condemn and annul "all Acts of Parliament, or Council, which might be interpreted to have given any church power, jurisdiction, or government, to the office-bearers of the church, other than that which acknowledgeth a dependence upon, and subordination to, the sovereign power of the king, as supreme," to whom the archbishops and bishops were to be accountable for their administrations. By the second Act of this session, the Covenanted Reformation, and all that was done in accomplishing it from 1638 to 1650, were declared to be treasonable and rebellious. It was farther enacted, that it is "treasonable and rebellious" to maintain, that it is lawful to subjects, "upon pretence of reformation, or on any other pretence, to enter into leagues and covenants, or take up arms against the king, or to put limits upon the due obedience or allegiance of his subjects." The public Covenants were cancelled, "as in themselves unlawful oaths," and "imposed upon the subjects against the fundamental laws and liberties of the kingdom;" and "all Acts and Constitutions, ecclesiastical or civil, approving of" the Covenants,

especially the Acts of the Assembly at Glasgow in 1638, which was pronounced an "unlawful and seditious meeting," all whose proceedings, from the beginning, were declared to be "unlawful, null, and void." At a more advanced period of the reign of Charles, the vehement enmity of the court and Parliament against the Covenants was farther expressed, by the order to burn them publicly at Edinburgh, as had been done previously at London and other places.¹ It was, moreover, enacted, that all who administered or took the Covenants, or wrote in defence of them, or acknowledged their obligation, should be punished as traitors.

Before proceeding with the narrative, it may be here observed, that in the enactments which have now been quoted, may be found embodied the leading principles on which the government of the Stuarts was conducted, in Britain and Ireland, for about one hundred years; although neither James I. of England, nor his son Charles, had power to carry their principles fully into practice. Under the reign of Charles II., however, and under his brother James, they were brought into operation with great rigour. Whether we regard these principles in theory, or as they were illustrated in practice, we feel constrained to condemn them, and to lift our testimony against them, as despotic, anti-christian, and impious. These principles are comprised under two heads:—1st, the unqualified supremacy of the king over the church; 2d, his absolute sovereignty over the nation. As these claims constituted the entire ground of controversy between the government and the steadfast Covenanters, for a period of twenty-eight years, it seems proper to analyze them, and to state somewhat more

¹ They were burnt at Linlithgow, with every mark of profane contempt, on the 29th May, 1662.

fully what was commonly understood, by both the contending parties, as included in them.

1st. In virtue of his supremacy, the king claimed an uncontrollable right to give to the church such a constitution and government as he should choose; in the exercise of which right he could be fettered by no human laws, and was answerable to no earthly tribunal. 2d. A right to enforce this government on the churches throughout his dominions, and, by the whole weight of the civil power, to compel universal and unqualified submission to it. 3d. The claim brought along with it the competency of the king to absolve these nations from the obligation of the most solemn bonds. It was, accordingly, by the exercise of the supremacy alone, without any other sanction, that the king restored the Episcopal hierarchy, notwithstanding that almost all the religious part of the nation were, from their inmost soul, opposed to it, as unscriptural and unlawful. 4th. The claim farther brought with it patronage, in its rankest form, whereby the king, in concurrence with his own creatures, the bishops, might appoint ministers for a large proportion of the parishes throughout the kingdom. It does not appear how a ruler, to whom is conceded such an authority over the church, could encounter much difficulty in establishing throughout his dominions any religious system whatever—Popery, Mahometanism, or Paganism; or how his subjects could possibly prevent such a result, without setting themselves in opposition to the king's authority, which it was declared damnable to resist.

But when we add to this the other claim mentioned, as explained by the government then existing, the mighty chain becomes strong enough to bind all subjects to the chariot wheels of their rulers. To maintain that it is lawful for subjects to offer resistance to the sovereign will of their

king, or to take arms against him, or any bearing his commission, *on any pretence whatever*, was declared to be treasonable and rebellious. Without the special consent and permission of the king, it was pronounced to be unlawful to form any association, or hold any meeting, even for the purpose of presenting a supplication or remonstrance; and all "writing, printing, preaching, praying, against his Majesty's royal prerogative," as thus defined, or against such a church government as he might choose to introduce, were prohibited under severe penalties.

The combination of these two claims forms a power which swallows up the chief rights both of God and man. It embodies in it the whole essence and impiety of Antichrist. The property, liberty, and religion of the entire community, are placed at its sovereign disposal. It forges a commission from heaven, to leave to men nothing to do in religion but to submit implicitly to the will of their prince, and thus annihilates the right of private judgment, the rights of conscience, and man's responsibility to God. Besides robbing the Redeemer of the rights of his crown, it would dethrone the King Eternal, transferring to a sinful mortal the highest homage which rational creatures can render to the Supreme Being. It has sometimes been ignorantly alleged, that the matters about which the persecuted Covenanters contended were of trivial importance; if it be so, there is nothing in the whole range of human rights as regards the present life, nor of the privileges which the divine benignity has furnished to man that he may prepare for eternity, which can be deemed important. In all the past struggles of patriotism and piety, it would be difficult to name an instance where resistance to unrighteous claims was more imperative.

The king's representatives in Scotland seemed

impatient to prove that they were prepared to reduce to practice the principles they had adopted. With this view, it was determined to make a few examples, which might serve not only as a warning to others, but to gratify the private personal malice of the king, and of some of his favourite counsellors. The first sufferer, who led up the noble train of martyrs, was the Marquis of Argyle,¹ who, ten years before, had placed the crown on the head of the king; a peer, more ennobled by his magnanimity, patriotism, and piety, than by his exalted rank. A few days after, one of the brightest lights of the Church of Scotland, the Rev. James Guthrie, was executed, on grounds equally honourable to himself, and disgraceful to his murderers. A brief interval elapsed, until these were followed by an individual every way worthy to be associated with them,—the eminently pious and learned Lord Warriston,² who had been one of the Commissioners from the Church of Scotland to the Westminster Assembly.

When the enemy thus broke in like a flood, there were but few prepared to lift up a standard against him. While the protesters only were the sufferers, whose vigilance and fidelity marked them out as the first sacrifices to the fury of the oppressor, the great body of the people looked on, with an apparent unconcern, which it is impossible to justify. In some instances, Presbyteries and Synods allowed themselves to become tools in the hands of the civil rulers, for harassing and oppressing their protesting brethren. How sad was this spectacle, as contrasted with that which the Church of Scotland exhibited twenty-two years before, when an attempt was made to introduce the Service Book! But this temporizing policy, of so large a number of the people of God, was visited with speedy retribution.

¹ May 27th, 1661.

² July 22d, 1663.

As soon as the church began to be undeceived, and Presbyteries and Synods were preparing to express their disapprobation of public measures, in the form of supplications and remonstrances, their meetings were forcibly dissolved, and, in a short time, entirely interdicted. Next, by an Act of Privy Council,¹ above three hundred ministers were ejected from their pulpits in one day; and, shortly after, all the ministers of the kingdom were strictly prohibited from the exercise of their ministry, excepting those who should take out a presentation from the patrons, and accept of collation from bishops.

The persons who were introduced as successors to the ejected ministers were, with few exceptions, most unworthy of the ministerial office. Even Burnet, who afterwards became a bishop, describes them as having been so "grossly ignorant, mean, and despicable, and many of them so openly immoral, that they were a disgrace to their sacred profession." When the first consternation was somewhat allayed, and the people had learned something of the character and doctrines of their new teachers, the attendance at the parish churches rapidly diminished.

For a time, the ejected ministers confined their instructions to those of the people who could conveniently join with them in family worship; subsequently, many of them resumed the exercise of their ministry, both in private houses and in the fields. It had been declared by Charles and his Parliament, that all ecclesiastical power and authority are lodg-

¹ At Glasgow, October 1, 1662.

In the preceding year, the Prelates in the north of Ireland had ejected from their pulpits the greater part of the Presbyterian ministers, who were settled in that kingdom. Of sixty-eight who were associated in Presbyteries in the province of Ulster, only seven conformed to Prelacy, and sixty-one were ejected.—Reid's History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, vol. ii., p. 330.

ed in the king, as an essential right of his crown. In the exercise of this authority, he had commanded these ministers to desist from preaching, and had put others, bearing his own commission, in their stead. He had also commanded the people to give punctual attendance on the ministrations of the curates. Such meetings for religious worship, therefore, as were now held by the ejected ministers, could not fail to be regarded by the king as so many instances of palpable disobedience to his authority. They were, accordingly, condemned as unlawful and seditious, and interdicted under severe penalties. Thus Charles and his associates addressed themselves to an enterprise which had baffled all the tyrants who had embarked in it, from the days of Nero up to that time,—an attempt to coerce, by the strong arm of violence, the consciences of the people of God into compliance with their own despotic will.

The offices of government were soon filled with the vilest men in the nation. The work to be done was too horrid for men of principle or integrity to have any hand in it. Or if, at any time, individuals less depraved were introduced to office, their influence and counsel were entirely neutralized by their profligate associates, and by the overwhelming force of the royal prerogative. As the spoils of the persecuted were divided between the governors and their agents, and pillage and brutal oppression were sanctioned by law, a multitude of persons who, in a well ordered community, would be the inmates of a prison, thronged around the government for employment. On the other hand, those men who, by their intelligence, uprightness, and piety, form the strength and ornament of a well ordered community, were now compelled to wander up and down as outlaws, were crowded into prisons, or banished as criminals to distant colonies,

where they were subjected to extreme privations and sufferings.

The ejected ministers, who could neither make a compromise with Prelacy, nor lay down their office at the command of the king, were the first to feel the effects of royal vengeance. At an early period, they were compelled to remove with their families, each at least twenty miles from the parish in which he had been settled; and they were forbidden to approach within six miles of Edinburgh, or of any royal borough. But the penalties denounced against preaching in private houses, and especially in the fields, increased in severity, until it was decreed to be a capital crime. Nor were those who countenanced the ministry of the field preachers, long exempted from suffering. High Commission Courts were erected, which, for a time, exercised all the severities for which these courts have been so remarkable. These being discontinued, other courts were multiplied, contrived and adapted for executing unjust and cruel laws. The military forces were summoned to the aid of the civil authorities: and, although the people continued to endure their sufferings with exemplary patience, the army was increased by new levies, and by the addition of several regiments of Highlanders.—These forces were dispersed over those counties, where dissent was most prevalent, that they might compel the people to give punctual attendance in their parish churches, and fine, and conduct to prison, those who should be guilty of hearing the ejected ministers. Under the false and wicked pretence that these districts were in a state of insurrection, the soldiers were instructed to take free quarters among the inhabitants. One class of the soldiers were rude and ignorant, and the others were trained to emulate them in rapacity, and unfeeling oppression. And, lest the design of the managers

should be marred by any remnants of humanity among the soldiers, the command was entrusted to such men as Turner, Dalziel, and the bloody Claverhouse.

But these were modes of oppression which savages might have practised. There wanted something more refined and exquisite in cruelty, to answer to the character of the present actors.—The hardships thus far enumerated, reached only the property, and the personal liberty, and sometimes the lives of men. But it might be expected, that apostate and perjured Covenanters,—and this was the character of Charles, Sharpe, and Lauderdale, the chief authors of the persecution,—would accomplish something more profound in iniquity, by attempting to reach the consciences of their victims. The history of their efforts does not disappoint such an expectation. A strenuous endeavour to involve the people in the guilt of dissimulation, falsehood, and perjury, by means of insidious and wicked declarations, bonds, and oaths, presented to them under circumstances of the strongest temptation, constituted a principal feature of this persecution, from beginning to end. By taking the bonds, the people were involved in guilt; for refusing them, they were commonly stripped of their entire property, and often subjected to more grievous hardships. As a specimen of these detestable contrivances, we may name, first:—

The *oath of allegiance*,¹ which involved in it also an acknowledgment of the king's supremacy.—Secondly, the *declaration*,² which exalted the royal prerogative, required a renunciation of the Covenants, and of the whole work of Reformation, and an acknowledgment that it is high treason for subjects to rise in arms without the king's permission,

¹ Wodrow, vol. i., p. 92, (1661.) ² Ibid, vol. i., p. 208, (1662.)

on *any ground whatever*. Thirdly, the *bond for peace*,¹ which imposed impracticable conditions on masters and heritors; and was understood as containing an engagement not to hear the ejected ministers. Fourthly, the *bond for conformity or regularity*,² by which noblemen, barons, heritors, and all masters, were bound for themselves, their wives, and children; their servants, and their wives and children; their tenants, and their wives and children, that they would not attend “any illegal meeting,” or, in other words, the preaching of the gospel by ejected ministers; that they would hold no intercourse with field preachers, or intercommuned persons, but endeavour to apprehend them, and deliver them up to justice; and if their own wives, children, or servants, should offend in these particulars, that they would, without fail, present them before the judge ordinary, that the legal penalties might be executed upon them. Fifthly, the *Test*,³ which being self-contradictory, made perjury inevitable. For, while the swearer is made, in the first place, to declare his adherence to the first Scottish Confession of Faith, ratified by the first Parliament of James VI., in which it is explicitly asserted, that Jesus is the only Head of the Church, and that obedience is owing to magistrates only in the due exercise of their legitimate authority, he is required, in the second part of the oath, to acknowledge Charles, the existing ruler, as supreme Head of the Church, and that it is unlawful for subjects to enter into Covenants without the king’s permission;—and to bind himself, that he shall never decline his majesty’s power and jurisdiction.

By degrees, the whole frame of government seemed converted into one vast court of inquisition, in which the Episcopal clergy of all ranks,

¹ Wodrow, vol. ii., p. 93, (1667.) ² Ibid, vol. ii., p. 300, (1678.)

³ Ibid, vol. iii., p. 293, (1681.)

held a conspicuous place, as informers, witnesses, or judges. Of fining and imprisoning, there was scarcely any cessation. From the privy councillor down to the common soldier, pillage was the universal practice. Multitudes who had possessed a comfortable abundance, or who had lived in affluence, were stripped of their entire property, and became houseless wanderers. The prisons of the kingdom were often crowded to excess; and, although death was continually removing numbers of prisoners, by the cruel treatment to which they were subjected, and by the busy hand of the public executioner, it was frequently necessary to make room for new companies, by banishing hundreds to foreign plantations, where many of them were sold into perpetual slavery. By what were termed letters of *inter-communing*, issued by the government, great numbers, both of ministers and of private Christians, were proclaimed *outlaws*, and cut off from the common rites of hospitality. In such cases, it was declared to be a capital crime to hold any communication with these persons, by word or writing; to afford them food or lodging, or the smallest relief or assistance,—no exception being made in favour of those who stood in the nearest relation to them. According to this law, if an individual was denounced by government as having been guilty of hearing a sermon in the fields, the nearest relative could not offer him a morsel of bread but at the hazard of life. To establish the crime of treason, it was not necessary, in the more advanced stage of this persecution, to prove any act of resistance to the laws, nor even to find evidence of an intention to resist the law, however tyrannical; the *opinions* of the persecuted Covenanters were pronounced treason. By all the various tribunals that were erected, multitudes were condemned to die for owning the obligation of the

Covenants; for refusing to acknowledge the king's ecclesiastical supremacy; for avowing the sentiment, that it is lawful in subjects to make resistance to tyrannical government; for refusing to call the death of bishop Sharpe murder; or the rising at Pentland, or at Bothwell, rebellion. Neither was it deemed always requisite for convicting an offender, that competent witnesses should be produced against him. Whether it was before the supreme court of justiciary that any suspected person was arraigned, or one of the circuit courts, or a sheriff, or his deputy, or his under-deputy, or a military officer,—there was commonly but one mode of procedure. The pannel was interrogated first in regard to his conduct, and next in regard to his opinions; if, on these heads, nothing was elicited, he was immediately required to take the Test, or the current oath of the day; and if the fear of God would not allow him to renounce his principles by compliance, the process was immediately closed. He might, perhaps, in the first instance, be deprived of all his property, and shut up in prison, or sent to the Bass;¹ but at one period of the persecution, such an examination was frequently followed by a speedy execution. Even the common soldier was at last permitted to adopt the same mode of trial, in the case of any person whom he suspected, or pretended to suspect, of disloyalty; and having his eye on the plunder, to become at once witness, judge, and executioner.

During the continuance of the persecution, there were two occasions on which a considerable number of the Covenanters rose in arms, with the view of defending themselves against oppression. The first of these efforts commenced near the village of Dalry, in Galloway, in 1666. It originated in the act of a

¹ A barren rock near the entrance of the Frith of Forth.

few individuals, who, prompted by humanity, interposed to rescue an unhappy fellow-creature, whom some barbarous soldiers were preparing to torture with fire. The whole district had, for a long time, been suffering extreme hardships, both from the ravages, and from the brutal insolence of the soldiers which had been quartered among them, under the command of Sir James Turner. In the excitement produced by the incident above mentioned, the people rose suddenly, and disarmed the troops; and, having marched to the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, were attacked and defeated with much slaughter at the Pentland Hills. The second attempt to break the yoke of the oppressor, which was followed by still more disastrous consequences, took place after an interval of nearly thirteen years. At this period, the soldiers had orders to disperse by violence every meeting for religious worship, not authorized by law; to seize the property, and even the garments of the worshippers; and were indemnified for whatever blood might be shed in the execution of these orders. From this state of the law, it had become the practice among the persecuted Covenanters, when they met for worship, to assemble in large numbers, and to come armed for their own defence. One of these meetings was held at Loudon Hill, in Ayrshire, on the first Sabbath of June, 1679; and, while public worship was proceeding, notice was given that Claverhouse was approaching, carrying along with him a number of prisoners, including Mr King, one of the ministers. To prevent an attack on the promiscuous congregation, a resolution was adopted by the men to stand on the defensive. On this occasion, Claverhouse was repulsed, and the prisoners liberated.

The persons who had concurred in this affair, were convinced that it would be visited by the government with a terrible revenge. This kept

them together for about three weeks, during which time they had received a considerable accession of numbers. But they were unhappily divided among themselves on several points, and especially about the propriety of owning the king's authority, in their public declaration of the cause in which they now appeared in arms. They were not properly united under the command of any one leader. They wanted discipline, and the necessary equipments of war. Being attacked by the king's forces at Bothwell Bridge, on the 22d of June, a small company of them made a brief but spirited resistance; these, however, being overpowered, the troops proceeded to spread slaughter among the multitude without farther resistance.

It deserves to be remarked, that both these efforts of the Covenanters were, in their origin, wholly unpremeditated. The first of them was occasioned by a revolting outrage on an individual; the second by a hostile aggression of an armed force on a peaceable congregation, met for public worship on the Lord's-day. In the circumstances in which the Covenanters were placed, the subsequent prosecution of these enterprizes might be imprudent. Even in the most important cause, it is unwarrantable to place lives in peril, without a rational and strong probability of success. But the principle on which the Covenanters acted, is one which we cannot disown, viz., that there is a point beyond which it is not required of Christians by the divine law, nor can justly be required of them by any human law, to yield themselves up as the unresisting victims of wanton oppression. Nor can it reasonably be questioned, that such a crisis had now come in Scotland, where murder was sanctioned by statute, hospitality was a capital crime, and even the common courtesies of life among the nearest relations, were punishable with death; to petition, was treason; and to talk of

legal redress, or even to utter a complaint, was the way to a prison.

In both the instances mentioned, the punishments inflicted under colour of law, on those who were taken prisoners on the field of battle, or charged with being accessory to these engagements, were vindictive and barbarous in the extreme. After the defeat at Bothwell, from twelve to fifteen hundred persons were confined in the Greyfriar's church-yard in Edinburgh, most of them for a period of about five months, exposed to the inclemency of the weather by day and night. Many died from the hardships and privations to which they were subjected there, and not a few by the hand of the public executioner. Between two and three hundred were sentenced to be transported to distant colonies; but the vessel in which they were embarked having struck on a rock, in one of the northern isles of Scotland, about two hundred of them perished. Their death is ascribed to the inhumanity of the captain and the crew, who, although they found the means of escaping from the danger themselves, are reported to have chained down the hatches of the sinking vessel upon their prisoners.

Amidst all the convulsions and dangers of this period, there was a band of faithful ministers, who continued to proclaim among an oppressed and impoverished people, the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to display a banner for truth. At a time when the rulers and their hireling clergy, conspired to set open the flood-gates of ungodliness, these despised wanderers were honoured to conduct many sinners to the fountain, "whose streams make glad the city of God." Their patience under sufferings, their holy and exemplary lives, and the fervour and solemnity with which they set forth salvation by the cross of Christ, were, by the divine blessing, made effectual for the conversion of thousands. The high

principle and intelligence of the martyrs, who, at the hazard of their lives, persevered in their attendance on the field meetings, afforded ample demonstration of the power which accompanied the preaching of the ejected ministers. Neither the example nor the doctrine of those ministers who crouched under the yoke, had any tendency to prepare men for martyrdom.

Here it becomes necessary for us to state our sentiments, in regard to one or two of the questions which, at this period, led to divisions in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The first of these respects the INDULGENCE. At the restoration of Charles, there were found, alas! among the ministers, a large number, who, to escape suffering, and retain their emoluments, made a sacrifice of their principles. There were also, as formerly stated, several hundreds who were carried honourably through this trial, and from their uncompromising fidelity, were banished from their homes and from their flocks. But a new trial of a more insidious nature awaited them, before which many of them fell. In the year 1669, an offer was made to a number of them, that, on their becoming bound to observe certain conditions, they should be permitted to resume the exercise of their ministry, by an act of royal favour, entitled an Indulgence. A number of good men, who, for many years, had borne poverty and persecution for conscience' sake, were taken in this snare, and after some feeble attempt to exonerate themselves by a protestation, accepted of the Indulgence. On two subsequent occasions during the reign of Charles,¹ Acts of Indulgence were repeated. The particular conditions annexed to each were not precisely the same; but they all came through a polluted channel, and were fettered with limitations, which were

¹ In 1672 and 1679.

wholly inconsistent with ministerial freedom. If they did not directly subject the indulged ministers to the Prelacy, they at least destroyed the whole essence of Presbytery.

From his throne of lordly supremacy, the king issued orders to his privy council to employ a certain number of the ejected ministers in the work of preaching, prescribing the law by which their ministrations must be regulated. In the exercise of this deputed authority, the council made choice of the individuals to be so indulged, and selected the places where they were to labour, planting and transplanting them at pleasure. These ministers were commanded, in the king's name, to constitute and hold sessions, and to attend the Presbyteries, all of which were held under the authority of the bishops. But should they refuse to attend these Episcopal Presbyteries, they were not permitted to hold any Presbyteries of their own, nor take cognizance of any case of discipline, which it had been customary to refer to Presbyteries, all such cases being reserved for the bishops' courts. They were forbidden, under severe penalties, to preach beyond the limits of their own parishes, respectively; to travel out of them, without a licence obtained from the bishop; to marry or baptize persons belonging to another parish, unless that parish should be a vacancy; or to countenance persons of other parishes in withdrawing from the curates to frequent their ministry. They were commanded to hold their communion all on the same day; not to admit into their pulpits any minister not indulged; and not to lecture or expound the Scriptures—it not being the practice of the Episcopal clergy so to do.

We cannot, therefore, hesitate to condemn these Indulgences, and to approve of the conduct of those who rejected them: 1st. Because the acceptance of them implied an indirect acknowledgment of the

royal supremacy, against which the ministers had all lifted up a decided practical testimony. 2d. Because the conditions on which they were granted were grossly Erastian, and inconsistent with ministerial faithfulness and freedom. 3d. Because they were manifestly offered with the crafty and sinister design of dividing the Covenanters, that it might be the more easy to reduce the whole of them into abject submission. 4th. Because the indulged were brought into an indirect alliance with the persecutors, which was exceedingly ensnaring to themselves, and tended to extenuate, in the eyes of the people generally, the enormous guilt of the persecution. 5th. Because the compliance of so many, presented a stumbling-block in the way of the more faithful, and increased the torrent of odium and ~~of~~ suffering to which they were subjected. It is not, therefore, among the indulged, but among those who, in a state of separation from them, kept up the proscribed and persecuted field meetings, that we are henceforth to look for the true testimony for "Christ's crown and Covenant."

Another question of very grave importance, began to be agitated among the suffering Presbyterians, about the year 1679, and proved the occasion of division among them, during nearly ten years of the persecution. This question respected the propriety of yielding allegiance to the then existing government. The whole body of the Presbyterians had condemned the claim of unlimited obedience advanced by Charles, as despotical, and subversive of their rights, both as men and as Christians. They could neither be induced to pronounce resistance to tyranny as unlawful, nor to bind themselves that they would never, under any pretence whatever, take arms against the king, or decline his jurisdiction and authority. They perceived very distinctly, that if these principles were admitted, and if it should

please the king to set up a graven image, and command his subjects to worship it, they should have no resource left but unqualified submission or death. Yet although Charles did what was precisely the same in principle, by compelling conformity to an unscriptural Church Establishment, to which a vast majority of the people were conscientiously opposed, it is astonishing that, for a period of eighteen years, amidst oppressions and sufferings which have rarely had a parallel, they never seriously thought of disowning his authority.

About the time of the rising at Bothwell, however, a number of the Covenanters became convinced, that it was one of the grievous sins of the nation to have done homage to the oppressor so long. This view was held by Cameron, Douglas, and Cargill, and was afterwards adopted into the testimony of the intrepid and pious Renwick. The grounds on which they vindicated their sentiments and conduct on this head were these:—That Charles had been received by Scotland as a sworn supporter of the Covenanted Reformation, and, by his coronation oath, was bound to maintain the religion and liberties of the nation inviolate; but that the whole course of his reign had been a deliberate and outrageous violation of his oath; that he had invaded the prerogative of the Son of God, by usurping a blasphemous supremacy over the church; had overturned the whole fabric of Scotland's Reformation; had violently restored Episcopacy, which the nation was sworn to reject and extirpate; had changed the civil government into an intolerable despotism, filling all the principal offices of state with men profligate in principle, and cruel in disposition; had poisoned the sources of justice, and multiplied sanguinary laws; that the best subjects of his kingdom, of all ranks, for peaceably assembling to worship God, had been proscribed, plundered, harassed by a

brutal soldiery, immured in filthy dungeons, sold into slavery, and multitudes of them executed as felons upon the scaffold. Such were their arguments; and who that reads the history of that period can deny that they were founded in fact? We are aware that the conduct of that division of the Church, which refused allegiance to the Stuarts, has been viewed by many as an unwarrantable extreme, to which they were driven by intolerable oppression. To us it does not appear in this light. We are unable to discover any plausible ground on which to found an argument condemnatory of their conduct, unless it be made to rest on the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance,—a doctrine which the genuine friends of the Scottish Reformation utterly disclaim.

It was to be expected, that the open renunciation of allegiance by the sufferers, as well as the rising at Bothwell, would have the effect of increasing the violence of the persecution. The fury of the oppressor became so terrible, that none of the surviving Presbyterian ministers, who had been accustomed to preach in the fields, could be induced to persevere in the service, excepting the few who had fearlessly cast off the tyrant's yoke. These, one after another, fell into the hands of their enemies, and sealed their testimony with their blood. Mr Richard Cameron, one of the most devoted of them, whose intrepid zeal in disowning the government and preaching the gospel in the fields, had rendered him peculiarly obnoxious to the persecutors, while reposing in a moor near Airdsmoss, in company with a number of his friends, was suddenly attacked by a troop of horsemen, and gained the crown of martyrdom on the 20th of July, 1680. Yet the standard which had been erected for the royal prerogatives of the exalted Redeemer, was not suffered to fall. Like the three children, when threatened with a furnace

seven times heated, the witnesses displayed increasing fortitude, as the danger became more appalling. Although the three kingdoms conspired, or through cowardice consented, to support an idol of jealousy in the person of their king; these good soldiers of Jesus Christ would not dishonour their divine Master, nor degrade themselves, by doing homage to the usurper. As they beheld inscribed on his diadem the complex title—Perjury, Tyranny, Blasphemy, they would not join in the shout of loyalty, nor bend the knee in token of reverence. When it was demanded of them, by their unrighteous judges, “why will you contradict the Scriptures, by refusing to acknowledge and to pray for the king? There is no power but of God; he that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God:” their reply was to this effect; “we do not contradict the Scriptures; but your interpretation of them is as false as your conduct is repugnant to the whole tenor of God’s blessed word. The powers that are from God can mean only lawful authority; otherwise, as the Pope is a power, the people who reside in Popish countries would be bound to yield implicit obedience to the Man of Sin. There is no lawful authority but of God; but no power which, in the habitual course of its administration, is in a state of determined hostility to God and to his law, can be of God—excepting as the power of Satan is of God. The authority which God owns, is a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them who do well: but your government spreads its shield over the vilest malefactors,—perjurers, robbers, and murderers, and employs them in its service, while its main work consists in persecuting and destroying the people of God. We are aware that it is our duty to pray for all men, not excepting our enemies and persecutors; but when prayer is demanded as a *test of loyalty* to a government of this character, it would be, in our

judgment, an act of impiety before God, and of disloyalty to the Messiah, to present it."

In the briefest sketch of the contendings of the witnesses, at this period, it would be improper to overlook the *joint public testimonies* which they emitted, containing both a protestation against prevailing defection, and an explicit statement of their own principles. To this duty they were imperatively called in self-defence. Not only did their enraged enemies seek to justify their own cruelties, by holding up the persecuted party to execration, as fanatics, abettors of anarchy, and enemies to all government and social order; but even their former friends and companions in affliction, who now deserted them in the hour of extreme danger, gave currency to the reproaches of the persecutors. But these joint public testimonies, as well as those which were given by individuals at their death, an ample collection of which has been preserved in a work named the *Cloud of Witnesses*, served other purposes of great importance. They were calculated to prevent the true state of the controversy, between the tyrant and the persecuted Covenanters, from being forgotten; and they contributed, in a high degree, to preserve the nation from sinking into a state of abject and hopeless servitude, at a time when the voice of faithful preaching was almost silenced. The government itself helped to promote this design, however unintentionally, by giving extensive circulation to the testimonies of the sufferers. As specimens of the documents to which we refer, we may mention the Declarations at Rutherglen in 1679, at Sanquhar in 1680, and at Lanark in 1682, to which we may add the larger paper, styled the *Informatory Vindication*. From the haste in which some of these papers were drawn up, and the extraordinary circumstances in which the writers were placed, it should not be deemed surprising, although

something intemperate in language, or even exceptionable in statement, were contained in them; yet a candid examination will show, that while, in these respects, there is no serious ground of complaint against them, they exhibit a distinct and energetic view of the true grounds of the pending contest.

In recording our approbation of these public appearances for the cause of the Reformation, made at a most perilous season, we would not be understood as espousing every sentiment or expression contained in the testimonies we have mentioned. But notwithstanding imperfections, from which nothing human is wholly exempted, we behold in these demonstrations the same hallowed zeal for the cause of God, the same surpassing love to the church, and magnanimous contempt of danger, which the martyrs generally evinced before their judges, and at their execution.

In the month of February, 1685, Charles II. went to his account.¹ Immediately on the demise of the king, the Scottish Council, and afterwards the Parliament, both of which had become more and more slavish, welcomed James, Duke of York, an avowed and bigoted Papist, to the throne. So intoxicated were they with sentiments of loyalty,

¹ To those who are acquainted with the history of Charles' government, the fact must appear extraordinary, that the Church of England continues to the present day to observe the anniversary of his restoration as a day of public thanksgiving. On the 29th of May every year, her congregations are summoned, by authority, to meet in their churches, to offer public thanks to God for advancing this prince to the throne! Is it thus the church expresses her abhorrence of bloody persecution, and of impiety, profligacy, and tyranny in kings!!

A day of fasting is also appointed by that church to deplore the decease of Charles I., who was put to death by the sectaries in England, and to confess the guilt of the nation on account of what is termed the martyrdom of that king. But there is neither sorrow nor contrition expressed on account of the protracted sufferings of the people of God in the three kingdoms, during the reign of the first Charles; or for the shedding the blood of thousands of the saints by the persecution under Charles II.

that, in an address to the king, they declare "their detestation of all principles which are derogatory to the king's sacred, supreme, sovereign, and absolute power and authority, of which none can partake, whether individuals or collective bodies, but in dependence on him, and by commission from him." This declaration, strictly taken, not only recognised a supremacy over the Protestant Church, as being vested in a Popish king, but stripped the Parliament of all authority, excepting what was derived by delegation from him. It was not long until James put their sincerity to the test, by the actual exercise of that unlimited authority which they had ascribed to him. But when it became evident, notwithstanding all his protestations to the contrary, that his design was to subvert the Protestant religion, and to restore Popery to its long lost ascendancy; when the *bishops* began to feel their dignities insecure, and the leading *nobility* were dismissed from office, to make room for such as embraced the "king's religion," both parties refused to render that unlimited obedience, which they had so vehemently inculcated. The Parliament proved averse to gratify the king, by a repeal of all the laws which had been passed, as barriers against Popery. When he found that there would be difficulty in granting a full toleration to the Roman Catholics, without extending it also to the Presbyterians, he commanded the Privy Council to issue a proclamation, in 1687, declaring that "by his sovereign authority, prerogative, royal, and absolute power," he suspends and disables all laws against any for refusing conformity to the Established religion; and grants to all classes the liberty of holding their own religious assemblies, on the condition, that nothing shall be preached or taught, that shall tend to alienate the hearts of the people from his government. The import of this condition was

commonly understood to be, that nothing should be spoken from the pulpit against Popery or arbitrary power. The only exception made in this toleration was in regard to the *field meetings*, "against which all the laws and Acts of Parliament were left in full force and vigour."

It was undeniably evident, that this measure was a gross violation of the constitution; that it annihilated the authority of Parliament, and set the king above all law; that the design of it was not to favour any form of Protestantism, but to introduce Popery; and that it overturned all the legal securities for the Protestant religion which had been erected since the Reformation. Yet it is to be lamented, that the Presbyterian ministers generally accepted of this toleration, and that a large number of them concurred in sending up to the king a loyal address, expressive of their gratitude for "his majesty's gracious and surprising favour," and engaging that they would "preserve an entire loyalty in their doctrine and practice." Such were the effects of the indulgence in destroying the patriotism, and enlightened zeal for civil and religious liberty, which formerly animated the great body of Presbyterian ministers.

Yet, even at this time, the Lord left not himself without witnesses for his cause. For about two years after the martyrdom of Cargill, the scattered and persecuted remnant who held fast their principles, were left entirely destitute of a public ministry. In this emergency, they formed themselves into fellowship societies, for mutual edification, and these societies were united in one for general correspondence. "By the rivers of Babylon they sat down and wept, when they remembered Zion."—Their affection towards the church burned the more intensely, as dangers thickened around her. If the sacrifice of their lives could have saved her from the fury of her enemies, and from the treachery of pro-

fessed friends, they were ready to lay down their lives with cheerfulness. The time of deliverance was not yet come; but the Lord was pleased to grant them a reviving in their bondage, by the return of Mr James Renwick from Holland, whither he had gone to complete his education, and to receive ordination to the office of the ministry. In the year 1683, he accepted a call from the societies, and became their pastor. By him the banner for "Christ's crown and covenant" was once more publicly displayed, on the mountains and moors of Scotland; and the Lord remarkably blessed his ministry, for comforting and reviving a torn and bleeding church. From the number of martyrs that suffered during two or three years at this period, it was emphatically denominated "KILLING TIME." But Renwick and his followers had counted the cost of the enterprise in which they were embarked, and neither sufferings nor reproaches could compel them to abandon it. He was joined by Mr Alexander Shields, a licentiate, who was a valuable auxiliary in the cause, both by his preaching and writing, at the time when that cause was at its lowest point of depression. It was only by these men and their associates, that there was displayed a full and faithful testimony against all the defections and backslidings of that unhappy time. In a second declaration, published at Sanquhar, in May, 1685, they lamented the inordinate affection which the nation had borne to the deceased tyrant, Charles the Second, and deliberately and unanimously entered their protest against the advancement of his brother James to the crown, because he was "a murderer, who had shed the blood of the saints;" an "idolater," with whom a Christian people could not lawfully form any such confederacy; because it was in opposition to "many laudable Acts of Parliament," which had determined that no Papist could

sit on the Scottish throne; and "inconsistent with the safety, faith, conscience, and Christian liberty of the people." They subjoined an affectionate appeal to the churches in England and in Ireland, urging them to consider their breach of covenant, and repent. And in the sight of God, angels, and men, they disclaimed the foul charges which had been preferred against them, as persons who pleaded for a right to rob, injure, or assassinate others, in retaliation for the injuries inflicted on themselves.¹

Whatever mitigation of suffering was brought to other divisions of the Presbyterian church, by the deceitful toleration of the tyrant James, toward Renwick and his followers there was little abatement of the rage of persecution. They were denounced as rebels, intercommuned, a price set on their heads, hunted from place to place with untiring assiduity; "in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." At length, the leader of this intrepid band was apprehended in the city of Edinburgh, and having witnessed a good confession, he suffered martyrdom on the 17th of February, 1688, having just completed the 26th year of his age. He was the last who suffered martyrdom in the cause of Scotland's Reformation. He departed, rejoicing in the full assurance of faith, and in the confident hope, that

¹ "We positively disown as horrid murder the killing of any, because of a different persuasion and opinion from us, albeit some have cast this odious calumny upon us. But we maintain, that it is both righteous and rational, in defence of our lives, liberties, and religion, after an orderly and Christian manner, to endeavour, by all means lawful and possible, to defend ourselves, rescue our brethren, and prevent their being murdered,—in a martial posture against wicked persecutors, who are daily seeking to destroy them and us, and imbrue their hands in our blood."—*Informatory Vindication*, published 1687.

the period of deliverance for the church was at hand. Before the end of the year in which he suffered, the principles for which he and his brethren contended, respecting the duty of disowning unlawful authority, were practically sanctioned and confirmed by the three kingdoms.

PERIOD FOURTH.

FROM THE REVOLUTION TO THE PRESENT TIME.

CHAPTER I.

THE REVOLUTION.

1688.

THE Revolution which placed the Prince of Orange on the throne of Great Britain, affords a memorable example of the application of principles, for which Presbyterian Covenanters had so long contended. The Scottish Convention unanimously declared, that "King James VII., being a professed Papist, having assumed the regal power without taking the oath required by law, having invaded the fundamental constitution of the kingdom, and changed the government to an arbitrary despotic power, to the subversion of the Protestant religion, and violation of the laws and liberties of the kingdom, had forfeited the crown." The English Parliament declared, that "King James II., having endeavoured to subvert the constitution, by breaking the original contract between the king and the people, did abdicate the crown." By these acts, both kingdoms gave their solemn sanction to these two prin-

ciples :—1st. That the right to exercise power may be forfeited by the abuse of it; and, 2d, that a people may depose their rulers. For maintaining these sentiments, Scottish Presbyterians had suffered indescribable hardships, and many of them had been put to death. The same grounds which were held sufficient to justify the deposition of James, had been, almost in every point, equally strong against the government of his brother, for a long series of years. In regard to religion, it would be difficult to determine which of the brothers had the advantage. The same vows by which Scotland was bound to reject Popery, were equally peremptory against the admission of Prelacy. Had Charles refused the coronation oath, as his brother James did, his character had been less odious. The hypocritical perjurer was more unworthy of a nation's confidence, than an avowed Roman Catholic. The charge of invading the fundamental constitutions of the kingdom, was common to both. Yet it was a remarkable display of the providence of God, that the very men who had multiplied laws against the Covenanters, and sat as judges to condemn them to banishment, torture, and death, should have been now compelled to justify them before the world, by avowing the very principles for which the martyrs suffered. The Lord brought forth "their righteousness as the light, and their judgment as the noon-day."¹

¹ At this juncture, all classes seemed to have adopted suddenly a new political creed. The most vehement royalists, the Episcopal clergy, the keenest disputers for passive obedience,—all conspired in welcoming the Prince of Orange. The University of Oxford furnishes an example for the rest. They had given the solemn sanction of their authority to the maxim inculcated by Mahomet, that '*obedience is due to the authorities of a nation, whether they be constituted upon just or unjust principles.*' The divines of the University drew up twenty-seven propositions, extracted from the writings of Buchanan, Baxter, Owen, Milton, and others, who had maintained, that the people might examine whether those in power have a right to rule;—and that when

The change produced by the Revolution in 1688, deserves ever to be commemorated as a remarkable instance of the goodness of God to these lands; and the crisis at which it was accomplished, enhances the value of the deliverance. At home, the spirit of the nation seemed broken. Religion and liberty were trampled under foot. Abroad, the Popish powers had established one of the most formidable combinations against the Protestant interest, which had existed in Europe since the Reformation. In the year 1685, the edict of Nantz,² which had given security for religious liberty to the French Protestants, was perfidiously revoked; and by a course of violence and cruelty on the part of the government, which has few parallels in history, the reformed church in that kingdom was reduced to desolation. These things confirmed the hope of the bigoted Papist on the British throne, that he should effectually accomplish his darling project of re-establishing Popery throughout his dominions. But "He that sitteth in the heavens," turned his efforts into derision. Just when his measures seemed ripe for execution, his authority and dignity were transferred to another; and from being one of the most powerful princes in Europe, he suddenly became a fugitive and a wanderer in foreign lands. Thus, the design of restoring the British isles to the domina-

kings forfeit their right to government, they may be resisted.—They passed a decree, in full convocation, condemning these principles as damnable doctrines,—as destructive to all human society, and declaring them to be impious, seditious, heretical, and blasphemous. Yet, four years after, they resisted the authority of the king, and, refusing to practise that passive obedience which themselves had taught, by consenting to the violation of their charter, the president, and all the fellows, excepting two who had complied, were expelled the college. As soon, however, as the king invaded their property, these ecclesiastics invited the Prince of Orange to their rescue; they signed an agreement to support him; they offered to him their plate, and declared for him in a body, even while their sovereign was still upon the throne.

² Issued by Henry IV. in 1598, recalled by Louis XIV. in 1685.

tion of the Roman Pontiff, was baffled. The sword of persecution, which had so long shed the blood of the saints, was sheathed. Many unjust and oppressive laws were repealed. The fines and forfeitures to which many were obnoxious, were made void. And above all, the sacred and inestimable privilege of adopting and avowing their own religious profession, was secured to the people; and they were allowed to meet together in larger or smaller assemblies, in churches or in fields, to worship the God of heaven without hazard or molestation.

Yet it is to be lamented exceedingly, that the nations did not improve the precious opportunity again afforded to them, of restoring those excellent constitutions, in Church and State, which Charles had overturned. Happy had it been for Scotland, whose obligations to steadfastness were so numerous, had she then complied with the divine injunction; "Remember whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works!" Happy had it been for England, bound as she was in the same Solemn League with Scotland, had she now strenuously applied herself to fulfil her sacred vow; "to endeavour the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland, according to the word of God, and the example of the best reformed churches!"¹ And how happy had it been for Ireland, where the progress of the truth was alternately obstructed by Popish violence, and by Prelatic persecution, and where the blighting influence of a covetous, inefficient, political clergy, still continues to present an insuperable obstacle to the advancement of the Reformation! But the men who possessed the power of dictating to the new ruler the terms on which these nations were henceforth to be govern-

¹ Solemn League.

ed, were altogether averse to implement the engagements of their fathers. There was not in these nations that measure of scriptural illumination and piety, which would have taught the nobility and principal men, to apply themselves, in a Christian spirit, to the momentous work they were summoned to discharge. The church was still viewed by them, as she has commonly been by civil rulers, as the most powerful political engine in their possession; as a lever to move and control the national mind at pleasure; and the only subject of intense anxiety was how to render her effectually subservient to the will of the State. Episcopacy was therefore retained in England, and in Ireland, and new securities devised to perpetuate and defend it. And Scotland, forgetful of the Solemn League, seemed glad to obtain a modified Presbyterianism, conceded to her for no higher reason than the inclinations of the people; and placed under Erastian restrictions, whereby its value and efficiency have ever since been exceedingly impaired.

There was a small minority in Scotland, with whom a portion of the Presbyterians in the north of Ireland concurred in sentiment, to whom these things were matters of deepest sorrow and disappointment. They had hailed the arrival of William, Prince of Orange, with a more fervent joy than any other class, because they had been the greatest sufferers under the late tyranny. They gave unequivocal evidence of their readiness to hazard their lives in the cause of their country's deliverance, by the effectual aid which they rendered in quelling an insurrection, raised in favour of the exiled king.— But when they beheld, in the progress of the Revolution settlement, that the best interests of religion were to be compromised; that many of the persons employed in erecting the new fabric, were such as had acted a prominent part in demolishing a more

noble structure, and even in shedding the blood of the saints; when they perceived a deliberate design, to leave buried under the rubbish of iniquitous laws, a large share of what was most valuable in Scotland's Reformation, their sanguine hopes were suddenly blighted, and the painful conviction was forced upon them, that the time of complete deliverance for the church was not yet come. While others rejoiced at the completion of this new temple, this class,—some of whom had witnessed, and all of them highly appreciated the glory of the former,—wept for sorrow, and especially when they beheld the modern structure to be still surmounted with the hated top-stone of a royal supremacy.—This was avowedly the case in regard to the churches in England and Ireland; and notwithstanding the formal repeal of the Act of Supremacy by the Scottish Parliament, it soon became evident, that the State reserved to itself a control over the proceedings of the Church in Scotland also, altogether incompatible with complete spiritual freedom, or independence.

Into an establishment thus constituted, the legitimate successors of the Scottish Covenanters—the followers of Cameron, Cargill, and Renwick, could not enter, without renouncing their consistency, and contradicting their solemn vows. Nor did they deem it their duty to decline the fellowship of the *Church* only; they felt constrained to lift up their protest also against the *State*, to whose unhallowed interference, the evils of the ecclesiastical settlement were in a great measure to be ascribed. They had a strong conviction, that the Reformation in Church and State, between the years 1638 and 1649, was, in a high degree, conformable to the Scriptures, and conducive to the interests of true religion; that the Covenants, by which this reformation had been

publicly and solemnly ratified, were moral in their nature and of standing obligation; and that it was unwarrantable for these nations to erect constitutions completely subversive of those which they had sworn to preserve. They conceived it, therefore, to be a matter of imperative obligation upon them, to dissent from the constitution of the State, as well as of the Church, and to protest against it, as immoral in itself, and founded on a breach of covenant. It was their firm purpose to guard against everything that might wear the aspect of a factious or turbulent dissent; to conduct themselves as quiet and peaceable members of society; and, out of regard to the authority of God, to be punctual observers of every good law. But being convinced that the authority usurped over the church, was anti-Christian and impious, and that these covenanted lands were guilty of grievous sin in conferring power upon their rulers on such immoral terms, they resolved to abstain, as much as possible, from every act which might imply their concurrence in the usurpation of the ruler, or in the sinful grant of power by the people.

They were fully aware, from long and sad experience, that the decision to which they had come, would expose them to obloquy and reproach; that it must necessarily exclude them from most of the avenues to worldly honour and distinction; and that it might possibly bring upon them a new train of legal penalties. But their fathers, who had passed to their eternal reward, had committed to their custody a sacred deposit of precious truth, in the defence of which thousands of them had laid down their lives; and they could not consent to betray that trust, whatever hazard might arise from their fidelity. The banner for Christ's crown and covenant had waved over the fields of Scotland, when the storm

of persecution had raged most fiercely, and how could they be justified in dropping it now, when the God of Zion was pleased to command a calm?

The steadfastness of these witnesses was put to a very rigorous trial, by the defection of their ministers. For some time, the Rev. Messrs. Linning and Boyd had been united with Mr Shields in dispensing the word and ordinances among them. The two former discovered an eager desire for union with the Revolution Church at the earliest opportunity. Even Mr Shields, who had been fellow-labourer with Renwick, and afterwards his biographer, of whose talents and piety the "Hind let Loose" will be a lasting memorial, was carried away by the tide of conformity. He lived to repent of this rash step, when it was too late to recover what he had lost,—his character and peace of mind.¹ By the apostacy of their ministers, the people were once more left as sheep without a shepherd. In this emergency, their fellowship meetings and general correspondence were diligently maintained. They believed it to be inconsistent to join in partial or occasional fellowship with a church, with which they could not join in full communion; and they perceived clearly, that attendance on public ordinances in the places where they respectively resided, must, in a short time, lead to the breaking up of their union, and, in so far as they were concerned, to the suppression of their testimony. Yet they would not violate the order of Christ's house, to obtain ministers by any irregular course. When their faith and patience had been tried for a period of sixteen years, their prayers for

¹ He subsequently held the office of chaplain to a regiment which fought in league with the Pope. Having violated his covenant with God and the church, by which he was bound to oppose the power of Antichrist, we soon find him in the army employed to defend the Man of Sin. He subsequently embarked in the expedition to Darien, and, after having experienced the utmost distress, died unknown and neglected in Jamaica.

a faithful minister were answered, by the accession of the Rev. John M'Millan from the Established Church, in the year 1706.

Here it becomes necessary to specify the principal grounds, on which these resolute Covenanters rested their refusal, to embrace the communion of the Revolution Church:—

1st. Because her judicatories were composed of men against whom they had weighty objections. The General Assembly, 1690,—the first that met after the Revolution,—consisted: 1st. Of ministers who had espoused the cause of the *public resolutions* in 1651, by which the public offices, civil and military, were first filled with malignants.—2. Of ministers who, during the last reign, had complied with one or more of the wicked bonds and oaths imposed by government; many of them having bound themselves to abstain from preaching, at a time when faithful preaching was so much required.—3. Of ministers who had accepted the various indulgences granted by Charles, every one of which was clogged with Erastian restrictions, and the acceptance of which was, virtually, the taking out a new commission for the exercise of their ministry, from an impious usurper of the prerogatives of the Messiah.—4. Of ministers who had grasped at the deceitful toleration given by James, and concurred in returning a fulsome letter of thanks for it, although manifestly springing from the corrupt source of a royal supremacy, and designed to be a preparation for the introduction of Popery.—5. Of elders, many of whom had been implicated in the guilt of the late persecution. These classes, together with a few ministers now returned from exile, composed the first Assembly: and all of them were received as members, without having afforded any evidence of repentance, or offered one expression of contrition for their former sins.

2d. Because the Assembly, when met, submitted

tamely to the dictation of the civil rulers, in matters of great importance, which belonged exclusively to its own jurisdiction. Before the Assembly was permitted to meet, the king and Parliament, by their own authority, had abolished Episcopacy in Scotland, restored Presbyterianism, and adopted and ratified the thirty-three chapters of the Westminster Confession of Faith, "as the public and avowed confession of the church."¹ By these acts the civil rulers practically assumed the right to prescribe to the church, both her confession and her form of church government; nor did the Assembly, when met, presume to offer protestation, or remonstrance, against this invasion of its liberty, or to alter or amend, by one jot or tittle, what was done for it by the State. It is true, that the Confession then enacted by the State, and adopted by the Church, asserts the doctrine of Christ's sole headship over his church; but this great principle was violated in practice by both parties;—by the State, in claiming and exercising an Erastian power over the Church, and by the church, in tamely submitting to that power. Yet the members of the Assembly were fully aware, that to the usurpations of the civil powers in religious matters, and to this cause alone, were to be ascribed, the enormous wrongs and oppressions which the church had suffered for twenty-eight years.

3d. Because the Scottish Reformation, in its most advanced and mature state, was deliberately abandoned in the Revolution settlement. The late government, in its public deeds, had condemned the principles on which that Reformation was conducted, as "rebellious and treasonable," and declared the measures used for carrying it forward "unlawful and seditious." The same epithets were applied to the reforming Assembly at Glasgow, 1638, and all

¹ Act 5th, Sess. 2d, Parliament 1st, William and Mary.

its "acts and decisions, and all confirmations of the same," were pronounced "null and void."¹ All the meetings of Parliament during the reforming period, had been condemned as without authority, and all

¹ Act 2d, Sess. 2d, Parliament 1st, Charles II.

"And since the rise and progress of the late troubles, did in a great measure proceed from some treasonable and seditious positions infused into the people, *that it was lawful to subjects for reformation, to enter into Covenants and Leagues, or to take up arms against the King, or those commissioned by him, and such like*, and that many wild and rebellious courses were taken and practised in pursuance thereof, by unlawful meetings and gatherings of the people, by mutinous and tumultuous petitions, by insolent and seditious protestations against his majesty's royal and just commands, by entering into unlawful oaths and covenants, by usurping the name and power of council tables, and *Church Judicatories*, after they were by his majesty discharged, by treasonable declarations, that his majesty was not to be admitted to the exercise of his royal power, until he should grant their unjust desires," (that is, give security that he would not renew his efforts to rob them both of their religion and liberty); "therefore, the King's Majesty, and Estates of Parliament, do declare these positions (above mentioned) to be rebellious and treasonable, and that all these gatherings, convocations, petitions, protestations, and erecting and keeping of council tables, that were used in the beginning, and for carrying on of the late troubles, were unlawful and seditious; and particularly, that these oaths, whereof the one was commonly called the National Covenant, as it was sworn and explained in the year 1638, and the other, entitled a Solemn League and Covenant, were, and are, in themselves, unlawful oaths, and were taken and imposed on the subjects of this kingdom, against the fundamental laws and liberties of the same; and, therefore, annuls all acts and constitutions, ecclesiastical or civil, approving the same or either of them. And also, it is hereby declared, by his Majesty and Estates of Parliament, that the pretended Assembly, kept at Glasgow, in the year 1638, was, in itself, (after the same was by his Majesty discharged under the pain of treason), an unlawful and seditious meeting; and that all acts, deeds, sentences, orders, or decreets, past therein, were in themselves from the beginning, are now, and in all time coming, to be reputed unlawful, void, and null, and that all ratifications or confirmations of the same, past by whatsoever authority, or in whatsoever meetings, shall from henceforth be void and null. And further, it is enacted, that if any person, or persons, shall, by writing, printing, praying, preaching, publish any words or sentences to stir up the people to the hatred of his Majesty's royal prerogative and supremacy in causes ecclesiastical, or of the government of the Church by Archbishops and Bishops, as it is now settled by law; or to justify any of the deeds, actings, practices, or things above-mentioned, shall be incapable to enjoy any place, civil, ecclesiastical, or military, in this Church and kingdom, and shall be liable to such further pains as are due by the law in such cases."

their acts rescinded as “testimonies of disloyalty, reproaches upon the kingdom, and unfit to be any longer on record.”¹ Multitudes of patriots and martyrs had been barbarously put to death, for their steadfast adherence to that Reformation. Yet nothing effectual was done at the Revolution, to rescue the precious attainments of that period from the load of infamy under which they lay buried. The *act rescissory* was not repealed. The legality of the reforming Parliaments was not acknowledged by the State, nor the authority of the reforming Assemblies explicitly owned by the Church. The charges of treason and rebellion against the measures of the Second Reformation, and against the men who had laid down their lives in defence of them, were left in the Statute-book, without qualification or contradiction. To gratify those who still retained a lingering attachment to that ancient work, a few stones were gathered from the wreck of it, to be incorporated with the new structure, but the venerable fabric itself was left in ruins. No entreaties could induce the Assemblies of the Revolution Church to recognize, by any explicit act, the permanent obligation of the Covenants; and the name of the Solemn League never once occurs in any of their public deeds. All attempts made by individuals, either at the Revolution, or afterwards, to revive the memory of the Second Reformation, were repulsed by the Assembly with evident marks of displeasure. In process of time, it became a more perilous course for a minister to vindicate the attainments of that Reformation, or condemn defections from it, than to make an open avowal of the most fatal errors. The model of the Second Reformation being entirely set aside, the Revolution Church was erected after the pattern of the first, as exhibited in the year 1592,

¹ Act 15th, Sess. 1st, Parliament 1st, Charles II.

when the church was yet in her minority. At that time, the National Covenant had not been explained, as condemning Prelacy, and the civil places and power of churchmen. The law of patronage had not been abolished. The Solemn League and Covenant, by which these kingdoms became bound to preserve and promote the Reformation, and to extirpate Prelacy, as well as Popery, had then no existence. The acceptance of a constitution resting on this basis, from a government which retained the act rescissory in its full authority, combined with the studied neglect of the Second Reformation by the Revolution Church, must be regarded as a virtual renunciation of that Reformation. The principal attainments for which the martyrs contended and suffered, were consigned to oblivion or contempt, in direct violation of the Covenants, and of that divine injunction, "whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

4th. The avowed principles on which the Revolution settlement was conducted, were of a *political*, rather than of a *religious* character. In the reforming period, Prelacy was condemned, not merely on account of its inutility—nor because it fostered ambition and avarice among the clergy—nor even because it had been the "ladder by which Antichrist mounted his throne," but because it had "no warrant nor foundation in the word of God." On the other hand, Presbyterianism was established, not chiefly on account of its peculiar fitness for preserving the unity and purity of the church, and the efficiency of all divine ordinances, but because it was the only form of church government which, in the judgment of the Reformers, was capable of being supported by an appeal to Scripture. But the reasons adduced for the Revolution settlement were of a very different complexion. Whether we examine the "claim of right" by the Convention of Estates,—or king

William's letter to his Parliament, or the Act of Parliament itself, we find no better reason for abolishing Prelacy, than that "it has been a great and insupportable grievance to this nation, and contrary to the inclinations of the generality of the people."¹ At the same time "the King and Queen's majesties do declare, that with the advice and consent of the Parliament, they will settle, by law, that church government in this kingdom, which is most agreeable to the inclinations of the people." In the Act establishing the Presbyterian form of Church Government in Scotland, and in subsequent Acts, that form of government is acknowledged to be "agreeable to the word of God." But this is not assigned as the *ground* of its being established; nor will any one attach much importance to this concession, who knows, that it is one great principle of Erastianism, to hold every form of church government as *agreeable to the word of God*, which conduces to general utility, and has the sanction of the civil government.²

These are some of the grounds on which a number of conscientious and devoted Christians felt themselves compelled to dissent from the Revolution church, when it was first established. In our judgment, the causes assigned were sufficient to warrant this dissent; and if a charge of schism is applicable to any party in this case, it must, in justice, fall on those who abandoned the scriptural and valuable attainments of the Reformed Church of Scotland, not on those who continued unshaken in their attachment to them, and who embodied them in their public testimony under every change of circumstances.

¹ Parliament 1st, William and Mary, Chap. 3d.

² In the Westminster Assembly, the Erastians were willing to acknowledge the Presbyterian Church Government, as "*agreeable to the word of God*," while they strained every nerve to prevent its being established in England.

CHAPTER II.

GROUNDS OF SEPARATION FROM THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH
SINCE THE REVOLUTION.

THE importance and validity of those reasons which induced our fathers to decline the fellowship of the Church of Scotland, at the Revolution, were speedily demonstrated in her subsequent history. When we undertake to justify them for maintaining a continued separation from that church, while they themselves held the *principle* of an establishment, we are bound to present a summary of the grounds on which we rest their vindication.

FIRST. It was obvious at the commencement, and became continually more so, that the civil government with which the church had consented to be united, did not possess the character which might justify that alliance. Compared with the tyranny of the two preceding reigns, the government which succeeded the Revolution has, doubtless, strong claims to our respect and gratitude. We freely admit that it was from the beginning, and continues to be, the best of the governments of modern Europe. Believing, as we do, on the combined evidence of Scripture prophecy and authentic history, that the kingdoms within the limits of the "Latin earth," or Western Roman Empire, have been all along "of one mind to give their strength and power to the Beast," and that the time of the breaking up of that impious confederacy has not yet fully come, a question arises of superlative importance, whether Britain itself has ceased to be, what it undoubtedly once was, one of the horns of the Beast.

Apart, however, from the decision of this question, our conviction is, that whatever excellencies may

belong to the British Constitution, however adapted it may be for the preservation of outward social order; for the promotion of trade and commerce, and even for the administration of justice, still, it wants those Scriptural qualifications, without which a union between Church and State can neither be lawful nor beneficial. The constitution provides, that a certain number of Episcopal clergymen, under the title of "*lords spiritual*," shall form a constituent part of the legislature. It provides for the perpetual establishment of *Prelacy* in England and Ireland. It provides, that an undisguised *supremacy* over the churches in these kingdoms, shall be perpetually maintained, as an inherent right of the crown; and that the ultimate control over all ecclesiastical matters in them, shall belong to the King and Parliament. All these things we regard not only as immoral and pernicious, but as palpably antichristian; and as having produced, to a lamentable extent, even under the profession of a Protestant faith, and an orthodox creed, the very same effects which, for centuries, have flowed from the corruptions of Romanism. We protest against the formation of a union between the Church of Christ and a State which embodies such flagrant immoralities in its constitution; which confounds the distinction between Church and State; which robs the churches of their liberty; and places the reins of government, indiscriminately, in the hands of the pious or the profane, the Christian or the infidel, as they may possess talents or influence to raise themselves to power. To men possessing Scriptural qualifications, the very terms of office in Britain have been such as to render power wholly inaccessible. That good men have, occasionally, co-operated in carrying on the government, we have no disposition to deny. It is sufficient to justify our position to observe, that even these good men, on receiving office, must

have bound themselves to maintain inviolate an immoral constitution, and to perpetuate those laws, by the operation of which the church and religion have suffered incalculable injury.

It was, therefore, in our view, a capital error in the Revolution church, to cleave to an alliance with a civil government, which was not constituted in conformity to Scripture, and which was composed of men altogether unworthy of such an alliance. This laid the foundation for a long series of errors.

SECONDLY. Our fathers testified against the Church of Scotland, on account of *her habitual submission to the Erastian encroachments of the State.*

The successful aggressions of the civil rulers on her ecclesiastical jurisdiction, have appeared,

1st. In regard to her Assemblies :—

In the 23d Act of Assembly, 1647, approving of the Westminster Confession of Faith, an explanation is given of the 2d article of chapter xxxi. of that Confession, for the avowed purpose of asserting the intrinsic power of the church to hold her own Assemblies, both ordinary and extraordinary, as often as occasion may require, even without the consent of the civil magistrate. By neglecting to revive the authority of this Act, the Revolution church left herself exposed to the continual and arbitrary interference of the civil magistrate with the freedom of her Assemblies. Every meeting of the General Assembly has been summoned and dissolved in the name of the sovereign. Nor can this be truly represented as an empty form, which does not imply any claim of authority by the civil magistrate. In no single instance, since the Revolution, has the church ventured to convene and hold an Assembly in virtue of her own intrinsic power, without the concurrence of his Majesty's Commissioner; nor has the Assembly ever ventured to sit longer than the ten days prescribed by law. This matter

is now conducted without any needless display of authority on the part of government; but this was not the case until the church was taught, by many painful and mortifying lessons, that her own authority was *subordinate*, and that of the king *supreme*, in regard to this most important privilege. The second Assembly after the Revolution, was appointed to be held in November, 1691, but was prorogued, by royal proclamation, until January, 1692. When met, it was suddenly dissolved by the king's commissioner, without being allowed to transact any business, or to fix another diet. A verbal protest was, indeed, offered by the moderator against this piece of tyranny, and another time for meeting was nominated; but the issue served only to prove, that the church had, on this head, completely surrendered her privilege into the hands of the civil government, as the diet was deserted;¹ and a large number of ministers concurred in sending up a penitential address to the king, on account of the protest offered by the moderator. After an interval of nearly two years, the king was pleased to summon an Assembly to meet in December, 1693, but did not permit the meeting until March, 1694. And in order that there might be no farther uncertainty nor dispute, in all time to come, to whom the absolute right belonged of summoning, proroguing, and dissolving the Assembly, the next meeting, which was appointed for April, 1695, was adjourned by proclamation three several times, before it was suffered to take place.² In 1703, under

¹ Aikman's History, vol. v., pp. 401, 428, 429.

² See Proclamations, W. S. Library, Edinburgh, 1676-93, and 1694-99.

The following is a specimen of the style in which these adjournments were declared and published:—"William, by the grace of God, king, &c.....to our Lyon King at arms, and his brethren, Herald, Mace, of our Privy Council, Pursuivants, Messengers at Arms, Sheriffs, &c., greeting;.....Forasmuch as we, by our Commissioner to the last General Assembly, did in-

the reign of Queen Anne, the General Assembly, apparently sensible of this degradation, was about to introduce an Act asserting the supremacy of Christ, the intrinsic power of the church, and the divine right of Presbytery; but the proposal to pass so good an Act was fatal to that Assembly. It was abruptly dissolved by the Queen's commissioner, without any recorded protest. Since that time, the matter has been fairly given up by the church; and the paramount power of the crown remains undisputed. What a contrast appears in this respect between the General Assemblies of the church since the Revolution, and the reforming Assembly at Glasgow in the year 1638!

2d. The Erastian interference of the State, and the subserviency of the Church, were farther exemplified in the admission into her fellowship of a large body of the Episcopal curates. This was a measure so sinful, and so full of peril to her best interests, that no consideration of expediency could justify it. The terms of admission were adjusted by the king, and consisted in their taking the oaths prescribed by the civil government for its own security, and promising to conform to the Presbyterian government now established by law.¹ It is indeed true, that the right of the church "to try and purge out all insufficient, negligent, scandalous, and erroneous ministers, by due course of ecclesiastical process," was recognized by Act of Parliament; but this right was, in a great measure, nullified, by

terdict a new Assembly to meet the — day of April next, and our affairs not allowing it to meet at that time; It is our will, and we have thought fit to adjourn the meeting of the General Assembly from the said — day of April next, to the eleventh day of July thereafter. Therefore, we, with the advice of the Lords of our Privy Council, do hereby adjourn the said General Assembly, until the said 11th day of July next ensuing, (1695) and then to meet at Edinburgh, requiring all the members of the said Assembly to attend the said day."

¹ Curstairs' State Papers, p. 44, *et seq.*

the overwhelming influence employed by government to secure the admission of the Episcopal clergy. The success which attended this endeavour is fully attested by an address of the Assembly's Commission to Queen Anne, in 1712, in which they somewhat boastingly mention it to her Majesty as a "pregnant instance" of their "moderation," that hundreds of these curates had been admitted "on the easiest terms."¹ The terms were, indeed, easy, to a degree altogether inconsistent with faithfulness. To make room for these men, the Presbyterian ministers had been violently ejected, banished, and imprisoned. They had all taken a solemn oath, that the government of the church is an inherent right of the crown. Many of them had been forced upon their parishes by military violence, and the people dragooned into their churches by guards, fines, and tortures. Some of them had acted the part of spies and informers; and the whole body, of which they were a part, had been in closest alliance with the late government in its long course of sanguinary oppression. Yet they were not required by the church, when they were received into her fellowship, to condemn Episcopacy, to renounce the Erastianism which they had avowed upon oath at their ordination, or to express any contrition for their criminal courses during the period of the persecution. So large an addition of time-serving ministers, whose conduct afforded little indication either of piety or principle, could not fail to prove unspeakably injurious to the church. They soon strengthened themselves by the alliance of a number, previously in her fellowship, who were of a kindred spirit with themselves. The result was, the formation of that well-known party in the church,

¹ Recorded in the 10th Act of Assembly, 1712.

which held a constant ascendancy in her judicatories for more than one hundred years.¹

3d. A very deplorable instance of the compliance of the church, appears in her submission to the grievous yoke of patronage. This remnant of Popery was among the last from which the church, in the reforming period, wrought out her deliverance. It was felt, however, and opposed as an intolerable grievance, even at a time when the exercise of it was subject to several restrictions, and when its mischievous effects were not developed, as they have subsequently been. Yet we do not justify the Church of the Reformation for having submitted to it so long. The liberty of the church of Christ ought never to be bartered for secular advantages. Long and sad experience has proved, that civil rulers have not miscalculated the mighty power of this instrument, for rendering the church subservient to their own will. Hence the tenacious grasp with which they have held it. No society can justly pretend to freedom, if some foreign power possesses the right of selecting the men who shall fill its principal offices. No shadow of support can be derived from Scripture for such a practice. The right of the Christian people to choose their own office-bearers we believe to be sanctioned both by Scriptural example, and by the practice of the primitive church for more than three hundred years. It is shocking to reason and to decency to make the charge of immortal souls a marketable commodity, which may be set up to sale, and transferred to the highest bidder;—to suffer any man, but especially the irreligious and ungodly—libertines or infidels, to select a spiritual instructor for a Christian congregation.

¹ The moderate party.

Although lay-patronage was set aside at the Revolution, the right of election was not lodged, as it ought to have been, in the whole body of the communicants, but in an aggregate meeting of heritors and elders. In 1711, the law of patronage was restored, in its most unqualified form. For some time after the re-enactment of this law, the judicatories of the church did not concur in the grosser aggressions of patronage on the rights of the people. But in the lapse of a few years, when the moderate party had gained a complete ascendancy, the law began to be enforced with great rigour. Although the clergy had cast off the Episcopal habit, they seemed to retain, in full vigour, the persecuting spirit of their fathers. It was henceforth no uncommon thing for a minister, professing himself an ambassador of the Prince of Peace, to be forced on an aggrieved and reclaiming parish at the point of the bayonet. For a time, the more godly ministers who disapproved of these proceedings, were not compelled to take any active part in them. The dominant party had recourse to Committees, and other courts of an unconstitutional character, to perpetrate the violence which the regular courts declined. But, in a brief space, the tyranny was carried to such an extreme, that ministers were commanded, on pain of deposition, to take their part in carrying into effect every presentation, however unpopular. It is lamentable that the Church of Scotland should have suffered this yoke to be re-imposed upon her, after having been, by divine mercy, delivered from it. But it is still more lamentable and astonishing, that so large a number of enlightened and godly men as have been found in the minority of that church, who in their consciences condemned, and in their souls abhorred this unrighteous law, should, in every age, have given their practical sanction to it, either by accepting presentations them-

selves, or by becoming the tools of the church, in league with an Erastian civil government, for carrying it into general operation.

4th. The civil rulers have, in some instances, usurped the right of prescribing the terms of admission to the office of the ministry, and even of wielding the censures of the church. In the year 1693, king William and his Parliament ordained,¹ "That no person be admitted or continued to be a minister, or preacher of this church, unless he subscribe the oaths of allegiance, and assurance;" and farther, they "statute and ordain, that uniformity of worship, and of the administration of all public ordinances, within this church, be observed by all the said ministers and preachers, as the same are at present performed and allowed therein, or shall be hereafter declared by the authority of the same; and that no minister or preacher be admitted, or continued for hereafter, unless that he subscribe to observe, and do actually observe, the foresaid uniformity." Church courts were not at liberty to confer licence to preach, or ordination, on any person, however qualified in other respects, unless he had taken the oaths prescribed by government, some of which were very exceptionable. At a subsequent period, ministers who scrupled compliance with a most vexatious order of government, to read from their pulpits on the first Lord's day of every month, for one whole year, a proclamation concerning the death of Captain Porteous, were declared by the civil government "incapable of sitting or voting in any ecclesiastical judicatory."

5th. The church has contracted sin by her indiscriminate compliance with the orders of the Government, respecting the observance of days of fasting and thanksgiving. We do not question the propriety

¹ Parliament 1st, Sess. 4th, Act 22d.

of a Government summoning a nation to such exercises at fitting seasons. But we conceive it to be unwarrantable to enforce the observance of such appointments by the church, when she has had no opportunity of exercising her own judgment respecting them. The instances are not numerous in which the Church of Scotland has summoned her people to such exercises by her own proper authority; and, on the other hand, her undistinguishing compliance with the orders of the State in these particulars, has frequently tended to involve her ministers and congregations in the guilt of public men, and their iniquitous policy; especially by giving the sanction of their benedictions and their prayers, to the unchristian and destructive wars which have been carried on, sometimes in the support of foreign despotism, and in close alliance with the Man of Sin.

THIRDLY. The fact that, at every period of her history since the Revolution, a large number of the ministers of the Church of Scotland have been unsound in the faith, renders communion with her incompatible with a full and faithful testimony for the truth. This fact has been confessed and deplored by many who continued in her communion. The church is "the pillar and ground of the truth." But if the inscription on this pillar does not contain the doctrines of grace; if the church's confession, or the habitual strain of doctrine taught by her ministers, gives a false view of the gospel plan of acceptance with God, *thus far* she becomes a pillar of error and delusion. When we specify examples of heretical teachers in the Church of Scotland, we wish it to be distinctly understood, that we do not consider them, singly or combined, as constituting the principal weight of the charge which we prefer against that church on the head of doctrine. The importance of individual instances consists, chiefly, in the evidence they furnish of the very extensive

prevalence in the church, of errors of the same class and character, with those which are screened by the church courts; and of a most culpable indifference to the truth, even among those who have not themselves embraced the prevailing error. The incorporating union with the Episcopal clergy, shortly after the Revolution settlement, deeply infected the constitution of the Church of Scotland, and produced a spreading leprosy, of which she has never since been healed. But for this fatal step, the sounder part of the ministry might, perhaps, have been able to maintain their ground against those of looser principles. In consequence of the union, however, the corrupt party were raised to that ascendancy in the judicatories, and especially in the General Assembly, which enabled them to give law to the church for more than a century.

In the year 1714, Mr John Simpson, Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow, was brought before the judicatories, on a charge of having taught his students Arminian and Pelagian errors. It was proved that he had discarded the doctrines of original sin, and of man's inability, by nature, to perform works spiritually good; and that he had depreciated divine revelation, as not absolutely necessary to instruct fallen man how to obtain supreme blessedness. Yet he was dismissed from the bar of the General Assembly without any censure whatever. Having received some counsels and cautions, he was continued in the chair of Divinity for fifteen years, from the commencement of the first process against him. A second process, however, proved that, during all that time, he had persisted in teaching his former errors—thus poisoning the very fountain whence the streams of religious instruction were to flow, and that he had added to his former heresy some of the principal errors of the *Arian* school;—exalting human reason above

revealed truth, denying the necessary existence of the Son of God, and maintaining that the three persons of the adorable Godhead are not numerically ONE, in substance or essence. Yet even then, the Assembly gave only a feeble expression of its disapprobation of his conduct; for although he was deprived of his Professorship, he was neither deposed from the office of the ministry, nor excluded from the fellowship of the church.

In the year 1720, the Assembly showed much zeal in pronouncing sentence of condemnation on several important scriptural doctrines, under the false imputation of Antinomianism. These were gathered from a book then re-published, entitled, “the Marrow of Modern Divinity.” We do not maintain that this work was wholly unexceptionable in point of doctrine; but in the selection of doctrines condemned by the Assembly, were included these precious scriptural truths; that in the gospel, Jesus Christ is offered by the Father to *sinner*s of mankind, *as such*, with a full warrant to every one who hears the gospel to believe on him for salvation; that personal appropriation is included in saving faith; and that believers are entirely freed from the law, as a *covenant of works*, although it still continues to be a rule of life in the hand of the Mediator. The Assembly commanded that this book should be denounced from all the pulpits throughout the church. To a number of the more orthodox ministers these decisions were very grievous, and a representation was given in to the Assembly, signed by twelve of them, of the injury that was done thereby to the cause of truth; but for this seasonable and friendly warning, the Assembly directed that these ministers should receive a public rebuke.

A few years after, a process was commenced before the judicatories, against Mr Archibald Campbell, Professor of Church History in the University

of St. Andrews. It was proved, that he had taught and published—"that self-love is the sole and universal motive to virtuous actions; that men, without revelation, cannot discover that there is a God, and yet that the laws of nature are a certain and sufficient rule to direct rational minds to happiness." Of the first of these tenets he offered to the Assembly a vague and equivocal explanation, which was accepted; and he was dismissed without censure, and without being pronounced guilty of any error.

About fifty years after the case last mentioned, Dr. M'Gill, one of the ministers of Ayr, in a publication entitled, "A Practical Essay on the Death of Christ,"¹ avowed and defended most of the leading errors of Socinianism; viz., that the supernatural mysteries of religion must be brought to the test of human reason; that Christ was a person of our own order only; that his priestly office and his sacrifice must be viewed as merely figurative; that there was no necessity for atonement by the death of Christ, as man's obedience is more acceptable to God than Christ's blood; that repentance is the proper atonement for past transgressions, and faith and sincere obedience a solid foundation of hope for future happiness. Four years after the publication of this book, the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr gave deliverance on the case, by dismissing Dr. M'Gill without the slightest censure, and without requiring him to retract any one of his errors. He was, indeed, persuaded to offer to the Court the following apology: "that there are in his publication ideas which may appear improper, and modes of expression, with respect to some things, ambiguous and unguarded, which he disclaims, and for which he is heartily sorry." That such an apology should have been sustained as satis-

¹ Published in 1786.

factory, after a most atrocious attack on all that is precious in the gospel, abundantly shows what were the sentiments prevalent in the Church Court before which the case was tried. Some time after, an attempt was made to bring the same case before the General Assembly; but that court absolutely refused to give it a hearing. The effect produced on the orthodoxy of the church, by such decisions as these, could not fail to be incalculably pernicious. They proved to demonstration, that however orthodox the confession of the church, a majority of her ministers, who had all subscribed that confession, had "made shipwreck of the faith, and of a good conscience;" and that the friend of truth had little to hope for, and the heretic little to fear, from a prosecution before the Church Courts.

FOURTHLY. Our fathers felt constrained to continue their separation from the Church of Scotland, also, on account of her unfaithfulness in discipline. In their judgment, the discipline of the Revolution Church was liable to the threefold charge of laxity, partiality, and tyranny.

The extreme *laxity* of her discipline was evident in the composition of her first General Assembly; and especially in the admission of persons as ruling elders, who had taken an active part in executing the bloody decrees of the tyrannical house of Stuart. It was manifest in the terms on which the conforming curates were received into fellowship. It was manifest in the countenance shown to the most dangerous errors. There is no instance on record, in so far as we know, of any minister having been deposed, by any one of her judicatories, for preaching the doctrines of Arminianism, and Pelagianism, however extensively these errors have been published from her pulpits. Even the blasphemous tenets of Arianism and Socinianism, have been taught in her without check or restraint.

The *partiality* of the church's discipline is proved by the fact, that while heretics and scandalously immoral persons have either been slightly censured, or have escaped with impunity, the heaviest censures have sometimes been inflicted on other deviations from strict orthodoxy, immeasurably less dangerous. The proceedings of the Assembly in regard to the book named "the Marrow," furnish one striking example of this. But the charge might be substantiated by the enumeration of a long list of cases, in which the Church Courts prosecuted, with extreme rigour, those who were conscientiously pleading the cause of truth, and striving against sin. The persecutors were received into the first Assembly without challenge. Shields, Linning, and Boyd, who condemned the persecution, and pleaded for Reformation attainments, were not admitted without an admonition. Mr John Simpson, the Arian Professor, was screened and caressed. Mr John Hepburn, who sought to have the Covenants revived, and who contended against defection, was deposed.¹

The materials supplied in history, which serve to establish the charge of *tyranny* against the administration of this church, are lamentably abundant. The first efforts of her despotism, after the Revolution, fell on a class of ministers who cherished a warm attachment to the attainments of the Second Reformation. These ministers were not insensible to the defects of the Revolution settlement from the beginning; but they continued for a number of years to cherish a fond hope of reformation. From time to time, papers were presented to the Church Courts, complaining of what was defective in the original settlement, and condemning various acts of corrupt administration; respectfully but earnestly urging, that the obligation of the Covenants should

¹ Dr. Thomas Murray's Literary History of Galloway.

be explicitly acknowledged, that the sole headship of Christ over the church, the divine right of Presbyterian church government, and the intrinsic power of the church to summon her own Assemblies, and transact all her own business, without the interference of the civil magistrate, should be distinctly asserted. To this class of ministers, the oath of abjuration, the law of patronage, and the violent intrusion of ministers on reclaiming parishes, were all, in their turn, subjects of complaint and remonstrance. The agitation of such questions as these, however, was reputed by the Church Courts to be heresy of the worst description; and sentences of suspension, deposition, and excommunication, were passed against men of eminent piety, and unblemished deportment, for no other offence than that they had disquieted the judicatories by pleading the cause of truth. To have given countenance to these honourable contentings for the purity and independence of the church, however required by the authority of Christ, would have given umbrage to her earthly masters. To betray the church, and to screen heresy, however provoking to Christ, gave no offence to the civil rulers. There is no difficulty in deciding to which authority the church courts yielded the greater deference. But we shall confine our notice to three instances of their despotism, on account of the remarkable consequences that resulted from them.

The first of these occurred in the case of the Rev. John M'Millan, minister of the parish of Balmaghie, in Galloway. In conjunction with two of his brethren, he gave in to the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, in the year 1703, a paper craving the concurrence of the Presbytery in seeking the redress of grievances, and in adopting measures for preserving from oblivion some of the precious attainments of the Reformation. The efforts employed

to induce the two brethren to withdraw from this proceeding were successful, and Mr M'Millan was left alone in pleading the cause of truth. No attempt was made to establish a single charge against either his life or doctrine. Neither did he plead for any novelties in religion, but that the church should "remember whence she had fallen, and repent, and do her first works." For this freedom he was visited with the heavy sentence of deposition. It is sufficient to vindicate him from the charge of faction or obstinacy, that he so far respected such a sentence, as to abstain, for a time, from the exercise of his ministry. It was soon evident, however, that his protest and appeal to the General Assembly would bring him no redress, unless he should consent to abandon what he believed to be important truth; and having the most entire conviction, that the sentence pronounced upon him was unjust, he soon became satisfied, that to lay down his ministry would be unfaithful to his Lord and Master, and an act of homage to unjust and tyrannical authority. He forthwith resumed the exercise of preaching, and was cordially welcomed by the people of whom he had taken the pastoral charge. But the Lord had destined him to a higher distinction than that of being the pastor of a single congregation. The United Societies, which had all along borne with them a testimony for the whole of the Covenanted Reformation, had now been for sixteen years without a living teacher to break for them the bread of life. They had watched, with intense interest, Mr M'Millan's faithful struggle for Reformation attainments. They satisfied themselves that his views of the Scottish Reformation, both in Church and State, were enlarged and correct. They gave him a harmonious call to become their pastor; and in the year 1706, this witnessing remnant once more enjoyed the privilege of having the ordinances of their Re-

deemer dispensed to them by a minister, of whose zeal and faithfulness they had received ample satisfaction. This occurrence marks an important era in the history of the REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

The second case we shall mention, is that of the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine, minister of Stirling, which occurred in the year 1732. At that period, the dominant party in the Church were carrying their measures with a high hand. While affecting to regard the law of patronage as a grievance,¹ they forfeited all claim to sincerity, by refusing to interpose such checks as were still in their power, and by giving effect to every presentation, whatever resistance might be made by the people. At the same period an Act of Assembly was passed,² which divested the people of any fragment of liberty which the State had left. By this Act it was determined, that in those cases in which patrons did not exercise their rights, the power of election should belong to a conjunct meeting of elders and heritors, providing only that the latter should be Protestants. This Act made it evident, that the Assembly was scarcely more favourable to the rights of the Christian people, than the Civil Government. In proportion as its proceedings became arbitrary and indefensible, it became impatient of complaint or remonstrance. It passed a law that reasons of dissent, by members of court, should not be recorded in its public registers;³ and when petitions and remonstrances were sent up by the people, the Assembly absolutely refused to hear them read. At this juncture, Mr Erskine was called to preach before the Synod of

¹ For more than half a century the Assembly gave annual instructions to the Commission, to embrace every favourable opportunity of endeavouring to obtain from the civil government the removal of patronage.

² Assembly 1732, Sess. 11.

³ Assembly 1730, Sess. 15.

Perth and Stirling. He embraced the opportunity, the only one now accessible, of testifying from the pulpit against the leading defections of the Church. The Synod decided that he should be rebuked for this offence. The case came before the General Assembly, which affirmed the decision of the Synod. Against this sentence Mr Erskine gave in a protest, in which he was joined by three other ministers holding similar sentiments with himself. They were ultimately deposed from the office of the ministry; and having formed themselves into a Presbytery, under the name of the "Associate Presbytery," became the founders of the SECESSION CHURCH.

The third case we shall mention was that of the Rev. Thomas Gillespie, minister of Carnock, which occurred in the year 1752. It was at that time the law of the Church, that however repugnant it might be to a minister's conscience and feelings, he should, nevertheless, be compelled to act the part assigned to him in any case of a violent settlement.¹ Mr Gillespie had been commanded to co-operate in intruding a presentee on the parish of Inverkeithing. With this wicked order he refused to comply. His refusal was visited with the heavy sentence of deposition from the office of the ministry. He felt himself entitled, as others had done before him, to disregard this sentence, and, being joined by another minister, they constituted a distinct religious fellowship, under the title of the "PRESBYTERY OF RELIEF."

How little did it enter into the conceptions of those lordly rulers in the Established Church, whose excessive tyranny led to these breaches, that they were preparing honours for the men whom they sought to load with infamy; that the bonds of their unchristian censures should confer new ministerial freedom; and that their efforts to reduce the entire

¹ Exemplified in the settlement of Torphichen, 1730; Inverkeithing, 1752; and of Nigg, 1756.

population of Scotland to a state of ecclesiastical vassalage, should open a door of escape for hundreds of thousands of the most serious and conscientious people in the land, and secure to them a larger amount of Christian liberty than the Church had enjoyed, with the exception of one short period, since the Reformation from Popery. That Scotland has been indebted, to a very large extent, to the exertions of different bodies of Dissenters for the preservation of evangelical doctrine and practical religion, ample testimony might be adduced; and the fact has been fully acknowledged in the writings of ministers of greatest eminence in the Church of Scotland.

We rejoice to believe, that He who reserved for himself in Israel seven thousand persons, who had not bowed the knee to Baal, at a time when defection appeared almost universal, has never left himself without a band of truly evangelical and devoted ministers in the Church of Scotland, whose labours have been made effectual for the conversion of many souls. In their own pulpits, they preached the unsearchable riches of Christ; and in spite of the fetters by which they were clogged, they made occasional public appearances in the cause of their Redeemer, against abounding defection. Yet, on the most deliberate review of the position they occupied, it is our conscientious belief, that a larger measure of the spirit of the witnesses would have constrained these godly men to "come out and be separate" from so intimate a fellowship with a multitude "who were enemies of the cross of Christ."

We hold it to be an exercise of genuine kindness to a church to exhibit to her, with the greatest possible distinctness, the defections that call her to repentance, and the evils that need to be reformed. There is an increased probability that advantage will arise from such a service, when there is a large

and growing number of her members evincing a strong desire for reformation. This we believe to be the case at present in the Church of Scotland. The preceding testimony against her defections, which seemed to us necessary for the vindication of truth, is, at the same time, in perfect harmony with the warmest desire for her welfare. Even should we reprove with undue sharpness, it would be an evil of trifling character, when compared with the sin of attempting to flatter and deceive her. And it is our decided impression, that several of her warmest friends have fallen into this hurtful error. Statements are frequently met with, chiefly in the controversial writings of modern advocates of the church, in which it is assumed or implied, that there is no essential difference between the Revolution Church and that of the Second Reformation—that the principles of the present Church of Scotland are the identical principles for which the Scottish martyrs suffered and bled. We have already assigned the reasons which shut us up to a contrary conclusion; and avowing it to be our sincere desire to exhibit the difference as plainly as possible, we beg to submit the following comparison by way of summary. The Church of the Second Reformation we hold to be different from, and superior to the Revolution Church:—

1st. In faithfulness to preceding Reformation. The Second Reformation embodied and approved of what was valuable in the First. The Revolution Church, on the contrary, left the attainments of the Second Reformation under the public disgrace and infamy, to which they had been subjected by the persecuting government of the Stuarts. No protest was entered against the unrighteous and daring Act by which the Reformation had been overturned. The Church received from the State a constitution in which the Second Reformation

was overlooked, and, apparently, for the express purpose of evading those excellencies in it which were inconsistent with the Revolution settlement.

2d. In respect to the independent authority and intrinsic power of the Church. 'The Second Reformation originated with the church, and was prosecuted by her in the exercise of her own intrinsic authority. All that she desired or permitted the State to do, was to remove civil barriers out of the way, and to give its public sanction to the different steps of Reformation to which she had attained. At the Revolution, the State took the lead, in abolishing Prelacy, and establishing Presbyterianism; and authoritatively appointed the church's Confession of Faith. Against this Erastian usurpation the church made no remonstrance; nor did she presume, by any formal act of her own, to vindicate her intrinsic right, by abolishing Prelacy, enacting Presbyterianism, and adopting her Confession by her own proper authority—all of which was done by the church in the Reformation period.

3d. In recognizing the divine right and original of the Presbyterian form of church government as being founded directly on the word of God. At the Revolution, this form of church government was claimed by the nation, and conceded by the civil government, as more agreeable to the inclinations of the people, "they having reformed by Presbyters." In language common to the Erastians of the day, it is acknowledged to be "agreeable to the word of God;" but not more agreeable than other forms of church government.

4th. In faithful opposition to Prelacy. In the period of the Reformation, Prelacy was condemned, as "having no warrant nor foundation in the word of God;"—as a branch of the "worldly monarchy and wicked hierarchy of the Roman Antichrist." At the Revolution, the State, in compliance with

the Claim of Right, abolished Prelacy in Scotland, because it was declared to be "contrary to the inclinations of the generality of the people." In disregard, however, of the engagements of these nations by the Solemn League, the government established Prelacy in the Churches of England and Ireland, without any effort being made by the Church of Scotland to prevent it.

5th. In asserting and maintaining the freedom of ecclesiastical Assemblies. In the Reforming period, the church asserted and exercised her intrinsic right to convene her Assemblies, and to transact such matters as were within her province, independently of the Civil Government. On the contrary, to the Erastian and arbitrary interference of the civil rulers with the freedom of her Assemblies, the Revolution Church yielded tame submission.

6th. In regard to lay patronage. This intolerable grievance was totally abolished in the Reformation period. At the Revolution, it was left in abeyance, and after the lapse of a few years it was restored by the civil government. And, notwithstanding the enormity of the evil, and the incalculable injury it has done to the interests of religion, the church still bears this galling yoke.

7th. In respect to Covenanting. At the commencement of the Second Reformation, the national Covenant was renewed, with an express and pointed application to Prelacy. A few years after, the Solemn League was framed and adopted. By these deeds, the three kingdoms, but particularly England and Scotland, as well as the churches in them, were dedicated to God. At the Revolution, the Covenants were left among the ruins of the Second Reformation. The Church of Scotland obstinately refused to revive the memory of these sacred bonds, and acquiesced in that deed, at the Union Settlement, by which the Solemn League was a second time rescinded.

8th. In the principles on which allegiance to civil authority was inculcated. In the Second Reformation, subjection was pledged and yielded to authority "in the maintenance and defence of the true religion, and the liberties of the kingdom;" and the laws which excluded from power men of immoral character, or who were disaffected to the Reformation, distinctly prove that, in the judgment of the Reformers, it was a matter of paramount importance that their rulers should possess scriptural qualifications. At the Revolution, subjection was yielded and allegiance pledged to authorities which, in many important particulars, were constituted on the very principles, and invested with the very powers, against which the Covenanters had contended even to death.

9th. In regard to purity of doctrine. In the Reformation period, much care was employed that the doctrines taught from the pulpit should correspond to the standards of the church, and to the word of God, on which these standards were founded. Since the Revolution, the Confession of Faith has been the avowed standard of the Church of Scotland; but it is a lamentable fact, that a large number of her ministers, notwithstanding that they solemnly subscribed that Confession, have rejected important doctrines taught in it, and exhibited from the pulpit and the press pernicious errors which it condemns.

10th. In respect to purity of discipline. The faithful removal from the church of persons avowing unsound principles, or openly immoral in their deportment, in the reforming period, presents a striking contrast to the administration that followed. The unfaithfulness of the Revolution Church on this head, we have already traced, in the composition of the first General Assembly, in the prompt admission of the curates into her church courts, and in the sinful connivance at error which has prevailed since the Revolution.

CHAPTER III.

TESTIMONY AGAINST PUBLIC EVILS SUBSEQUENT TO THE
REVOLUTION.

IN the public measures of these nations, also, during the period which followed the Revolution, there were many things against which the witnesses were called to bear testimony. Of these we may specify the following:—

1st. The incorporating union between England and Scotland in the year 1707. Without pronouncing any opinion on the policy of the union itself, or calling in question the political advantages that are believed to have arisen from it, we complain that the terms on which it was effected involved a serious violation of the solemn engagements of these lands. The moral obligation of the public Covenants of our ancestors was, in our judgment, not impaired, by the unrighteous Act of Charles' government repealing these deeds. We hold that these nations were mutually and permanently bound by the Solemn League "to preserve the reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, and to promote the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government; and to endeavour to bring the churches of God in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion; confession of faith, form of church government, and directory for worship and catechising:" and farther, "to endeavour the extirpation of Popery and Prelacy,—that is, church government by archbishops, bishops, &c.,—and whatsoever should be found contrary to sound doctrine." In total disregard of this solemn bond, Pre-

lacy was retained in England and Ireland at the Revolution; and by the terms of the Union, new bulwarks were raised for its defence, with the express consent of the kingdom of Scotland. The treaty of Union, in which Scotland was a consenting party, provides, as far as human laws can do, that in England and Ireland, Prelacy shall be perpetually preserved and established. The Act of Union, moreover, abolishes all laws and Acts of Parliament which were in any respect contrary to itself. Thus it became, in effect, a new ACT RE-SCISSORY, as it virtually annulled the Solemn League, and most of the public proceedings of both kingdoms that were consequent on that deed. The removal of the government to London has also had the effect of drawing the Scottish nobility and gentry to a more frequent residence in that metropolis, and of multiplying the motives by which so many of them have been induced to abandon the faith of their fathers, and connect themselves with the Church of England. Another result of the Union has been, to increase the obstacles by which the Church of Scotland has been prevented from making any vigorous efforts to propagate her principles in England, and from receiving into full ecclesiastical fellowship those Presbyterian congregations in that kingdom, which are anxious to be represented in the General Assembly, as a branch of the Church of Scotland.

2d: Much guilt has been contracted by the oaths and tests imposed by Government during the same period. The legal mode of swearing, in England and Ireland, by kissing a book containing the whole or a portion of sacred Scripture, we condemn as superstitious, and of heathen origin. Many serious people have been subjected to the loss of property, and some to temporary imprisonment for refusing to make oath in this manner. The extreme fre-

quency of oaths, particularly in the excise and custom-house departments, and the hurried and irreverent manner in which they have been administered, have had a most hardening tendency, and have involved great numbers in aggravated iniquity. The revolting and sanguinary character of the penal laws, which annexed capital punishment to a multitude of offences affecting property only, had the effect, in numberless instances, of involving both witnesses and juries in perjury—a crime often committed deliberately, that they might avoid what seemed to them the more heinous crime of legal murder. In the same rank may be placed what have commonly been termed the Test and Corporation Acts, passed in the reign of Charles II., and happily abolished in 1828. By the Test Act every person holding an office, civil or military, under the king, in any place of command or trust in England or Ireland, was required to qualify for office by receiving the Lord's Supper according to the form of the Church of England. For some time an annual indemnity was passed, by which persons not belonging to the English Church were exempted from the penalties incurred by disobedience to this law. But the Act led to the systematic and most criminal profanation of one of the solemn ordinances of the church of Christ, and it fixes indelible disgrace on the clergy of the English Church, that for a period of 150 years they should have dispensed the Lord's Supper, indiscriminately, to every candidate for office, however notorious for profligacy or impiety, and that they should have so pertinaciously resisted the repeal of a law which involved themselves and others in so much guilt.

3d. Many things in the constitution, and in the administration of Government, have concurred to bring Great Britain into a perilous connection with the Anti-Christian system. The Episcopal hierarchy,

which we believe to be Anti-christian in its character, forms an essential part of the constitution. The ecclesiastical supremacy of the crown involves in it one of the most impious pretensions of the Man of Sin. The blending and intermingling of things civil and ecclesiastical—making the dignitaries of the church an essential branch of the legislature, and vesting in the civil government almost the whole authority which properly belongs to the church—affords a striking example of that unhallowed commerce which the ten kingdoms of Western Europe are represented in Scripture prophecy as maintaining with the apostate church.

In the alliances contracted with foreign nations, political expediency alone appears to have guided the policy of the British government for ages. It does not seem to have entered into the conceptions of the rulers, that to form leagues with Anti-christian powers, the tendency of which was to strengthen and preserve the reign of Popery on the Continent, or to give stability to a general system of government throughout Europe inimical to true religion and to the liberties of mankind, was an act of rebellion against God, and that in doing so they were expressly placing Britain in the position of those kingdoms of which it is predicted that they would be of “one mind, and give their strength and power to the Beast.” In the early part of the present century, when the convulsions of revolutionary France had placed the authority of the Roman Pontiff, and that of the House of Bourbon, in the greatest peril, it was chiefly by the gigantic efforts of Great Britain that both were preserved.

The relation between the British Government and Popery at home, has also become progressively more intimate, particularly since the passing of the Act of Parliament in 1829, by which members of the Church of Rome were declared eligible to seats in both

Houses of the Legislature, and also to the highest offices in the State, with a few exceptions. The effect of this measure has been, the admission into Parliament of a large number of Roman Catholics, who, from the balance of political parties in the State, have commonly been able to exert a preponderating influence on the decisions of Government. However much it is to be lamented, that the destinies of Protestant Britain should be, to a large extent, under the control of Popish demagogues in matters purely political, it is still more to be deplored in the settlement of questions which vitally affect the Protestant churches, and the interests of Protestantism throughout the empire.

But there has been another class of public measures which have identified Britain still more closely, perhaps, with the Anti-Christian system. She has, for a long series of years, employed her power in protecting, and her treasure in propagating the Romish faith. Her kings have been nursing-fathers and her queens nursing-mothers to Popery. In the Ionian Islands the Popish religion has been long under the fostering care and patronage of Britain. In the province of Lower Canada she confers on it a legal establishment. In Ireland she munificently endows the Popish college at Maynooth, in which thousands of persons are trained up to propagate the soul-destroying principles of that horrid system. And a large and increasing sum is voted by her representatives, out of the public treasury, for the support and propagation of Popery in her more distant colonies.

4th. Britain has acted a distinguished part in that system of almost incessant warfare which, for several ages, has deluged the nations with blood. In all cases, war is a dreadful alternative, and cannot be vindicated, unless when it has become inevitable in necessary self-defence. It is our conviction, that

ambition, avarice, and revenge, can no more be justified in the proceedings of nations than in the conduct of individuals ; and that a nation, governed by Christian principle, can no more be prompt to plunge into war, on every occasion of insult or injury, than that a Christian man may warrantably avenge himself by single combat. Yet it may be doubted, if any one of the nations of Europe has displayed more of the passion for war than Great Britain, or has more recklessly hurried immortal beings into eternity. The criminality of this conduct was greatly aggravated when wars were undertaken, as they have frequently been, in alliance with foreign despots, or for re-establishing the tottering pillars of New Testament Babylon.

It affords cause for thankfulness, that the nations of Europe, generally, have of late enjoyed a breathing time from the horrors of war, and that a feeling of aversion to it has been gaining strength, both in Britain and in other nations. Yet there is reason to fear, that this change of sentiment is rather a dictate of prudence than the result of an enlightened perception of the unholy and dreadful nature of war, and its contrariety to the character and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

5th. To these things must be added, the large share which Britain has had, for ages, in the Anti-christian traffic "in slaves and souls of men."¹ We fully participated in the joy experienced by all humane and Christian people, when, by an Act of the Legislature in 1807, this diabolical traffic in human beings, by subjects of the British Government, was abolished. We witnessed, with satisfaction, the efforts that have been subsequently employed to induce other nations to abandon that traffic. We cordially united with all the friends of freedom, in thank-

¹ Rev. xviii. 13.

fulness to God, when that Act of Parliament was passed, in 1834, which has happily led to the extinction of Slavery in all the British Colonies. But, in cleaving so long to a system, in which avarice, injustice, impiety, and cruelty, are combined in their rankest forms, Britain has contracted guilt of a very awful character. When "the earth shall disclose her blood, and no more cover her slain," the wrongs of oppressed, and the blood of murdered Africans, shall not be unavenged, and we tremble to think how large a share of that solemn reckoning belongs to Britain.¹

CHAPTER IV.

SOME BRIEF HISTORICAL NOTICES OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FROM THE ACCESSION OF MR M'MILLAN TO THE PRESENT TIME.

1706 to 1839.

IT was a source of fervent joy and praise to the scattered societies, to have the ordinances of divine grace once more dispensed to them by a pastor, whose ministrations they could own, without abandoning any part of their testimony, and without embracing an ecclesiastical fellowship which they justly regarded as exceedingly defective and corrupt. The

¹ It is inconsistent with the principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, to retain in ecclesiastical fellowship any person holding property in Slaves. In the North American Republic, which has contracted so much guilt by Slavery, and in many of the States of which it still prevails to a vast extent, and without any abatement of its horrid injustice and cruelty, this decided practical protest against the iniquity of the system, was maintained by our sister church from an early period of her history. By a judicial enactment of her highest Church Court, in the year 1800, persons holding Slaves, or trading in Slaves, were declared inadmissible to the fellowship of the church.¹

¹ Reformation Principles Exhibited. American edition, p. 132.

toils and privations to which Mr M'Millan cheerfully submitted, often embittered by calumny and reproach, in visiting and feeding a flock so widely scattered, proved him not unworthy to take up the mantle and the ministerial charge which Cargill and Renwick had left behind. In a short time he was joined by Mr John M'Neil, a licentiate of the Established Church, who, while he continued in the fellowship of that Church, contended for the same truths for which Mr M'Millan had borne testimony, and had passed through the same ordeal of ecclesiastical persecution to which that excellent man was subjected. In 1708, they concurred in laying before the Commission of the General Assembly a joint protestation and declinature, in which they presented an explicit statement of the grounds of their controversy with the Established Church. Mr M'Neil laboured as a preacher with much acceptance until his death. The high veneration which all parties entertained for the established order of Presbyterian government prevented any attempt to obtain ordination for Mr M'Neil in an irregular way. Neither would they make the least compromise of their principles, in order to gain the co-operation of other ministers who had been expelled from the Established Church for pleading, to a certain extent, the same cause with themselves. Their ardent love to the truth, the testimony of an approving conscience, the manifest tokens of a blessing from on high resting on their labours, supported them amidst all present trials and discouragements.

After the incorporating union with England in 1707, and the restoration of patronage in 1711, had presented fresh instances of the apostacy of the nation, they adopted the resolution of renewing the Covenants, both as a means of confirming the faith of the Church, and of giving a public testimony for the cause of Scotland's Reformation. After much serious

preparation, the solemn work was performed at Auchensach, near to Douglas, in the year 1712.

When the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine and his associates seceded from the judicatories of the Established Church in 1733, Mr M'Millan and the people under his care conceived strong hopes that the cause for which they had contended would be adopted by the Seceders. The testimonies emitted on both sides against the corruptions of the Established Church seemed very much to harmonize. But it soon appeared that the same harmony did not exist in the views which they entertained, respectively, in regard to the civil government of these nations. It was freely admitted by the Seceders that many grievous defects existed in those civil institutions which were erected at the Revolution; that the qualifications required by the Scriptures, and by the Covenants, were not possessed by the civil rulers; and that the complex system in Church and State entirely excluded, and was calculated to bury in oblivion, the Covenanted Reformation of the three kingdoms. Yet they believed it to be their duty to yield allegiance to the government, as the ordinance of God, to offer up stated prayer for it, and to render to it their active support. On the other hand, Mr M'Millan and his people, being convinced that the conduct of these nations at the Revolution involved a breach of their mutual engagements, and of their solemn Covenant with God; and perceiving that the support of an Anti-christian hierarchy, and of a usurped supremacy over the Church, were made essential to the constitution; that the door of admission to the most important offices in the government was open to unprincipled and ungodly men; and that the relation subsisting between Church and State gave to such men, when in power, a dangerous ascendancy over the Established Churches, could not believe it to be incumbent on them to

render to a government which "established iniquity by law" the allegiance which is due to institutions framed in accordance with the inspired volume. A controversy ensued, which, it must be admitted, was managed with some asperity on both sides, and which served to prove, that the two parties could not be advantageously united into one communion. It was some consolation to Mr M'Millan and his people under this disappointment, that the accession of the Rev. Mr Nairne to their cause enabled them to obtain a Presbytery. This minister had been a member of the Associate Presbytery; but as his sentiments on the subject of magistracy were not in unison with those of that body, he gave in his reasons of dissent, and withdrew; and having declared his adherence to the cause of the Reformation as held by Mr M'Millan and his people, he was received by them into church fellowship, and concurred with Mr M'Millan and some ruling elders in constituting a Presbytery at Braehead, in the parish of Carnwath, on the first of August, 1743, under the appellation of the REFORMED PRESBYTERY. This designation they assumed as expressive of their attachment to the Reformation cause, and of their desire, through divine aid, to contend for all those Scriptural attainments, both in Church and State, to which these nations were so solemnly pledged.

A door was now opened for the admission of young men to the ministry; and Alexander Marshall, having passed the usual pieces of trial before the Presbytery, was licensed to preach the gospel on the following year. To the aged father who, for a period of nearly forty years, had stood almost alone in maintaining this cause, and whose heart must have frequently trembled for the ark of God, it was a delightful spectacle to see the church assuming a regular organization, and enjoying the visible prospect

both of permanence and increase. Nor could any thing be more appropriate, as a means of confirming the faith of the church, and of fortifying the minds of the more youthful labourers, in whose hands the testimony was shortly to be left, than a renewal of the exercise in which this band of witnesses had engaged about thirty-three years before. The solemn work of Covenant-renovation was, accordingly, once more performed by the church at a place called Crawford-John, in Lanarkshire, in the year 1745.

As this was the last instance in which the public Covenants were renewed in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, we beg here to offer the following observations:—1st. That covenanting is an occasional duty, to be performed as the circumstances of the church, or of a nation, may seem to demand; and that the permanent obligation of the Covenants of these lands depends on their moral and scriptural character, rather than their being publicly recognized or renewed. 2d. Yet we believe, that where a church or people have been brought under the bond of such engagements, it is a duty warranted by reason and scripture occasionally to renew them, as the aspects of divine providence may require. 3d. We believe that the defection of a great majority of a church or nation from such Covenants, does not cancel their obligation; and that the call upon a minority, who adheres to them, to bring them up to remembrance, becomes the more urgent when the public acts of the majority have a tendency to bury them in oblivion. 4th. We approve of the zeal and faithfulness which prompted our fathers to engage in this work at seasonable times, and admit that we are placed under superadded obligations to adhere to these Covenants in consequence of their deeds of renovation.

A few years after, the church was enabled to take a step of some importance for extending the know-

ledge of her principles in the New World. During the persecution, many Presbyterians who were driven from their native country, found an asylum in North America. These exiles, and their descendants, were accustomed, when it was practicable for them, to unite themselves into praying societies, as they were wont to do in their own land, on the footing of Reformation principles. In the same year in which the Reformed Presbytery was constituted in Scotland, a number of them, residing in the State of Pennsylvania, held a meeting for the renovation of their Covenants. At that time, they enjoyed the labours of a minister who seemed to hold Reformation principles very firmly, and to propagate them with uncommon zeal.¹ He proved deficient in steadfastness, however, and the United Societies there were left for many years, as their brethren had been in Scotland, without a public ministry. In the year 1752, the Scottish Presbytery was enabled to comply with their importunate intreaties for help, by sending to them the Rev. Thomas Cuthbertson, who, during a period of twenty years, was the only minister on that Continent who displayed a banner for the whole of the Scottish Reformation. By the assistance of some brethren who emigrated from Ireland, a Presbytery was at length constituted in the year 1774.² The same causes which retarded the progress of Reformation principles in the British Isles operated also in America; yet, in process of time, the Lord crowned the labours of his servants there with most encouraging success.

About the time of Mr Cuthbertson's departure for America, the Reformed Presbytery suffered a severe trial from a quarter whence danger was least apprehended. It was discovered that two of its

¹ The Rev. Mr Craighead.

² The first Presbytery consisted of the Rev. Messrs Cuthbertson, Linn, and Dobbin, with ruling elders.

members, who, only a short time before, had given a solemn declaration of their attachment to the principles of the church, had been teaching sentiments not in accordance with her acknowledged standards. The most prominent error which was at first avowed by them was the doctrine of an indefinite atonement, as opposed to that of a particular redemption. After a protracted discussion, the Rev. Messrs Hall and Innes, who had imbibed this initiatory error of the Arminian school, were separated from the fellowship of the church. By this event she was again reduced in numbers; but her character for orthodoxy was vindicated, and the vigilance of her ministers and members in guarding against every appearance of error, was increased.

The Act, Declaration, and Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, was published in the year 1761. An acknowledgment of this document was, thenceforward, required, as a term of ministerial and Christian communion in the church. It has proved, by the divine blessing, a most valuable and efficient instrument in explaining, vindicating, and recommending the principles of the Covenanted Reformation, not only in Scotland and Ireland, but in the United States of America.

The increase of members in the Reformed Presbyterian Church has been, at all periods, and in all countries, comparatively slow. We do not hesitate to confess, that, in one respect, this furnishes ground of humiliation before the Lord. Had there been in the church a larger amount of faith in the gracious promises of Zion's King, more of the fervour and importunity of believing prayer, in the pulpit, in the family, and in the closet; had her ministers been more distinguished for unwearied, self-denying labour in the Lord's service, and the patient prosecution of well-concerted schemes for the diffusion of the truth, we doubt not that her increase and pros-

perity would have been proportionately more abundant. For our own shortcomings, and those of our fathers, in these most important duties, we desire to feel abased before God, and to supplicate his merciful forgiveness. Yet it is a fact too little remembered, that the popularity of a church affords no conclusive evidence either of her orthodoxy, or of her general fidelity. If a religious profession may be estimated by the standard of numbers, the truth of God would have small honour. Among Protestant churches, it will be found that the most corrupt can boast of the greatest number of members. Popery, also, in this respect, outstrips Protestantism; and Paganism outstrips them both. Had the judicatories of this church been chiefly solicitous for an increase of numbers, they would have adopted a line of policy, in many respects, the reverse of what they have actually followed. They would have embraced no principle which could encumber any man in the pursuit of worldly honour and distinction. They would have been more tender of the vices of men, and especially of the opulent and powerful. They would have contented themselves with recommending the practice of religion to their people; but by no means have insisted on the actual performance of religious duties, in the family and in the church, as an indispensable qualification for church-fellowship. They would have preached against sin, while, with little scruple, they dispensed the special privileges of Christ's house to almost every class of transgressors, without demanding, or waiting for, satisfactory evidence of repentance, or subjecting offenders to public censure. By such expedients as these, we feel confident that a larger share of popular favour might have been secured; but in the same proportion should this church have forfeited all claim to be regarded as a WITNESSING CHURCH, and have

failed in answering the design for which, as we conceive, she has been heretofore preserved.

Under the deep conviction that the world is in a state of revolt from the authority of God, and of active opposition to the kingdom of his Son, it has been the constant study of this church to mark and testify against the varied outbreaks of disaffection and disloyalty, which have been exhibited in society. And as the complex system of Anti-christian delusion is the great master-contrivance of the Prince of Darkness, it has been her earnest endeavour to testify against this system, in all its forms and ramifications—whether appearing in the Church or in the State, whether in the unmitigated grossness and deformity of Popery itself, or in the more specious and deceptive combinations by which the elements of it have been incorporated with Protestant institutions. In such an employment, it would have been unwarrantable to expect a multitude of companions. Nothing can be more clearly indicated in prophecy, than that, during the whole period of the reign of Antichrist, the number of true Christians within the territory of the Man of Sin shall be small; and the number of those who shall keep themselves free from all fellowship with the corrupt system still smaller. While the exalted Redeemer preserves for himself two witnesses clothed in sackcloth to plead his cause, the whole world wonders after the Beast.¹

Besides the testimonies that have been statedly given by the ministers of this church from the pulpit, it has been her ordinary practice to lift up more formal protests against prevailing iniquity, in the judicial enactments of her ecclesiastical courts. Many of these have been directed against Popery, and the

¹ Rev. xi. 3, compared with xiii. 3.

public countenance given to it in this nation, particularly in the measures of the civil government. Other dangerous errors, and flagrant vices, were condemned as they gained currency. Wherever the enemy broke in like a flood, it was the aim and endeavour of the church to lift up a standard against him. When the issue of the process against Dr. M'Gill of Ayr, had proclaimed to the world the extent to which heresy had spread in the Church of Scotland, the Presbytery published a testimony against Arian and Socinian errors. This was soon followed by a specific warning against the prevailing immoralities of that period; a document which, like its predecessor, is calculated to be of permanent utility.

In the early part of the present century, the number of ministers and congregations had so far increased, as to admit of a division of the Presbytery, which, from the extent of country over which the church was scattered, had become exceedingly desirable. In the year 1810, three distinct Presbyteries were constituted, which met in a general Synod in the following year. This era in the history of the church was rendered the more memorable, that in the good providence of God, the sister churches in Ireland and in America were in a condition to take the same important step at the same time. In the year 1811, these three Synods, all adhering to the same Testimony, were constituted in their respective churches; and it hath pleased the Lord to grant them all considerable enlargement since that time.

CHAPTER V.

PRESENT POSITION OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH IN SCOTLAND.

SECTION I.

HER POSITION IN RESPECT TO THE CIVIL INSTITUTIONS OF THESE
KINGDOMS.

It is now more than one hundred and fifty years, since the most steadfast band of witnesses for the Covenanted Reformation in Scotland were led to the conclusion, that it was incumbent on them to adopt the position of dissent from the civil government of these lands, as well as from the churches which were at once established and corrupted by it. The extreme tyranny of the government then in existence, was only one of the grounds on which they rested that dissent. They further complained, that the government was erected on the ruins of a Scriptural Reformation, to the preservation of which these nations were most solemnly bound; that the ecclesiastical establishments were the mere creatures of the State; and that the principles and the policy of the great Romish apostacy were so conspicuous in the constitution and administration of both Church and State, as to stamp the whole with the character of Antichrist. At the Revolution, these nations adopted and acted upon the views of the Covenanters, in regard to the first ground of complaint only. The tyrannical government was indignantly overturned, and one of a much more equitable and moderate character was substituted in its stead. But while the public spirit and energy of the nations were displayed, in shaking off the yoke of oppression, and in asserting their own rights, no effectual attempt was made to vindicate the rights of the

Redeemer. The Covenanters were not ungrateful for the large increase of liberty and privilege secured to them by the Revolution; but they could not accede to an arrangement, however beneficial to themselves, of which these were made essential conditions—that the crown rights of the Messiah should be compromised, and the Anti-christian corruptions interwoven with the constitution both of Church and State, should remain undisturbed.

The lapse of a century and a half has, in our view, produced nothing to prove the judgment of our ancestors, on this important question, to have been erroneous. The following considerations appear to us to justify their decision, and to impose upon us an obligation to maintain the same position of dissent:—

FIRST. There is no direct or explicit acknowledgment of the supreme authority of the Scriptures, in the constitution and administration of civil government in these lands. It is not our judgment that civil government is founded in grace, or that the right of nations to establish government depends on their possessing divine revelation; yet, wherever God's word is known, his authority, in this matter as in all others, should be recognised as supreme and infallible. It is incontestible, that the Scriptures do contain many passages which treat of civil government, delineate the qualifications requisite for civil rulers, and unfold the great principles by which men in power should be guided, in framing their laws, and in the whole course of their administration. To maintain that civil communities and their rulers may warrantably disregard these divine directions, would be virtually to disown the authority of the Most High over the nations. Where divine revelation is not possessed, the light of nature is the only guide. Whatever is not determined in Scripture, must be regulated by enlightened reason or public utility, agreeably to the general principles

and rules of the word. But every jot and tittle of what God has actually determined, must be acknowledged to be of perpetual obligation, in every community where the laws of Heaven have been promulgated; those things only being excepted, of which it can be shown that they were designed for some particular locality, or intended to be only of temporary application. In the actual administration of the government of these kingdoms, it seems to us that this principle has been practically disregarded. It does not appear that the responsibility of *nations* to the moral Governor of the world, is fully understood or felt. No strenuous attempt has, heretofore, been made, by almost any class of society, to select men possessing scriptural qualifications to occupy the halls of legislature, or to fill public offices; and it has rarely occurred, we believe, that any course of policy has been abandoned, merely because it was condemned in the word of God. Here we rest our first complaint—that the authority of Jehovah is virtually set aside, while the homage and allegiance of the nations have been tendered to the great idol of **POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY**.

SECOND. At no period, since the Revolution, have these nations and their rulers formally acquiesced in the divine decree, which has invested the exalted Messiah with the government of the nations. The eternal Son of God, as a divine person, and one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, possesses an unlimited authority which is underived and unchangeable. But this is altogether distinct from the dominion which belongs to him as Mediator. It hath pleased the Most High, that the administration of his moral empire, in its widest extent, should be conducted by him whose name is Immanuel. “All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth.” The Father hath put all things under his feet, and has left nothing that is not put under him. “The kingdom is the

Lord's, and he is the Governor among the nations." To him belong "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him." He is also the "Prince of the kings of the earth;" "the King of kings, and Lord of lords." The Sovereign of the universe has issued his command to all kings and judges, in these terms: "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed ye judges of the earth; serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way." We know of nothing, either in the deeds of constitution, or in the administration of the government of these kingdoms, which can justly be regarded as a proper acquiescence in this authoritative appointment. There is no formal recognition of the supremacy of Christ, as Mediator, over the nations; no acknowledgment of those vows of allegiance that were formerly pledged to him in the period of the Reformation; no care employed to make the interest of his kingdom the primary object of concern. The favour that has been extended to churches in these lands, has been manifestly vicious in its principle, and has tended to corrupt these churches rather than to advance the cause of religion.

THIRD. With these evils may be conjoined the open and arrogant invasion of Christ's supremacy over his church. If it is offensive to the Son of God, to be refused the homage that rightly belongs to him as "Governor among the nations," it must be still more provoking, when a finite, fallible being, usurps his authority over the church. In this department of his kingdom he is peculiarly jealous of his prerogatives. He has solemnly commanded his disciples to own no other master. He claims the exclusive right of prescribing a government and laws to his church; and there is not a single hint in the sacred volume, of his having appointed an ecclesiastical

VICEROY, to whom he has delegated his own authority. The usurpation of such a dominion constitutes one of the highest charges against the Man of Sin. His conduct, in this matter, is denounced as a blasphemous assumption of the prerogatives of Deity. The son of perdition exalteth himself, "so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." And shall civil rulers be held blameless when they imitate this example, and make themselves popes to the churches in their respective dominions; or the people, when they acquiesce in such impious usurpation? Yet, according to the statute laws of the empire, an Erastian supremacy over the churches of England and Ireland, is held to be an essential right of the British crown. The power of the State to model and remodel, to overturn and reconstruct the church at pleasure, to decree rites and ceremonies in her, to form canons for the regulation of her government, to select the persons who shall fill all her most important offices, and even to determine her confession or creed, remains indisputable. While we cannot but condemn this, as grossly Erastian, and essentially immoral in principle, the evil has been greatly aggravated, by the usual character of the rulers in whom this extraordinary power has been vested. It is at once repugnant to religion and to common sense, that the Church of Christ should be subjected to the arbitrary will, or caprice, of a legislative assembly composed of Protestants and Papists, of Christians and libertines, of sincere believers and scoffing infidels; and in which the enemies of religion so greatly outnumber her friends.

FOURTH. The support that has been extended by the State to the Church, however munificent, has been so managed, that the cause of true religion has been more injured than promoted by it. In proof of this position, we offer the following considera-

tions:—1st. This support has been lavished most abundantly on those Protestant churches which have been most inefficient and corrupt; and even in them, it has been employed to pamper luxury and gratify ambition, while a large proportion of those ministers by whom pastoral duties were actually performed, have been left to struggle with poverty, and multitudes of the people to perish through lack of knowledge. 2d. It has invariably been used as an instrument for reducing the church into a condition of political subserviency. The revenues of the church have been dealt with as a spoil, which civil rulers have distributed among their political partizans and supporters. They have been employed to sustain a lordly aristocracy, rather than to feed the people with the bread of life. They have largely contributed to silence the voice of faithful remonstrance, which it is the duty of the church to raise against the iniquitous measures of public men, and to influence the clergy to inculcate upon the people lessons of indiscriminate and slavish submission, whatever aggressions have been made upon their liberties—civil or religious. 3d. The mode of levying the revenues of the church, both in England and Ireland, has been unhappily calculated to excite odium against her and her ministers, and to call into exercise a class of passions exceedingly unfavourable to the progress of the gospel. 4th. The principle on which that bounty has been bestowed upon the churches, is essentially corrupt and vicious. In all the measures of government respecting the church, we have searched in vain for any higher principle than political expediency as the prime mover. It is impossible to believe that an enlightened regard to the authority of God, a discriminating love of divine truth, an earnest desire for the promotion of true religion, can dispose a government to patronise every system of religion—be it true or false. Yet

it does not appear that the British government, since the Revolution, has ever withheld its fostering care from *any* religious system, merely on the ground of its falsehood. Presbyterianism is conceded to the inclinations of the people in Scotland; Episcopacy, more in favour with men in power, is established in England and Ireland, and more richly endowed than any church in Europe: but when a wretched expediency seems to require it, Popery is taken under the fostering care of government in the Ionian Isles; its corrupting seminary at Maynooth magnificently endowed; successive companies of its priests, directly supported from the public treasury, sent out to propagate its destructive errors in the British colonies; and it is honoured with a legal establishment in Lower Canada! Nor is the climax of inconsistency and iniquity complete, until the functionaries of a Protestant government are degraded into tax-gatherers for the wooden gods of Hindostan, and the priests of a debasing and bloody superstition!¹ The same atheistical principle has regulated the whole procedure of government in those vast dominions, which, in the providence of God, have been brought under British sway in India. For a time, the preaching of the gospel by Christian missionaries was positively interdicted;² and even after the removal of this interdict, the dislike of government to missionary operations there was strongly expressed, by the enactment of legal disabilities against converts from Heathenism. Public offices and employments were open to natives which would have been instantly forfeited by their embracing Christianity. For a long series of years, infant murder—and for a still longer period, the burning of widows on the same funeral pile with the bodies of their deceased husbands—were connived at, or sanctioned, by law.

¹ Memoir of Dr. Carey, p. 581.

² Idem, pp. 349, 367, 424, *et seq.*

FIFTH. In the domestic policy of these nations, there are many things which awaken regret, and merit reprehension. While millions have been expended in destructive wars, the education of the people has been neglected. Until a very recent period, this has been lamentably the case, both in England and in Ireland. An irreligious government, and an ambitious and pampered church, have looked on with equal apathy, while successive generations have grown up in the grossest ignorance. In England, a revenue has been expended annually, on cathedrals, and on the swarms of idle ecclesiastics that are attached to them, which, under judicious management, might have secured the education of all the poor in that kingdom.¹ From the extensive prevalence of ignorance has arisen a most frightful growth of infidelity and of crime.

How little has been done to check the alarming progress of the national sin of Sabbath profanation. The very letter of the divine command, as it appears to us, peremptorily requires of magistrates to guard that day from open desecration. Yet most of those laws, which were formerly enacted to restrain this wickedness, have been suffered to become obsolete, while many of the regulations of government, both in the civil and military departments, as well as the example of men high in power, have greatly contributed to encourage a vice which forms so large an item in our national guilt.

With this may be conjoined the apparent apathy with which government has contemplated, from age to age, the dreadful ravages of intemperance. It may be questioned if even war, with all its horrors, has been more prodigal of blood and treasure, than this giant vice. Yet no strenuous effort has been made by government to arrest its progress; while

¹ The revenues connected with the cathedrals of the Church of England are commonly estimated at £300,000 per annum.

the whole system of laws, respecting the manufacture and sale of spirituous liquors, tends to perpetuate the fatal delusion, that their general use is beneficial to the community. Some palliation may be pleaded for the past, from the misconceptions which prevailed on this subject; but, in this land, it can no longer be a sin of ignorance to have any share in extending or perpetuating this desolating scourge. The effects of spirit-drinking are every where demonstrated, by the wretchedness of ruined families; by crowded prisons and lunatic asylums; by multitudes of convicts, whose crimes were perpetrated under the maddening influence of strong drink; by the lamentable ignorance and depravity bequeathed to children by drunken parents; and by the appalling mortality which it occasions in cities, towns, and villages. To give any direct encouragement to the manufacture and sale of these dangerous liquors, or to make laws with the view of facilitating or promoting the practice of spirit-drinking, while the dreadful results of that practice are ever in the view of government, would, in our judgment, be a moral delinquency, for which the largest amount of revenue would form no excuse. The temporal misery, and premature death of thousands, are but a small part of the price that is paid for this accursed revenue. It flows through a channel that is polluted by myriads of crimes; and the practices which produce it, are, every day, and throughout the whole empire, involving thousands in eternal ruin.

The views we have adopted of the office and duty assigned to the witnesses, imperatively called for these remarks. And while we honestly and emphatically express our sentiments respecting the constitution and administration of government, we repel the imputation of any unkind feeling. To disguise or extenuate the public delinquencies, which provoke the Most High, and expose a nation to divine

judgments, affords no proof either of patriotism or of Christianity. We love the land which gave us birth, and which has nourished us hitherto—the land of our fathers' sepulchres. We love it on account of the general equity of its laws, the impartiality of its courts of justice, and the effectual protection which it affords both to life and property. When we review the history of our fathers of a former age, we endeavour to be thankful for the measure of civil and religious liberty which we enjoy. We love our country for our friends' and brethren's sakes who reside in it. It is endeared to us by the large number of the saints who, in different ages, have been prepared in it for a blessed immortality; and by the struggles of patriots, confessors, and martyrs, whose names adorn its history, and whose monuments are scattered over its surface. We love it as a land once dedicated to God in solemn Covenant, and appropriately styled Hephzibah, and Beulah.¹ We love it as containing, at the present day, a larger number of the people of God than any other nation. We love it on account of those Christian institutions, which for forty years have been increasing in number and efficiency, whose object is to disseminate the glorious gospel, and accelerate the coming of Christ's kingdom. If other evidence were wanting, these things would be sufficient to prove, that the privileges enjoyed by Britons are pre-eminently great and precious. It would be to us a source of joy inexpressible, if, from such considerations, we could venture to deduce the happy conclusion, that Britain has repented of her confederacy with Antichrist, and of her rebellion against God; and to cherish the hope, that when the seven last plagues shall be poured upon guilty nations, Britain may be mercifully spared in the day of wrath.

¹ Isaiah lxii. 4.

But of national repentance we can find, alas! no convincing evidence whatever. THE RIGHTS OF MAN are, indeed, as well secured, and as faithfully guarded, in Britain, as, perhaps, in any nation on earth; but THE RIGHTS OF GOD AND OF HIS SON, if they are not as grossly outraged, are, in many particulars, little more respected in it than in other nations, which still give their strength and power to the Beast. Those Christian institutions which have been labouring to extend the boundaries of Christ's kingdom, have usually received little support or encouragement from the government of the nation. On the contrary, the majority of those who preside in the national councils, have commonly regarded their efforts with apparent indifference. And it is a solemn reflection, that the unexampled light and privilege which Britain enjoys, render her national sins proportionally more criminal and alarming.

The particulars specified above, in connection with what is contained in the third chapter of this Fourth Period of our narrative, express the principal reasons why we feel compelled to maintain the position of dissent from the civil government of these lands, in which our fathers have persevered for nearly 150 years. To us they seem to afford decisive proof that, during that period, Britain has never been divested of the spirit, nor disentangled from the fellowship, of Anti-christian powers. We do not come to this conclusion lightly. We are aware that it must bring with it a train of consequences of a serious and painful nature. With some of these consequences we are already familiar. To avow the sentiment, that the British government embodies immoralities of that peculiar description, which stamp it with the character of Anti-christian, will appear to many, even of those who acknowledge its faults, as an unwarrantable extreme. More moderate oppo-

nents will condemn the sentiment as unpatriotic and uncharitable; and others may denounce it as dangerous and tending to sedition. But the guilt and danger of holding fellowship with the principles, or the policy, of the Anti-christian system—with the head or the horns of the Beast—are represented in Scripture as of such magnitude, that no temporal loss nor suffering can counterbalance them.¹ Under these impressions, we cannot proclaim attachment, nor vow allegiance to institutions, which many good men extol and admire:—1st. Because, in viewing them by the light of Scripture, we believe them to be immoral. 2d. Because we hold them to be Anti-christian. 3d. Because they were erected on the ruins of a more excellent system, both in Church and State, and in opposition to those solemn vows, by which these nations were pledged to preserve that system inviolate. 4th. Because the immoralities of existing institutions were originally introduced, and are still upheld, in opposition to the clearest light of revelation with which any people were ever favoured.

This explanation of our sentiments will supply the reason, why we do not adopt those forms of prayer for the government of these lands, which are publicly prescribed, or commonly used throughout the churches. We fully recognise the obligation that lies on us, to pray for the peace and prosperity of the land that sustains us, and for the temporal and spiritual welfare of all classes of its inhabitants. Towards the persons of the rulers we cherish no feeling but that of unfeigned good will. Our heart's desire and prayer to God for them is, that they may be saved. But we cannot warrantably employ forms of prayer, that would even seem to express approbation of institutions which we believe to be essentially defec-

¹ Rev. xvii. 3, 12, 13.

tive and immoral. We cannot pray for the stability of a system which, as long as it is unreformed, is dishonouring to Christ, and an impediment to the coming of his kingdom.

The same reasons are still more cogent to forbid our being incorporated, or united with the State, so as to become accomplices in, or morally responsible for, its iniquitous public policy. Such as are in ecclesiastical fellowship with us, cannot, without a breach of their testimony, hold fellowship with the civil government, by composing a part of the legislature, or by taking those oaths, for the maintenance and defence of the complex constitution, which are required of members of Parliament, and others filling public offices both in Church and State. And as the members of our church cannot sit in Parliament themselves, neither can they, consistently, sit there by their representatives; or commission others to do for them what it would be unwarrantable and immoral for them to do in their own persons. Neither can they compose a part of the executive government, by holding offices under the crown, civil or military, which might require them to co-operate in carrying into practice any branch of an unscriptural code of law. Yet we do not feel debarred from doing what may be in our power, as private individuals, for strengthening those wholesome laws, which are necessary for the security of life and property, or for promoting the administration of justice, when permitted to do so without being identified with a corrupt constitution. Should these principles subject us to the charge of uncharitableness, or want of patriotism, we would study to confute the charge by the blamelessness of our deportment, and by a life of active benevolence.

SECTION II.

PRESENT POSITION OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN
REGARD TO THE ESTABLISHED CHURCHES OF THESE LANDS.

OUR position in regard to the Established Churches in the empire remains unaltered. In some particulars there are symptoms of improvement about them, which we observe with pleasure and thankfulness to God. For several years past, there has been a gradual, and very considerable increase of evangelical and godly ministers, in the Established Churches of England and Ireland. By these, the glorious gospel is preached, and the eternal interests of men promoted. Among a portion of the people connected with the Church of England, there has also been evinced, of late years, a laudable zeal for the spread of the gospel, and for the conversion of the heathen. Large sums have been raised to promote the circulation of the Scriptures, both at home and abroad. The Missionary Society, supported by ministers and members of that church, has been honoured with encouraging success. Several of the missionaries connected with that Society, have displayed a zeal and devotedness not surpassed by any class of missionaries. Should it please God still farther to increase the number of sound and faithful preachers in that church, we feel persuaded that other salutary changes would follow, and many abuses and corruptions would be reformed.

But all the weightier grounds of complaint against that establishment continue undiminished. Her Anti-christian connection with an Erastian state; her slavish submission to the royal supremacy, which has left her scarcely a vestige of freedom, or ecclesiastical authority; her Popish hierarchy; her superstitious ceremonies; the Arminianism and other,

unsound doctrines of a vast majority of her clergy;¹ her simony; her worldly pomp and luxury; her pluralities and sinecures, especially in the multitudes of indolent ecclesiastics attached to her cathedrals; her gross prostitution of sacred ordinances, by the indiscriminate administration of them to all applicants;—all these enormous evils are not only undressed, but no single step has yet been taken by any competent authority towards their reformation. The terms of her union with the State are such, as to deprive the clergy of all power to accomplish any constitutional or substantial reform; and, at their entrance to office, they are universally bound, by solemn oath, to uphold and maintain the royal supremacy,—the prolific and fatal source of all her worst abuses. According to existing statutes, any of her clergy who should neglect to use the liturgy, or presume to utter any thing publicly against it, or against the royal supremacy, is liable to be deprived of his benefice. In addition to these things, a spreading leprosy of Popish error has lately broke out in one of her universities, and has been propagated with most alarming success among the ministers and members of that church; and although the sounder part of her clergy, including some of her dignitaries, contemplate its advances with dismay, they have no power to arrest its progress.

In the Church of Scotland, the number of orthodox and zealous ministers has, for several years, been steadily increasing. This improvement has been very conspicuous in the cities and larger

¹ It is computed that there may be about three thousand evangelical ministers in the Church of England. It is lamentable, however, to reflect that even this calculation, made, we believe, by the friends of that church, shuts us up to the conclusion, that there must be thirteen or fourteen thousand of her ministers who do not preach the gospel. Less than one-fifth of the whole number of her ministers feed the people with the bread of life. More than four-fifths of them starve the people for want of spiritual food, or poison them by error!

towns. The sound instruction that has of late been delivered in her principal theological seminaries, seems to have been blessed to a number of those young men who have been recently ordained to the ministry. Churches have been rapidly increasing in number, and their pulpits generally filled with zealous and efficient ministers. The removal of the odious restriction which debarred ministers of chapels of ease, and of newly erected churches, from all exercise of ecclesiastical authority, was a step of sound constitutional reform; and has contributed materially to strengthen the evangelical party in the judicatories. An encouraging beginning has been made by the church in the prosecution of several schemes of benevolent exertion. We shall rejoice to find, that what has been already done in ascertaining and providing for the spiritual destitution which exists at home, and in diffusing the gospel in distant lands, is only the commencement of a new era of enterprize and exertion heretofore unexampled. Efforts of this nature, in so far as they are made in a truly charitable and Christian spirit, claim not only our warmest approbation, but our earnest prayers.

The church has been awakened to the alarming fact, that in this land of Bibles and religious ordinances, there is still a vast amount of ignorance and irreligion. All true disciples of Christ, and all Christian communities in the land, will cheerfully acknowledge the obligation that lies on them to exert their energies to have this frightful evil redressed. But, in many respects, the obligations lying on the Church of Scotland to do so, are peculiarly weighty and solemn. 1st. Because she has been receiving a large and regular support from the State, for the express purpose that she should provide religious instruction for the ignorant and the poor. 2d. Because a large share of the existing

heathenism of the land is to be ascribed to her own past inactivity and unfaithfulness. "While men sleep the enemy sows his tares;" and had not the Church of Scotland indulged a most criminal slumber, for more than a century, while the population was rapidly increasing, and other churches, destitute of her great advantages, making strenuous efforts to arrest the growing evil, this vast arrear of duty would not now require to be discharged. 3d. Because her resources are so extensive. By far the larger part of the opulent inhabitants of Scotland are in her communion; and the great majority of her members are exempted from the burden of providing religious ordinances for themselves, by the legal provision already made for their ministers. On both these accounts, the wealth at her disposal is manifold greater than that of all the religious communities in Scotland that decline her fellowship. 4th. To whatever extent she may fail in applying an effectual remedy to the existing destitution, either by inactivity, or by retaining in office unsound and unfaithful ministers, thus far the existence of her congregations presents an impediment that is all but insuperable to other religious bodies. The bad moral condition of a people that are deceived by erroneous, or lulled asleep by unfaithful teachers is, in many respects, less susceptible of cure than that of those who have no teachers. The mistaken belief that they are already supplied with the gospel, will, in most cases, restrain a people from making any efforts to obtain it, and lead them to discountenance and repel any attempts that may be made to introduce it.

From the remarks already made it will appear, that we cannot adopt the opinion of those, who ascribe the abounding ignorance and heathenism of our land, wholly or principally, to the scantiness of those funds secured to the Church of Scotland;

and who labour to direct public attention to the increase of revenues, and of endowed ministers, as the only effectual remedy. We are convinced, that the ignorance and heathenism of Scotland are to be ascribed to the past supineness of the church, more than to the smallness of her revenues; to the inefficiency and unfaithfulness of a large number of her ministers, both as regards doctrine and discipline, more than to the want of a sufficient number of them. It is undoubtedly of essential importance, that the increase of churches and ministers in a country should keep pace with the increase of population. But when a church is inefficient or corrupt, the increase of wealth, and of the number of her ministers, only increases the power of doing evil. If splendid church revenues, or a numerous clergy, could be safely relied on for renovating the moral condition of a people, the kingdom of England might have been a moral paradise. Yet it is generally admitted, that the amount of heathenism which still exists in that land is appalling; and of the religious knowledge and piety which it contains, a large share must be ascribed, under God, to the strenuous exertions of the different bodies of Dissenters. Unless the extension of the Church of Scotland be accompanied with a corresponding and effectual reformation, the moral improvement which our country requires must still be very remote. It is a fact apparently too little regarded by the advocates of Church Extension, that a large share of the prevalent ignorance and irreligion in Scotland, exists in rural districts, amidst a population immediately under the eye of ministers who have undertaken the pastoral charge of them, and who receive national support that they may instruct them. These considerations lead us to the conclusion, that the Church of Scotland requires to be purified more than to be extended; and if this be not done, the

heathenism of our land may go on to accumulate, although the number of ministers, and the amount of church revenues, were doubled. It is with deep regret, therefore, we have observed, that the efforts heretofore made to purify the church, from those evils which constrain enlightened and conscientious men to separate from her fellowship, have, in no degree, corresponded to those made for extending her boundaries. We should regard it as a result to be greatly lamented, should the extension of the church be so managed that, while it left her corruptions and abuses almost unimpaired, the principal effect of it should be to counteract and enfeeble the exertions of evangelical Dissenters.

The discipline of the church is still lamentably defective. We are aware, that her recent history furnishes several instances of decided measures having been adopted, towards ministers who had dishonoured their sacred profession by open immorality. Of this faithfulness we greatly approve, and should be glad to see it imitated by the judicatories generally. There have also been several cases of discipline being exercised towards ministers convicted of teaching error, commonly known by the name of the Row heresy. While we do not question the propriety of these decisions, we cannot resist the conviction that the error, or extravagance of sentiment, condemned, was not more dangerous in its character, while it was much less extensive in its range throughout the church, than other errors which have heretofore been overlooked. It was well to check the growth of tenets calculated to foster enthusiasm, and disfigure the doctrines of grace; but why should not the church be purged from teachers who either discard the doctrines of grace, or give them small share in their discourses? A cold, withering, unevangelical strain of preaching, has been the plague sore

of the church for ages. The manner in which the Assembly dismissed a complaint brought against the late Dr. David Ritchie, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, who was charged with having published Arminian tenets, was by no means in unison with the zeal manifested in suppressing the Row heresy. Instead of adopting measures to have the true character of the book ascertained, the Assembly was pleased to accept of an ambiguous declaration of orthodoxy by the author.

In respect to the membership of the church, we are inclined to believe that, in some districts, the standard of discipline has, of late years, been elevated. Church privileges are frequently refused to persons guilty of notorious or scandalous immorality. In this department of reformation, however, comparatively little has yet been effected. Very unscriptural and pernicious opinions on the subject of discipline are frequently avowed, by persons belonging both to the established, and to dissenting churches. The danger of giving offence, and banishing people from public ordinances, is pled as a reason for dispensing church privileges to an ungodly multitude, who have not even a decent form of religion. Thus, scriptural principle is sacrificed to expediency. A distinction is frequently drawn in practice between the two seals of the covenant, having no foundation in reason or scripture—baptism being freely dispensed to the children of persons who are acknowledged to be unworthy to partake of the Lord's Supper, or who live in the habitual neglect of that ordinance. Very many parishes have been long destitute of any regular session. In other cases, the session is merely nominal, consisting of persons not chosen by the people, and who are totally regardless of the duties and the responsibility of the office. This state of things is found to exist most commonly where pastoral duties are

not discharged, and from both causes, the exercise of discipline has sunk into utter neglect and contempt. In many places, the ordinance of discipline is commonly made a subject of profane ridicule among church members.

How little care is employed in dealing with persons addicted to fashionable amusements, which are immoral in their nature, or corrupting in their tendency; such as card-playing, and other games of chance, theatrical exhibitions, balls, and revels! Many are admitted to church privileges, who, in their ordinary conversation, take God's name in vain; who make the Sabbath a day of carnal indulgence, by giving or receiving entertainments, or making complimentary visits; who seldom enter the house of God, excepting when they come to receive special privileges to which they have no proper title; who make excursions for pleasure, frequent public news-rooms, transact secular business, or traffic in spirituous liquors on God's holy day. By such unfaithfulness, the sanctuary is profaned, the church is greatly corrupted by the fellowship of unworthy members, and a deadly snare is laid for the souls of men. The irreligious multitude, observing so many of the forms of iniquity connived at within the church, are confirmed in their neglect of God: and the fatal delusion is strengthened, that the hope of heaven may consist with a carnal ungodly life. This evil is farther aggravated by the private administration of baptism, which is still the general practice in the church.

Even in those places where the duty of preserving a distinction between the church and the world is acknowledged, the true standard of scriptural discipline is not applied. Regarding, as we do, the daily observance of family worship as an essential and important part of Christian practice, we hold it to be unwarrantable to retain in church fellowship

those who habitually neglect that duty. It also tends to confound all order and discipline, when Episcopalians, who rarely deign to enter a Presbyterian house of worship when in England, are admitted, without scruple, as communicants in the Church of Scotland, and even sit as elders in her church courts. While such an example is set at home, and while the Church of Scotland continues to make common cause with Prelacy, abjured by both kingdoms in the Solemn League, it should not seem surprising, that so many of her children, when they remove within the bounds of the Church of England, embrace the fellowship of that corrupt establishment.

The intolerable yoke of lay patronage is still on the necks of the people. The General Assembly has been frequently urged, by the most zealous and faithful of its own members, as well as by numerous petitions from the people, to apply to the legislature to repeal that unrighteous law; but it has hitherto obstinately refused to make such application. What was at first submitted to with great reluctance is now cherished as a privilege. Town councils, consisting of persons of different denominations; proprietors of land, many of whom are Episcopalians; even Roman Catholic landlords, through the intervention of Protestant factors, may, all of them, select ministers for the Presbyterian congregations of the Church of Scotland! No degree of profligacy or ungodliness disqualifies a patron for exercising his legal right to present a minister. An association existed for a few years, named the Anti-patronage Society, composed of ministers and members of the Church of Scotland, by whose instrumentality the evils of patronage were publicly exposed and reprobated; but it embodied in its constitution the erroneous principle that patronages may lawfully be bought and sold.

The Act of the General Assembly, 1834, commonly termed the Veto Act, was ostensibly designed to prevent the intrusion of ministers, by securing to each congregation the right of rejecting an unacceptable presentee. Thus far the intention of the Act was commendable; but when viewed as an attempt at reformation, the whole history of it has been most unpromising. Instead of asserting the unfettered choice of a pastor to be the undoubted right of the Christian people, it fully recognizes lay-patronage, as a law to be retained and respected by the church. It neither condemns the law as mischievous, nor utters any complaint concerning the injustice of it. Even the right of refusal, the only privilege it professes to secure, is not conceded to communicants, but only to male communicants; and not even to all male communicants, but only to male heads of families. The female members of the church, and male communicants not being heads of families, are not permitted to interfere. The meagre privilege conferred by this Act, fettered as it is by a complicated system of jealous regulations, is also most liable to prove delusory. Even had the church been able to maintain the Veto law, therefore, we should have regarded it as vicious in principle, inasmuch as it substitutes the right of refusal for the right of choice, and contemplates the continuance of patronage. Whatever may have been the intention of the Assembly, the law bears the aspect of an ingenious device to reconcile the people to that grievous yoke; and it was not concealed by some of the principal promoters of the measure, that their intention was, not to impair or destroy, but to secure and strengthen the rights of patrons.

But it now appears that the Veto law was beyond the powers of the church; that the character and terms of her relation to the State did not admit of her adopting such a measure. A decision of the

supreme court of law in Scotland, which has been recently confirmed by the House of Peers, has determined, that the measure was an infringement of the rights of patrons, and of the laws which control the Church of Scotland, as an established church. To those who have carefully examined the original settlement of that church at the Revolution, and traced the subsequent history of civil interference, and ecclesiastical submission, this result will occasion no surprise. But to those who proclaimed their belief, that the church was perfectly free and independent, possessing ample powers to manage all ecclesiastical matters, and accomplish all requisite reforms, the decision must prove embarrassing and mortifying in the extreme. A majority of the Lords of Session, in delivering their opinions, informed the Assembly that it had no power to enact such a law without the concurrence of the State. Other judges expressed an opposite opinion; but the ultimate decision in the House of Lords has proved, that the former, and not the latter class, have been the correct interpreters of the law in this matter. It appears perfectly evident, therefore, that the recent declarations of independence by the church, must be regarded as an expression of the wishes of the reforming party in her, or of their judgment of what she ought to be, rather than as a correct description of her actual condition, either at the present time, or at any period of her history since the Revolution.

The position in which the church has been placed by the recent decision of the House of Peers, however perplexing, appears to us a natural result of her alliance with an Erastian civil government. Our fathers testified against that alliance, both on account of the character of the government with which it was contracted, and because the church

entered into it with culpable precipitation, or inexcusable negligence, without requiring or obtaining any sufficient security for her ecclesiastical freedom. The recent decisions by the law courts of the kingdom, furnish a new and convincing proof that the judgment of our fathers was well-founded.

There are many ministers in the established church, whose known principles must lead them cordially to acquiesce in these legal decisions, although tending to rivet the church's fetters. But there is also a large number of ministers, and a multitude of her private members, who begin to understand and appreciate the independence of the church, as the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ. What these may now regard the path of duty we presume not to determine. They professed attachment to the church, notwithstanding many acknowledged corruptions in her, because they believed she possessed both the power and the disposition to purge out these corruptions. Until the existing laws be changed, however, it is now evident that she does not possess the power. Nor have we, heretofore, been able to discover any convincing evidence of a disposition to escape from patronage. Perhaps the Most High, in his adorable providence, and in kindness to the Church of Scotland, is about to force her into measures of reform, which she had not the faithfulness or the courage to undertake spontaneously. To us it appears evident, that until she break those fetters by which she has been so long trammelled, any effectual reformation is impracticable. The friends of religion may labour to purify her, but their efforts must still be liable to fatal obstruction. So long as the original channels of corruption are kept open, whatever partial reforms may be effected, we have not the slightest security that a new deluge of abuses and errors

shall not be poured in upon her, by which all the present indications of improvement shall be overwhelmed.

What, then, it may be asked, are the reforms which the church requires? We respectfully suggest the following, as being, in our judgment, indispensable:—She should renounce her connexion with the State, until it shall be reformed agreeably to the word of God; and employ such exertions as are competent to her for effecting a thorough reformation in the civil institutions of these lands. She should forthwith break the bands, and cast away the cords of patronage, in whatsoever hands it may be vested, and extend to the Christian people the right and privilege of choosing their own pastors. She should exert her utmost energies to purge out from her pulpits the leaven of legal doctrine, and Arminian error. She should expel from her fellowship, by a vigorous and impartial discipline, an irreligious multitude, who are almost as much strangers to the form of godliness as they are to the power of it. She should revive the memory, and acknowledge the obligation of the Covenants,—the national Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League, both of which were cordially embraced by the Church of Scotland; during that period of her best reformation, which modern church reformers profess to admire, and which were owned by the martyrs at the hazard of their lives. She should exclude Burgh elders, and non-resident elders from her judicatories, as incompatible with the representative character of Presbyterianism, and as having contributed, in time past, to secularize the church, and bring her into bondage. She should labour to restore family worship in all the families, and fellowship societies, for prayer and religious improvement, in all the congregations under her jurisdiction. Were these important changes effected, others

would follow; and the Church of Scotland would once more stand forth a Reformed and Covenanted Church, conciliating and securing the affections of the faithful, and having few enemies excepting the enemies of truth and godliness; universally acknowledged as “a blessing in the midst of the land,” “the house of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

SECTION III.

PRESENT POSITION OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
IN REGARD TO THE UNITED SECESSION, AND OTHER DISSENTING
CHURCHES.

THE grounds of difference between the Reformed Presbyterian, and the United Secession Church, have been very much changed since the origin of the Secession.¹ In regard to most of the leading

¹ The history of the Secession Church is remarkable for the number of separations, or divisions, which it records. The first of these originated in a controversy respecting an oath which, in some of the Scottish Burghs, was administered to persons claiming the privileges of Burgesses,—one party maintaining, that the religious clause in that oath was inconsistent with the testimony of Seceders, while others considered it as unexceptionable. This first rupture took place in the year 1747, only fourteen years after the commencement of the Secession. The Synod, composed of those who held the lawfulness of swearing the burgher oath, was commonly denominated “The Associate, or Burgher Synod.” The other division was generally known by the name of “The General Associate, or Anti-burgher, Synod.”

Each of these bodies was again subdivided. Towards the end of the last century, the church under the care of the Burgher Synod, was violently agitated by a controversy respecting the continued obligation of the public Covenants, and the nature of that obligation; and also, respecting the power assigned to the civil magistrate in matters of religion, in certain passages in the Westminster Confession. On this occasion, the Synod deemed it necessary to prefix to the formula of questions, usually put to ministers at their ordination, a preamble, explanatory of their views on these two points. This preamble was considered, by a minority, as implying a departure from the principles of the Secession. The dissatisfied members withdrew; and in the year 1799, consti-

principles of the Scottish Reformation, there was no essential difference between our fathers and the first seceders. The chief subject of controversy between the two churches, for a long series of years, respected the duty of Christians towards the civil government of these lands, and what should be accounted essentially necessary, in reformed and Christian nations, to constitute a lawful magistracy. The fathers of the Secession admitted, that there were many serious errors and defects in the Revolution settlement, in the State as well as in the Church, and testified against them. They declined taking the oaths which were prescribed by government as tests of loyalty. But they believed it to be incumbent on them to recognize the government as

tuted themselves into a court, commonly named "The Original, or Old Light, Burgher Presbytery." A few years after, when the number of its members had increased, it was constituted into a Synod, known as the "Original Burgher Synod."

The Synod termed "The General Associate, or Anti-burgher, Synod," was divided on a question respecting the power of the civil magistrate in matters of religion. The division took place in the year 1806. The minority that separated, including the late Dr. Mc'Crie of Edinburgh, and Mr Bruce, who had been Professor of Divinity in that body, constituted a court, which they denominated "The Constitutional Associate Presbytery."

The two principal bodies of the Secession, after a separation of seventy-three years, were re-united in 1820, forming the Synod now known as "The United Secession Synod."

This union, however, was attended with another separation. A minority were dissatisfied with the basis of union which had been adopted by the two Synods, and having entered their protest against the measure, withdrew. They constituted a Presbytery which, for a short time, was commonly known by the name of "The Presbytery of Protesters." In the course of a few years, this Presbytery, and "The Constitutional Presbytery," were united, and constituted that body now entitled "The Associate Synod of Original Seceders."

Under the general name of Secession, therefore, there are included three distinct bodies at the present time:—The United Secession Synod, the Associate Synod of Original Seceders, and the Original Burgher Synod. Of this last section of the Secession, a considerable number of Ministers and Congregations have recently entered into the fellowship of the Church of Scotland, and the question of re-union with that Church, is still under consideration with the remainder ¹

the ordinance of God, and to yield to it the benefit of their prayers, and of their active support. Neither did they rest the claims of the government to allegiance on any amelioration of its character at the Revolution. Their doctrine was, that whatever magistrates are, in the providence of God, and by the consent of a majority of the inhabitants of a land, in the possession of the supreme civil power, should be recognized as lawful magistrates, and entitled to the allegiance of the whole community. They admitted that it would be for the advantage of a nation, were the constitution of its government, and the character of its rulers, in conformity with the divine law; and that Christians are not bound to yield obedience to those commands which are inconsistent with the command of God. But in testing the claims of a government to allegiance, they would allow no question to be raised in regard to its moral character, in heathen, or in Christian lands.

The reasons why we cannot assent to this doctrine have been already assigned, in our defence of the Covenanters who rejected the government of Charles, and that of his brother James; and in what has been subsequently offered, as the ground of our dissent from the present British government. If the doctrine were correct, we should feel it to be impossible to vindicate those persons by whom the Revolution was brought about in the year 1688, from the charge of a deliberate and criminal rebellion against a legitimate government, which they were bound to submit to as the ordinance of God. Neither could we account for the terms of vehement condemnation employed in the New Testament, in regard to those who, during the prevalence of the Anti-christian powers, render homage to the head, or any of the horns of the Beast.¹

¹ Rev. xiv. 9—11.

But there were principles of very extensive and permanent value, lying at the foundation of the Scottish Reformation, concerning which there was the most entire harmony between our fathers and the first seceders, which have been brought into debate in modern times. In the controversy which has been agitated with so much keenness, for several years past, respecting national establishments of religion, the United Secession Church has taken a prominent place. And the principal writers by whom the controversy has been conducted, have propounded doctrines tending to bring the whole of the Scottish Reformation—in so far as it was a national work—into discredit. As the question is one of paramount importance, and has awakened an interest more general and intense, than any that has been debated for a century past, and as we cannot range ourselves under the banners of either of the contending parties, it is proper that we should state our sentiments respecting it as distinctly as possible.

We are most deeply sensible that the union which, for so many ages, has subsisted between the Church of Rome, and the civil governments of European nations, was an unlawful and criminal union; that it contributed largely to corrupt both parties so united; that the effect of it was to uphold and perpetuate error, to obstruct the progress of the gospel, to fasten down upon the nations the iron yoke of a double despotism, and to occasion the shedding of the blood of the saints, in lamentable profusion.

It is farther conceded, that the union which has subsisted between the British government and the Church of England, has been much of the same character, and, to a large extent, productive of similar results. Arbitrary power has derived from it its firmest support. The reformation of the church has been prevented. Civil and ecclesiastical

authority have been wickedly blended and intermingled. Fierce and bloody persecutions have been perpetrated. And the immense revenues, which were ostensibly raised for the religious instruction of the people, have commonly been expended upon a host of irreligious and heretical teachers, or as the price of political subserviency on the part of the clergy.

Neither would we be understood as having any sympathy with the opinion, avowed by some advocates of Church Establishments, that it is a privilege to the people, generally, to be exempted from all pecuniary charge in connexion with religion. Statements have been published, and arguments employed on this subject, which we believe to be unscriptural and pernicious; appealing to the selfishness of the human heart, and exalting into a virtue the spirit of religious pauperism; representing it as undesirable and injurious that the labouring population should give any thing for the regular support of the gospel. We are fully persuaded that it is a Christian duty of unalterable obligation, which no human legislation can set aside, to contribute voluntarily and liberally, according to the ability that God giveth, for the support of religious ordinances at home, and for the diffusion of the gospel among the nations; and, having in our view the case of the poor widow, whose generous contribution was commended by the Redeemer, we should be unwilling to fix the degree of poverty at which the obligation may be supposed to cease. The promises contained in Scripture, confirmed by long and attentive observation, fully convince us that cheerful spirited exertions for the support of religion, even by those in limited circumstances, have a tendency to promote the temporal as well as spiritual prosperity of those who make them. True piety prompts the believer, and the Divine law requires it of him, to

“honour the Lord with his substance.” Such liberality tends to exercise and invigorate one of the most excellent of the Christian graces, and affords a valuable testimony to the truth and power of religion. While we hold, therefore, that it is the duty of nations to render support to the church, we would account it a positive injury to have it conferred in such a manner as would tend to extinguish or repress the spirit of Christian liberality.

We have already declared our belief, that a union between the church of Christ and an immoral or Anti-Christian State, is essentially unlawful and pernicious. All past experience serves to prove that a church, so united, cannot long maintain her independence, her orthodoxy, or efficiency. We are also decidedly opposed to such a union as would subject the church, or the consciences of men, to civil control. That any civil government, however enlightened or reformed, may assume the right of legislating for the church; prescribing her form of government; delegating authority to her judicatories; interfering with her discipline, or the appointment of her office-bearers; dictating, reviewing, altering, or annulling the decisions of her church courts, or giving validity to them as ecclesiastical deeds; or of employing any civil coercion whatever to compel men to adopt what they regard as the true religion, are doctrines which we renounce and condemn.

Yet in the things specified we can discover nothing more than the abuse—a very extensive, no doubt, and fatal abuse—of a sound and most important principle. That principle may be stated thus:—That by the sovereign appointment of Jehovah, nations and their rulers are placed in subjection to the Messiah; and are solemnly bound by that high authority, wherever divine revelation is enjoyed, to have a supreme regard to the interests of

the Redeemer's kingdom, in framing their civil constitutions, in the appointment of rulers, in the enactment of laws, and in their whole administration.

It is most evident that nations, in their united political character, are moral agents, and accountable to the supreme Moral Governor of the world for their public conduct; and it is inconceivable that they could be innocent in neglecting to make open acknowledgment of the being of a God, and of his righteous authority over them; or in refusing to make his revealed will their supreme law, and the advancement of his kingdom the ultimate end of their government. The refusal must stamp upon a nation, even if it were composed of Christian men, the character of political atheism, or infidelity. In the holy Scriptures, the Most High addresses to nations and rulers a variety of commands, warnings, and instructions. One class of Scripture lessons, addressed particularly to them, is designed to show them their duty to Christ and his church. They are informed that by the unchangeable appointment of the Father, Jesus is made "Governor among the nations,"—"the King of kings and Lord of lords." They are commanded to do homage to him, and submit to him. They are farther informed, that one grand design of the advancement of the Mediator to the throne of universal dominion, is for the benefit of the church. "He is made Head over all things to the church." He has received power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him. The kingdom of Providence is administered by the Redeemer, in subserviency to the interests of the kingdom of grace. In the advancement of that stupendous work of mercy, which brought him from heaven to earth, he requires the active and cordial concurrence of all the subjects of his moral empire. He condemns neutrality as equivalent to undisguised opposition. "He

that is not with me, is against me." And there is not a shadow of reason for maintaining, that while it would be criminal in individuals, possessing the light of the Scriptures, to affect neutrality in regard to the interests of true religion, yet as soon as these individuals are constituted into civil society, all farther obligation to serve Christ, and promote his cause, is at an end.

In respect to civil communities, such a supposition is especially guarded against in the Scriptures. It is there foretold, "that all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him." In times past, they have often professed to serve Christ, when they have been supporting the cause of Antichrist, or shedding the blood of the saints; but the time is approaching when this counterfeit homage shall be succeeded by genuine subjection. "The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ." Nor will they affect any neutrality towards the Church. "The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls; and their kings shall minister unto thee." "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." "The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee." "Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles; and shalt suck the breast of kings;"¹ for "kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers." How can the divine will in these particulars be ever obeyed, or these predictions be accomplished, if, in the full blaze of gospel light, the civil governments of enlightened nations must observe a most rigid neutrality in regard to religion—do no more homage to Christ than they do to Mahomet—and show no more favour to his church, than to the apostate and idolatrous Church of Rome?

¹ Isaiah, chap. lx., and xlix. 23.

Should it be alleged, that the predictions, of which we have given a specimen, contemplate nothing farther than the general prevalence of the true religion among the inhabitants of the different countries; and that what is enjoined upon kings and judges, or predicted respecting them, must be accomplished by them in their private capacity only, we account the interpretation inadmissible. We cannot perceive that language more explicit and unequivocal could have been employed to show, that not individuals merely, but nations, in their public and corporate capacity,—and that rulers, not in their private character merely, but in their public official station, shall serve Christ, and his church. The limitation of the meaning of these passages to individuals, and to private station, is altogether forced and gratuitous.

When the command is addressed to kings and judges, in the second Psalm, to do homage, or yield allegiance, to the Messiah, there is not a shadow of evidence that the language should be restricted to their individual, or private, capacity. The terms employed distinctly refer to their official character; and terms of similar import, used in the beginning of the Psalm, are so interpreted by the inspired apostle when he applies the passage to those rulers who concurred in condemning and crucifying the Saviour.¹ It was not in their private capacity that the Jewish Sanhedrim, and Herod, and Pilate, fulfilled this prophecy. When it is predicted, in the book of Revelation, that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ,² it would be not only a groundless, but most unreasonable assumption, that the prophecy should be understood merely of the individuals composing these kingdoms. The improvement of individual character, at the period specified in the prophecy,

¹ Acts iv. 25—28.

² Rev. xi. 15.

is, no doubt, presupposed or implied; but that is not the event contemplated in this prophecy. It is the renovated character of these kingdoms in their public national capacity that is obviously intended. During the Anti-Christian period, the ten kings or kingdoms, were united in their opposition to Christ, and in giving their power and strength to the Beast. Was this done merely by the homage rendered to the See of Rome by the people generally? Most certainly not; but by the public national support which these kingdoms gave to Popery, and by the homage rendered by the rulers in their official capacity. And it would be preposterous to maintain, that when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, the change implies nothing farther than that the inhabitants of these nations, and rulers in their private capacity only, shall do service to Immanuel. If this was the intention of the passages quoted, no language could be more calculated to mislead than that which is employed. But if, as we believe, it was the intention of the inspired writers to teach, that rulers in their official character, and nations in their public capacity, should do homage to Christ, and promote the interests of his kingdom, no language could be more explicit or appropriate.

In so far, therefore, as the system of principles usually expressed by the term Voluntaryism, rests on this basis, that in lands possessing the Scriptures, civil rulers, *as such*, have nothing to do with religion, and that nations, *in their public capacity*, can do no homage to Christ, nor make exertions to promote his cause, we oppose and testify against it, for the following among other reasons:—

1st. Because it tends to confirm the nations in revolt from the authority of God. Unless we wholly misapprehend the system, it would sanction these dangerous doctrines:—that in their public corporate

capacity the nations owe to the Most High no allegiance; that in constructing their civil constitutions they are not under obligation to regard his revealed will, or to render those constitutions subservient to the interests of true religion; and that in the choice of persons to whom political power is to be entrusted, no man should be held disqualified, or ineligible, either on account of the falsehood of his religious tenets, or his known hostility to true religion. We are aware, that among those by whom these sentiments are embraced and advocated, there are many whose reputation is deservedly high, both for talents and piety; but this increases the danger attending their erroneous opinions, and renders a solemn testimony against them the more indispensable. However ardently we desire to see the unhallowed and unscriptural connexion, which has so long subsisted between corrupt churches and immoral civil governments, totally and for ever destroyed, we could not, without dread and sorrow, contemplate the prospect of its being succeeded by a system of national atheism or infidelity.

2d. We protest against this system, because it robs the Messiah, also, of his supremacy over the nations. If the avowed enemies of the Redeemer may, without guilt, be promoted to places of highest authority; if the church which he has redeemed by his blood, and whose benefit is perpetually regarded by him in regulating the concerns of his kingdom, must receive no countenance from civil rulers, beyond what may be extended to a society of infidels; if even Christian men, when invested with political power, although bound on all other occasions to live to Christ and for the advancement of his kingdom, must here discard the governing principle of their lives, and know nothing of Christ, or of his people, or of his cause, we cannot perceive how it is possible that the divine promise could ever

be fulfilled, that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

3d. We protest against this system as being diametrically opposed to a Scriptural reformation, commenced, and considerably advanced, in these lands. We are aware that the Scottish Reformation had its defects; and we account them injudicious friends who undertake to vindicate or excuse them; but the system against which we are now contending would bury many of its excellencies and its defects in the same grave. The Scottish Reformation provided, as far as human laws could do, that the supreme civil ruler of the nation should be a friend of true religion, "a just man, ruling in the fear of God;" but this system would offer no obstruction to the appointment of a Papist, an ungodly man, or an infidel, to sway the sceptre over a Christian people. The Scottish Reformation provided, that subordinate places of trust and power should be filled with "able men, men fearing God, men of truth and hating covetousness;"¹ but this system condemns every restriction which would exclude from office, either in the legislative or executive departments of government, the openly irreligious, or the slaves of superstition. The Scottish Reformation presented the sublime spectacle of nations making a public surrender of themselves to the service of God, and binding themselves by vows and Covenants, as under divine direction the seed of Abraham formerly did, to adhere steadfastly to the true religion. But this system not only disowns the obligation and authority of the Covenants of our ancestors, but would prohibit all national Covenanting, as unwarrantable under the Christian dispensation. The Scottish Reformation recognized the principle, that a Christian nation should, with

¹ Exodus xviii. 21.

common consent, and through the medium of its representatives, devote a portion of its wealth to the service of the Lord, by providing education and religious instruction for the destitute at home, or by diffusing the knowledge of salvation by Christ in other lands, unprovided with the gospel. But this system, while it very properly allows full scope to private and individual liberality, would prohibit a nation from consecrating any portion of its national funds to religious purposes, under any circumstances, or on any occasion.

4th. We condemn this system as calculated to exert a baneful influence on religion and morality. The political atheism, or avowed neglect of God, which must characterize a government constructed on its principles, could not fail to produce an effect on the public mind inexpressibly injurious. The example of irreligion and ungodliness in those whom this system would, without scruple, admit to power, would be the more dangerous from the exalted station in which it would be exhibited. "The wicked walk on every side when the vilest men are exalted." To these sources of moral evil an immense addition would be made, when the holy Sabbath had ceased to receive any public countenance or protection; when every description of secular business, and every species of public amusement, would be openly carried on without fear or restraint. Even were there no danger of bringing divine judgments on the nation that should deliberately refuse, in its national capacity, to recognise the authority of God's holy day, we feel it impossible to resist the conviction, that the abolition of a national Sabbath, by a removal of all the laws which guard it from open desecration, would have the effect of setting open the flood-gates of iniquity and licentiousness, in any country whose government should make the dreadful experiment.

If we are reminded of the rapid and triumphant progress of the gospel in the first ages of Christianity, when it received no favour from civil rulers, it is answered, that we never imagined, that the success of the Redeemer's cause is suspended on the favour of princes. If they are disloyal, He will find other instruments for accomplishing his merciful designs. But the fact specified is no more a proof, *that it is not the duty* of nations, and their rulers, to favour the church, and strenuously to promote true religion, than that the most efficient way to propagate the gospel is by persecution.

If we be reminded of the divided state of public opinion in religious matters, and the difficulty, under these peculiar circumstances, of giving national support to any one division of professing Christians, without awakening the jealousy and resentment of others, and that giving support to one church, may impose a necessity on the government of making offer of support to all—that it must bring with it the alternative of kindling in the community interminable civil strife, or of compelling the government to become the patron and supporter of the grossest systems of error and delusion, it is answered, that a country may be placed in circumstances which render the erection and support of a formal establishment impracticable. There is need for much prudence and discrimination, that no prejudices or animosities may be raised against the true religion. The apostle Paul would not exercise his undoubted right to support in the church at Corinth, when he perceived, from the temper of that church, that it might obstruct the success of his ministry there.¹ But what may be expedient in a disordered state of society, should not be made a rule for a community in a well regulated condition.

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 7—12; and xii. 13—18.

The system we are opposing, would condemn all countenance being given to the true religion by the civil government, even if the people were united in one religious profession.

If we are reminded that the endowments granted to churches by the State have been, for ages, a lure to a covetous ministry, and have cast the great majority of those who received them into a deep slumber, from which the cry of great spiritual necessity among their people could rarely awaken them; our reply is, that we do not undertake the defence of any existing establishment. The extent to which, or the occasions on which, it may be proper for the State to bestow regular support on the ministers of religion, are questions about which the decided friends of establishments may differ in opinion, and which we do not deem it necessary to attempt definitely to settle. We are as much opposed to the prostitution of public money, by which endowments are bestowed as the reward of indolence, or as the price of political subserviency, as any of those from whom we differ on the general question. Our declared principles respecting the character of the civil government with which the church may lawfully contract an alliance, and our views regarding the existing institutions of these lands, should secure us from the imputation of selfishness, when we advocate the general principle, that nations should do homage to the Messiah. In Ireland, where all other divisions of the Presbyterian Church, with the exception of a few congregations belonging to different sections of the Secession, have long received support from the public treasury, the Reformed Presbyterian Church has uniformly declined to apply for or accept of such support; and we have no reason to doubt, that had our brethren desired it, they might long since have been sharing the comforts of royal bounty along with the minis-

ters of other denominations, who, if we regard the average numbers or wealth of their congregations, had much less reason for soliciting public support.

The progress of the great controversy respecting national establishments of religion, has already produced several remarkable results. Some of these are, apparently, of a beneficial character, while others are ominous and alarming.

The contest appears to have been over-ruled to be a principal means of awakening the Established Churches from a protracted and criminal slumber. Of this change we have already taken notice in the preceding section. Nor is this quickening and increase of exertion confined to the Established Churches, although in them it contrasts more strongly with former inactivity. The different bodies of Dissenters have been stimulated to new enterprizes, and to prosecute plans of useful labour, formerly in existence, with redoubled vigour. Pleasing examples of Christian liberality are exhibited, where single congregations, after defraying all the expences connected with their own religious ordinances, do, besides, voluntarily raise the funds necessary for the support of a missionary among the heathen. We regard this as among the most interesting and pleasing of the signs of the present time.

Whatever indirect advantage to the cause of religion may have arisen from this controversy, should be ascribed to the power of Him "who maketh the wrath of man to praise him." The more direct and obvious results of it are of a character to be deplored. Where there is bitter envying and strife in the heart, the graces of the Spirit of God cannot flourish. The plant of piety is scorched and withered by the fire of religious animosity. The eternal interests of men are endangered, by their mistaking the fervour of party strife for the warmth of true piety. Religious institutions, also, whether

of a local or general nature, which depend for their prosperity on the harmonious co-operation of Christians of different denominations, are often left to languish or expire.

Nor are the singular alliances to which this controversy has given rise, among the least remarkable of its results. A sense of common interest, and of common danger, has drawn the established and other endowed churches, into a new bond of brotherhood, from which, in a past age, they would have shrunk with mutual aversion. The tone of cold indifference, or of contempt, with which the high-minded Church of England was accustomed to speak of the Scottish Church, has, in some instances, given way to something like kindness and respect. Yet this courtesy would be the less merited, should it appear to be accompanied, as we much fear it is, with a corresponding unfaithfulness in the Scottish Church, in suppressing her testimony against the manifold corruptions of that secular and Semi-popish establishment. There was a time when the Scottish Church was accustomed to speak of Prelacy in terms of just reprehension, and when her prayers were directed against it. On this head we have witnessed a very palpable change. Prelacy is now treated with great tenderness, if not with affection. Our complaint on this head falls most heavily on many of the sound and orthodox part of the Church of Scotland, who, while they profess to venerate the memory, and espouse the principles of the Scottish reformers, are frequently found palliating that Prelacy which these reformers were sworn to extirpate, and against which they contended even to death.

It is a subject for deepest lamentation, when the great body of the friends of the gospel throughout a kingdom, are divided into hostile camps, and present the spectacle of contending armies. In such a warfare, Satan finds the best guarantee for

the safety of his kingdom. The power of Christ's kingdom lies in the demonstrations of love and kindness. The prevalence of strife and malevolence affords sure indication of the successful efforts of the adversary. The sin and danger of such a warfare are greatly increased, when Christians are seduced to fight their battles on the stormy and perilous sea of worldly politics. The present contest has lost its original simplicity of character. The question now is, not whether existing religious establishments should be preserved, or whether it is for the advantage of religion, that any Church should be taken into so intimate a connexion with the State. These questions have become blended and complicated with many others that are purely of a political character. Adverse systems of political government have, unhappily, long divided the community. Of late years, the struggle between the contending parties in the State, has much increased in violence. At length the question respecting national establishments of religion, has been superadded to all former grounds of strife, and has embittered the contest, by a large infusion of religious animosity.

It was a natural but unhappy result, that each of the religious bodies should attach itself to that party in the State, which seemed most favourable to its peculiar views. The established and endowed churches have, in the hour of danger, fled for support to that party which, for a long period, has generally held the reins of government, and which has never appeared reluctant to befriend any church, whatever might be its creed or character, which could be made an efficient instrument for securing its own political ascendancy. On the other hand, the religious communities who are opposed to church establishments, have, with equal alacrity, embraced the alliance of that political party, who strive to re-

trench the power of the aristocracy, and to place the civil institutions of the empire more completely under popular control.

On both sides the alliance is most anomalous and ensnaring. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness?" Who could have anticipated, that any great question should arise, most intimately affecting the interests of religion throughout the empire, in which Papists, Socinians, Infidels, and evangelical Protestant Dissenters, should be cordially united? Yet the co-operation of these parties in the struggle now going on, presents at least the appearance of harmony and alliance. It is painful to read, on this side of the controversy, the most fallacious representations of Popery, as if it had changed its character, or were under a process of thorough reformation; or as if the essential, and almost only evil and danger of it, consisted in its being in league with the civil powers. Such statements would be in character, if found in the writings of the spurious liberals, or disguised infidels of the day; but when they appear in the productions of Protestant Dissenters, they awaken our astonishment, as well as merit condemnation. Yet the same spirit of odious partizanship on the other side, impels many sincere Christians to shut their eyes to the accumulated crimes of their political allies; to employ a mischievous ingenuity in defending them; and to strain every nerve to secure to them the possession of a power which, for ages past, they have so grievously abused. It is the present policy of that party in the State to profess much zeal for religion, and great veneration for the Church; but it is well known that the party comprehends a large share both of the irreligion and infidelity of the nation. Their past conduct cannot fail to awaken the suspicion, that their present noisy zeal for the

church is hypocritical and selfish ; that they wish still to degrade her as an handmaid to their ambition, or to pamper and adorn themselves with her spoils.

In the view of a scene so dark and complicated, when the friends of religion are fatally alienated from each other, and embarked in a contest which presents so little hope of being terminated without some fearful convulsion ; when in the vehemence of their contention, they have not scrupled to call in to their aid, on both sides, a multitude of the ungodly, who, if their own quarrel were adjusted, could readily combine to persecute the followers of Jesus, as each of the parties has often done before, how much does the serious Christian require the support of this divine assurance ; “ The Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations.”

The system of principles on which we have been animadverting, has also obtained favour with that body of Christians in Scotland, distinguished by the name of the Relief Church, the origin of which has been already noticed.¹ That church, although Presbyterian in its constitution, never evinced, as the Secession did, an attachment to the distinguishing peculiarities of the Scottish Reformation. Its members, generally, we believe, disapprove of the public Covenants. They also disapprove of creeds and confessions, as tests of orthodoxy, or as terms of ecclesiastical communion. Neither the founders of that church, nor their successors, appear to have ever embraced the sentiment, that it is the duty of a church, in its united ecclesiastical capacity, to exhibit a public judicial testimony in behalf of truth, and against the prevailing errors and corruptions of the day. The principal, if not the sole object

¹ See page 188.

contemplated, in erecting a separate religious fellowship, was to afford a refuge to those who felt constrained to withdraw from the Church of Scotland, on account of patronage. The ministers and elders in the Relief Church are elected by the communicants; and at their ordination, declare, that they “believe and own the doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, to be founded on, and consonant with, the word of God, except where said Confession recognizes the power of the civil magistrate in religious concerns.” They are understood to hold the doctrine of free communion, among Christians of different denominations. We are happy to cherish the belief, that the ministers of the Relief Church are evangelical in their sentiments, and that, by many of them, the gospel is preached with much zeal and earnestness.

The people composing that division of the Secession Church, whose supreme judicatory is named—“The Associate Synod of Original Seceders,” we have always regarded as among the firmest and most intelligent friends of the Scottish Reformation. We have perused with satisfaction the latest exhibition of the Testimony of that church, both on account of its faithfulness to truth, and from the persuasion, that there is a sensible approach to harmony of sentiment between that body and ourselves, on subjects which furnished topics of serious controversy to our fathers. We have read attentively that portion of the work, which treats of the understood grounds of difference between the two churches. We freely admit, that to create or prolong separations on slight or imaginary grounds, is unjustifiable; and that, in an age of defection from Reformation principles, it is peculiarly desirable, that those who are honestly attached to them should strengthen each others hands, in maintaining the common cause.

In that part of the Testimony already noticed, we meet the following statements:—"That magistracy, like every thing belonging to the kingdom of Providence, is put into Christ's hand, to be ordered in subserviency to the good of his church." And farther:—"That it is the duty of Christians, and of Christian nations and their rulers, to regulate the whole of their conduct by the revealed will of God." These, we account most important and precious principles; and if we cannot adopt some of the other positions with which they are accompanied, it is because they do not appear to us to be in harmony with the passages quoted. This remark applies both to some things in the context, and in the explanatory note at the bottom of the page.¹

That in lands enjoying the clearest light of revelation, for it is of these exclusively we now speak, "the public good of outward and common order, to the glory of God," is "the only end" which the civil magistrate can propose to himself in the exercise of his office; that "the whole institution and end of that office, are cut out by, and lie within the compass of natural principles;" that "the body politic, or majority of a nation," have any *right* to erect civil constitutions of an immoral and unscriptural character; or that, when they do so, a minority who disapprove of their conduct are bound to yield allegiance to these constitutions, are sentiments, apparently contained in the part of the work specified, which we cannot reconcile either with the Scriptures, or with the Scottish Reformation.

We have already declared our belief, that cases may occur, in which it becomes the duty of Christians to decline fellowship with a corrupt civil gov-

¹ Historical Part of Testimony, p. 54.

ernment, as well as with a corrupt church, notwithstanding that it is supported by a majority of the inhabitants of a land. At the same time, we have not the most distant idea, that a minority of Christian men, dissenting from the civil constitution, have any warrant to disturb the peace of society, by offering physical opposition to government, when they are suffered to live in peace, and the sacred rights of conscience are not invaded. However much they may desire a Scriptural reformation, it must be sought only by moral and scriptural means. Out of regard to the authority of God, and the welfare of society, they will conscientiously practise a quiet and peaceable submission, in all matters where sin is not commanded. But we account *allegiance* to be something of a much higher character—an expression of attachment and loyalty—a pledge of desire and endeavour for the permanence and stability of the system to which it is rendered. Our views of the character of the civil institutions of these lands, as formerly explained, and a dread of having fellowship in the guilt of Antichrist, forbid us to render such allegiance. When the Most High is calling his people to come out, we are afraid to take refuge in Babylon, lest we should partake of her sins, and be exposed also to her plagues.¹

The prophecies of the New Testament lead us to expect, that the kingdoms of Western Europe, marked out as the ten horns of the Beast of the Revelation, would be for several ages, in an impious confederacy with the apostate church, and in a state of hostility to Christ and his cause. These prophecies have now been illustrated and confirmed, by the events recorded in authentic history. In consequence of the guilt hereby incurred by the nations, judgments are denounced against them of

¹ Rev. xviii. 4.

the most tremendous character.¹ The governments who form this wicked confederacy, being of "one mind to give their strength and power to the Beast," and the people who support them in it, are accomplices in rebellion against God and his Son. It seems incontestible, that the framing of such governments on the part of the nations, and sustaining them in power, by yielding to them a general and cordial allegiance, constitute the chief guilt on which the Redeemer has threatened to take vengeance. The general consent of the people to their sway, is the foundation of their power. That power is habitually exerted against Christ and his cause. To us, therefore, it appears unquestionable, that the general consent of the people to their dominion, and the general allegiance yielded to them, are highly criminal, notwithstanding that by these governments certain descriptions of wickedness are restrained, and "outward and common order" preserved. Nor can we conceive that what is impious and criminal, in the conduct of the whole population of a kingdom, can become innocent in any particular class of the inhabitants. If the body of the people in any European nation contract guilt, in erecting an Anti-Christian government over it, a minority among them, who disapprove of their conduct, cannot be innocent, either in giving their concurrence to the original deed, or in subsequently declaring their consent when the majority has so decided.

It is our settled conviction, that Britain is one of the kingdoms marked out in this prophecy; and it is almost universally admitted by the most approved expositors, not excepting the warmest friends of the British constitution, that at one period, it was one of the horns of the Beast. We have already assigned reasons for the apprehension, that whatever

¹ Rev. xiii. 10, and xvii. 14, and xix. 17--21.

may have been the case in regard to Scotland, Britain, as a whole, has never decidedly ceased to be so, notwithstanding that, for several centuries, the Protestant religion has had the ascendancy in it. In some of the continental nations, particularly in France, the reformed religion has at times prevailed very extensively; yet it is not imagined that France ever ceased to be one of the Anti-christian kingdoms. The Church of England, with which the British Government has allied itself, retains in it a large share of the corruption of the Church of Rome. Besides, the alliance subsisting between Church and State is of that unscriptural kind, which fastens upon Anti-christian nations the charge of spiritual adultery. Church and State have conspired to rob the Redeemer of his titles, and proper prerogatives; to secularise and corrupt religion; to prostitute divine ordinances; to promote and pamper a priesthood who do not preach the gospel; to disregard the commandments of Christ while they rigorously enforce the inventions of men; to depress and discountenance all zeal for the truth; and they have frequently been united in that fearful wickedness which consummates the guilt of Anti-christ—the shedding the blood of the saints. In the movements of government in modern times, a spurious and infidel liberality seems ever ready to sacrifice the most important principles at the shrine of ambition or political expediency, and the bonds that unite us with Popery, are progressively multiplying. On account of these, and similar reasons formerly specified, we cannot incorporate ourselves with the State, by holding offices which would mix us up with the constitution or administration; or involve us in responsibility for the acts of a government whose public policy is habitually, and to so great an extent, dishonouring to the Redeemer, and provoking in the sight of God.

In regard to those passages of Scripture which enjoin obedience to civil powers, we feel persuaded, that they must be understood with limitations and exceptions; otherwise, it would be as unwarrantable to withhold allegiance from the most impious and tyrannical government which ever existed, as from the most equitable. And we conceive that those governments which are marked out in Scripture as in league with Antichrist, and in a state of open rebellion against the Redeemer, may be viewed as exceptions.

The passage in the 13th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, which has been often adduced in this controversy, contains not only a command of subjection, but a description of the power to which subjection, for conscience' sake, is due.¹ It must be explained in consistency with itself, and with other parts of the sacred record. That there was any specific reference to the Roman government, then in existence, appears to us highly improbable. The passage lays down general principles, intended to direct the conduct of Christians in every age. If there be those who maintain, that the command of subjection is absolute and unlimited, without admitting any reference to the character of the rulers to whom it is rendered, we cannot here dispute with them, as their interpretation would establish the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance. But with those who admit that the passage must be interpreted as a whole, and that regard must be had to the character of the government, as regulating the nature of the subjection required, we have no farther controversy respecting this portion of the divine word. Nor do we know any passage of Scripture, inculcating obedience to civil powers, which does not require to be interpreted with the same limitations.

¹ Rev. xiii. 1—7.

There is also a passage in the Westminster Confession of Faith, which has been understood in a sense opposed to our peculiar views, on the subject of magistracy. It is as follows:—"Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him." Chap. 23, Sec. 4th.

The "infidelity, or difference in religion," here mentioned, may be supposed to exist either in the ruler, or in the people. In the former case, the doctrine could not be intended to apply to a reformed or Christian state. The whole conduct, as well as the known sentiments of the Reformers, tended to refute the supposition. If in a reformed and Covenanted nation, "infidelity or difference of religion" in the ruler, could not impair his claim to the obedience of the people, how could the Reformers, or the compilers of the Confession, be justified, in pledging their own allegiance to the king, only "in the preservation and defence of the true religion, and liberties of the kingdom," as they did in both their Covenants? Nor was it in theory merely they made this limitation. The Parliaments of England and Scotland, with the consent of the people generally, resisted the first Charles, when he invaded their civil and religious liberties, and refused to restore him again to the exercise of government, because he declined to give those securities, both for the religion and liberties of the kingdoms, which were deemed necessary. The second Charles was not admitted to sway the sceptre in Scotland until he had granted these securities, although in doing so he acted the part of a perjured deceiver. Both kingdoms united in expelling his brother James from the throne, at the Revolution, on religious as well as on political grounds. Even at the present day, the fundamental

law of the land prohibits a Papist from sitting on the throne of Great Britain. But if the clause of the Confession under review is well-founded, and if the interpretation we are opposing is the correct one, the law imposing this restriction must be unwarrantable and unjust.

That the interpretation is not correct, however, nor in unison with the intention of the compilers, will appear evident, still farther, from a consideration of the context. In the preceding section of the Confession it is asserted, that the magistrate "hath authority, and it is his duty to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed." Must we suppose, that the Reformers intended that all this might be done by an infidel or a Papist? The supposition is too absurd. It appears, therefore, to us perfectly manifest, that if the infidelity or difference of religion here specified were designed to have any application to the ruler, it must be only in heathen countries, or in lands emerging from Papal or Pagan darkness, where the true religion has not obtained a footing. The compilers seem to have had in their view the existence of infidelity, or a different religious faith, among the people, and not in the ruler; and the concluding part of the section, where the claims of the Romish clergy to be exempted from civil obligations, on account of their allegiance to a foreign power, and the arrogant pretensions of the Roman Pontiff to absolve men from their allegiance to civil magistrates, are condemned, manifestly favours this interpretation. No sentiment can be more opposed to the views of the Reformers, than that every power existing in the providence of God is to be acknowledged and obeyed.

The religious community known by the name of Independents, is not numerous in Scotland, but we believe it deservedly ranks high, in respect to the intelligence and religious character of its members. The doctrines taught by its ministers, are understood to be evangelical. The members of this body disapprove of creeds and confessions, and of every kind of alliance between Church and State. Their system of church government appears to us unscriptural, inasmuch as it confounds the distinction between rulers in the church, and those who are ruled; and lodges, theoretically at least, the power of ordination in the people, and not in the Presbytery. By setting aside all courts of review, to which parties aggrieved may carry an appeal, it vests the supreme power of government in the majority of each particular congregation. The system also appears to us deficient in energy, and incompatible with the proper unity of the church. Yet the periodical meetings of the ministers, along with a number of the private members of the church, in what is termed the Congregational Union, to attend to the religious interests of the community, and the conducting of cases of discipline, in particular congregations, by committees of deacons, display an evident approach to the practice of Presbyterianism, and serve, in some degree, to supply the want of a more regular government. As this body does not exhibit any public or authorized document, declaring its principles or church order, it is difficult to speak on these subjects without incurring the danger of inaccuracy. It affords us pleasure, however, to remark, that its members appear to be actuated by a warm and lively zeal for the diffusion of the gospel; and that, we have reason to believe, much care is generally employed in that community, to ascertain the moral and Christian character of those who are admitted to the enjoyment of church privileges.

In speaking of the Established Church of Scotland, we have felt it to be our duty to testify against the relaxation of discipline, which has so long and so extensively prevailed in her. This great evil, however, is by no means confined to the Established Church. The same looseness of sentiment and of practice is frequently met with in Dissenting Churches. It is but justice to remark, that much more care is employed in some Dissenting communities to preserve purity of discipline than in others; and a great difference is frequently observed in the discipline of different congregations, even in the same community. But is it not the fact, that many persons do find admission into Dissenting Churches, and have sealing ordinances dispensed to them, who can with no propriety be accounted religious, or even moral characters?—who do not worship God in their families, who are profane in their conversation, who openly desecrate the Sabbath, either in the prosecution of business, or of carnal pleasure, or who are occasional drunkards? In many Dissenting congregations, to be a seat-holder appears to be regarded as the only essential qualification for church membership; and few persons are debarred from church privileges who bear their share in the pecuniary burdens of the congregation, excepting those whose offences are peculiarly flagrant. Church censures are rarely administered, even in cases of public scandal, excepting for offences of one particular class; and even in these cases, a modern construction has been put on the divine precept which enjoins public censure, and a practice adopted in some Dissenting churches, by which the censure is administered in comparative privacy.

It is our conviction, that great guilt is contracted, by the indiscriminate admission of applicants into the fellowship of the churches. The revealed will of the Messiah, the church's glorious Head, must

be acknowledged as a complete and authoritative directory, for organizing, and building up his church. But *his* law supplies no warrant for admitting into it the ignorant, the openly immoral, such as are tainted with error, or who live in the habitual neglect of any ordinance which he has appointed. It is Christ's own province to search the heart, and he will not suffer church officers to invade it; but they are solemnly bound to take cognizance of that which may be known and discovered, about the character and conduct of church members. If the profession of faith in Christ made by applicants, stands free from suspicion, arising from any known inconsistency of conduct, the rulers of the church are entitled to accept of that profession. But if it is known—or by a little honest inquiry might be known—that applicants, or church members, are profane swearers, sabbath-breakers, habitual or occasional drunkards, or addicted to any other vice, how can church rulers be justified in receiving them? Must it not be offensive to the Lord Jesus Christ, to prostitute the privileges provided for his disciples, by bestowing them on the ungodly; to cast the children's bread to dogs; and bring into his sanctuary those who bear, in their foreheads, the unequivocal marks of a loathsome moral leprosy? Must not the example of these persons prove exceedingly dangerous to others, and the false lenity of the church towards them exceedingly ensnaring to their own souls? Does it not open the mouths of scoffers, and bring religion into reproach? The divine injunction addressed to each believer is, "if any man who is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat"¹ It is further required, that each disciple should take

¹ 1 Cor. v. 11.

on Christ's yoke, by the punctual observance of all commanded duties. But if those who refuse this yoke—living without personal, or practical religion; whose tables are unsanctified by the divine blessing, because that blessing is never sought; whose children and domestics can testify that family instruction, and family worship, are habitually neglected, or very rarely performed, do, nevertheless, receive the right hand of fellowship, is not the law of Christ's house violated, the sanctuary polluted, and the church and the world wickedly blended and confounded?¹

Moral evil is exceedingly infectious; and even where there is an honest purpose on the part of a church, or of a particular congregation, to raise discipline to the scriptural standard, the difficulty of doing so is immensely increased by the general unfaithfulness. But no extent of example, no considerations of expediency, suggested by the desire to enlarge a church, or to conciliate the unbelieving, and induce them to place themselves under the influence of gospel ordinances, can sanction what is morally wrong. The favour and blessing of Christ are of more value to a church than any amount of members. The neglect of discipline was one chief ground of controversy with the churches of Asia, and appears to have been one principal reason of their fearful rejection.

The church is preserved in the world that she may present a living and palpable exhibition of true religion; that the hearts of men may be attracted and won, by the lovely spectacle of truth, and love, and purity, which they behold in her. But when the irreligious world is received into her fellowship, this glorious end is, to a large extent, frustrated and lost. As long as parents who neglect family religion

¹ Ezek. xliii. 12.

are sustained as church members, and their ignorant children admitted to communion; as long as church officers deliberately connive at the undisguised and known immorality of church members, or strengthen the hands of evil doers by their own disorderly practices; as long as the censures of Christ's house are laid aside, or commuted for money, or withdrawn into privacy, whereby the benefit of the example is lost; as long as fugitives from discipline in one church are cordially welcomed into the communion of another; it would be vain to expect any abundant measure of that divine blessing, on which all fruitfulness depends, or that the church will put forth that hallowed and mighty influence on society, by which she is destined, ultimately, to make a conquest of the nations for the exalted Redeemer.

May the solemn intimations of Zion's glorious King be regarded by ourselves, and by every Christian community!—"Behold I come quickly;" "and all the churches shall know that I am he who searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

ERRATUM.—In the note at the bottom of p. 21, read the first sentence thus:—The motto on their standard, taken from Exod. xv. 11, was, "Who among the gods is like unto thee, O Jehovah."

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TESTIMONY,

BY THE

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN SCOTLAND.

"I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and
for the Testimony which they held."—REV. VI. 9.

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PREFACE.

No privilege conferred upon a people, is to be compared, in magnitude and in the responsibility which it involves, with that of having had “committed unto them the oracles of God.” The word of God, wherever it comes, brings along with it a solemn obligation to examine its claims, to know well its contents, and to believe and obey it. And it is the incumbent duty of every believer in the gospel, to avow his faith, to hold fast the truth, to defend it from the attacks of adversaries, to disseminate it in every direction, and to transmit it to the succeeding generation. He is a stranger to its spirit, who does not feel these obligations. The honour of its author, and the good of man, are equally involved in these things.

That it is also the duty of Christians to unite in holding forth the word of life, and to aid one another in its preservation, diffusion, and transmission to posterity, none will deny. Christianity not only unites its subjects to one another, in a bond of affection and sympathy, but it brings them under a new, and peculiarly-enforced, obligation to love their neighbour as

themselves. Besides the common connection arising from relation, and dependence upon others, Christians are linked to the race of man, by the law of love; a law obligatory, as it is pleasing and powerful, wherever it is felt. Every individual can, and should do something. Some individuals may do much. But, in general, single and insulated effort can do little, in comparison of social and well combined operation.

It is more immediately to our present purpose, to remark, that it is the duty of the church, in her organized and collective capacity, to exhibit a Confession of faith, and to give a faithful Testimony to the truths of the word of God, and to the cause of Christ. The ecclesiastical union is distinguished by peculiar characteristics, from societies erected upon the ordinary principles of human association, and has special advantages. A society, however wisely constructed, and however multiplied in its members, is only an accumulation into one great agency, of the power that is in the individuals composing it; securing an extent of result, which the efforts of all the individuals apart could not produce, but never acquiring authority above what is constituted by conventional arrangement. But the church is the positive institution of Jesus Christ. Her objects, laws, and offices, are specifically and authoritatively defined—the places and duties of her mem-

bers, official and private, are respectively laid out—when acting lawfully, in an organized capacity, she has authority from Christ—and she has the promise of his special presence and benediction. The church is not, therefore, a merely spontaneous association, like the numerous societies erected among Christians, for specified objects, and formed upon the simple principle of co-operation; but she is an association instituted by Christ, and receiving from him her constitution and laws, and having the promise of his special blessing. Other societies may, in certain circumstances, be called to co-operate with the church, but they can never supersede her, nor are they to receive a preference, or be put into comparison with her. This association, as such, and with the sanction of that authority which Christ has delegated to her, should exhibit a Testimony for the truth.

The testimony of the church should embrace divine truth, in its bearings upon the relations of man to God, and of man, as a moral and fallen creature, placed under a moral and a gracious dispensation. It should comprehend the constitution and ordinances of the church, the privileges and duties of her fellowship, and the relation of the individual Christian to the church. It should also include the original natural and moral relations of man to man, bringing

them all under law to Christ. And it should comprehend also, the relations of man to the eternal world. The truth, on these subjects, should be stated with perspicuity, and faithfully defended from present attacks made upon it; and the testimony of the church should be exhibited with all due publicity, and in the proper season. And in times of reformation, it should embrace, under the direction of scripture, the attainments which the church has reached, and faithfully protest against all departure from truth.

Impressed with these views, the Reformed Presbyterian Church submit their humble Testimony to the truths of the Word of God, and covenanted profession of the Reformed Church of Scotland. In doing this, they request that the following things be understood:—

1. They avow their faith, in the doctrines and institutions of religion, on the direct evidence of their authority in the Scriptures. The word of God, and this alone, is the object of a divine faith. It is, accordingly, adduced under the respective articles.

2. They view the Reformation to have been a work of God, and a great blessing to the land, which it is their duty faithfully to record, and to tell to posterity. They refer to the Covenants, to the Westminster standards, and to the testimonies of the Martyrs, as illustrative of the principles of the refor-

mation, approving of them under the authority and correction of the supreme standard. They acknowledge the moral obligation of the national covenants against Popery and Prelacy, and lift their testimony against these systems, which still sway such an influence in our land. They have received as their subordinate standards, the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, and have accordingly referred, under the different articles, to the chapters in the Confession, and the questions in the Larger Catechism.

3. The departure from the Reformation, by church and state, particularly at the Revolution, is the immediate occasion of their Dissent and Testimony. The period and place in which God has cast their lot, have laid them under the necessity of embracing, according to the best of their knowledge, the scriptural cause of the Reformation, and of vindicating it, in some important points in which they consider it to have been unfaithfully dealt by, or abandoned. "Asking for the old paths and the good way," they are not chargeable with schism; nor have they originated the divisions by which the church has been rent; but they continue to this day, witnessing, both to small and great, none other things than those for which their fathers contended and bled.

4. They have found it necessary to refer to errors, not only in the abstract propositions containing them, but in connection with the names under which

they are known and propagated. In doing this, nothing is more remote from their minds, than indulging malevolent feeling, or invidious personality. They have, indeed, declared the truths in which they believe, they have condemned the opposite errors, and they have testified against persons who have abandoned truth, and embraced error: but they have done all this, they hope, in the spirit of that "charity, which is not easily provoked, which thinketh no evil—which rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."

TESTIMONY,

&c.

CHAPTER I.

OF DIVINE REVELATION.

1. THE most diligent improvement of human reason, and study of the works of creation and providence, are inadequate to direct man, in his present state of guilt and depravity, to glorify and enjoy God.¹ Reflection on the state of the human mind, observation of the history of the world, and the fact that God has given a supernatural revelation, demonstrate that the light of nature is utterly insufficient to impart to man that knowledge of God which is necessary to salvation.²

¹ 1 Cor. i. 21. The world by wisdom knew not God. ² Rom. i. 21. When they knew God they glorified him not as God. Prov. xxix. 18. Where there is no vision the people perish.—Confession of Faith, Chapter I. Section 1. Larger Catechism, Question 2.

2. It has pleased God, in his gracious condescension, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to give amply authenticated revelations of his will respecting the salvation of man.¹ For the preservation and diffusion of these revelations, they have been, by special divine direction, committed to writing in successive ages,² and are now brought to that state of completeness and perfection in which God designed to give them.³

¹ Heb. i. 1. God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son. ² Exod. xvii. 14. And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book. Isa. xxx. 8. Note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever. Jer. xxx. 2. Write thee all the words I have spoken to thee in a book. ³ Rev. xxii. 18, 19. If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.—Con. I. 1.

3. The writings usually called the Old and New Testaments, and these alone, are given by inspiration of God; holy men having been infallibly guided in the matter and language of them, writing as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.¹ 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, and 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.

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God. 2 Pet. i. 21. Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. ² Isa. viii. 20. To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Psal. cxix. 105. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. John v. 9. Search the Scriptures. 1 Thess. ii. 13. When ye received the word of God—ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God.—Con. I. 2, 3, 4; Cat. 3.

4. Arguments taken from miracles, prophecy, and the remarkable preservation and success of the sacred writings, and from the doctrines, precepts, manner, scope, harmony, and effects of these writings, afford rational evidence, and may produce rational persuasion

of the truth of revelation ;¹ but the special divine influences of the Holy Spirit are necessary to impart to the mind that discernment and persuasion of the infallible truth of the Word of God, and produce that sense of its divine authority, and submission to it, which are included in believing it to salvation.²

¹ 1 John v. 9. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. ² 1 Cor. ii. 14. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. John xvi. 13. The Spirit of truth will guide you into all truth.—Con. I. 5 ; Cat. 4.

5. God has granted to every man the right of judging for himself on all subjects that come within the reach of his faculties.¹ He is entitled, without permission from any human authority, to read the Holy Scriptures,² to inquire into their meaning,³ and to adopt whatever doctrines they teach.⁴ In the exercise of this right, he ought to cherish an ardent love of truth,⁵ profound reverence to the authority of revelation,⁶ and humble dependence on the gracious illumination of the Holy Spirit,⁷ to avail himself of all the assistance which preceding inquiries may have supplied, to exert to the utmost extent all the powers of his mind, to guard against the influence of the passions,⁸ and ever to remember that he is accountable to God for the opinions he embraces, as well as for the words he utters, and the actions he performs.⁹

¹ Rom. xiv. 5. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. ² Acts xvii. 11. And searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. ³ 1 Cor. x. 15. I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say. ⁴ Rom. xiv. 10. But why dost thou judge thy brother ? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother ? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. ⁵ 2 Thess. ii. 10. Because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. ⁶ 2 Cor. x. 5. And

bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. ⁷ 1 Cor. ii. 12. Now we have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. ⁸ James i. 21. Therefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls. ⁹ John iii. 18. He that believeth not, is condemned already. 1 Cor. iv. 5. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God.—Con. I. 8, 10.

6. The communication of divine revelation does not supersede the exercise of human reason.¹ Man is bound to employ his rational faculties in examining the evidences of the divine authority of the Scriptures, ascertaining the meaning of the language of Scripture, comparing one part with another, deducing inferences from Scripture statements, and trying what he thinks, speaks, reads, hears, sees, or practises, by this infallible test.² Reason cannot predetermine what God shall, or shall not reveal, may not mould into its own conceptions the contents of revelation, but ought implicitly to receive, on the veracity and authority of the divine testimony, the doctrines which God has actually revealed, how much soever they exceed the comprehension of the mind.³ The testimony of God being greater than that of men, it is highly reasonable and dutiful to receive, and highly unreasonable and criminal to reject, any thing he has revealed. The doctrines of revelation are clearly discerned by reason, to be contained in the Scriptures, and are mysterious not from any thing unintelligible in the language, but from the intrinsic sublimity of the subjects themselves, and from the necessary limits, as well as present obscurity, of the human mind. The

spiritual discernment of divine truth, which maketh wise to salvation, is a result, not of the unassisted effort of human reason, but of the special illumination of the Holy Spirit.⁴

¹ 1 Pet. iii. 15. And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you. ² Acts xvii. 2. Paul reasoned out of the Scriptures. 1 Cor. x. 15. I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say. ³ Mat. xiii. 11. Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God. ⁴ Col. ii. 2. To the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. Eph. iii. 3. By revelation he made known unto me the mystery,—whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ. 1 Tim. iii. 9. Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.—Con. I, 5.

Believing and confessing the above first principles on the subject of a revelation from God, we condemn the following errors:—That the light of nature is sufficient to direct man to perfection and happiness, and that men framing their lives according to it shall be saved;—that the Old and New Testaments are not the inspired word of God;—that the books known by the name of the Apocrypha, are of equal authority with the Holy Scriptures;—that it is proper to read them as a part of the public worship of God;—that there are authoritative oral traditions;—that the Scriptures are not to be put into the hands of the common people;—that the Scriptures are not fully and infallibly inspired of God, and that some parts of them are more inspired than others;—that reason is the standard of religious truth, and that there are no incomprehensible mysteries in the Holy Scriptures; that the Scriptures are to be believed only in accordance with the interpretation of the church;—that the traditions and writings of the ancients, and decrees of the

Church, are to be admitted in whole or in part, as supreme authority in religious controversy ;—that an internal light in the human mind in any respect supersedes the necessity or use of the divine word, and sets aside the visible institutions of the church of Christ ;—that there are still new revelations of the Spirit besides the Word of God ;—and that the Old Testament is not of equal authority with the New, and is of comparatively little use to the Christian church.

In the errors testified against, under this chapter, we have in view—the Infidel who denies revealed religion—Romanists who claim the authoritative interpretation of the Scriptures, have sanctioned Apocryphal Books, and maintain the authority of oral traditions—Episcopalians who, though they do not admit the inspiration of the Apocrypha, retain it along with the Holy Scriptures, and ordain that it be read in their churches—Socinians who deny the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, and ridicule the idea that there are mysteries in the Bible—the Friends, or Quakers, who give to Christ alone the title of the Word of God, and refuse it to the scriptures, although they profess highly to esteem them, in subordination to the Spirit ; and who have set aside the visible institutions of Baptism and the Lord's Supper—and visionaries who pretend to new and authoritative revelations of the Spirit. Although no denomination have avowed that the Old Testament is not of equal authority with the New, or is of comparatively little use in the Christian Church, yet in conversation, and in books, on certain branches of controversy, the Old

Testament is much overlooked and slighted. Without distinguishing whether a passage belongs to the moral, ceremonial, or judicial law, it is often thought sufficient to reject it, when adduced in proof of a doctrine or principle, that it is taken from the Old Testament. This, however, is inconsistent with a full belief in the New Testament, for it explicitly and largely recognises the divine authority of the Old.

CHAP. II.

OF GOD, THE DIVINE PURPOSES, AND WORKS.

1. THERE is, distinct from the universe, an uncreated, infinite, eternal, self-existent, independent, and immutable Being; the creator, preserver, and governor of all things, the true and living God.¹ God is a most pure spirit,² invisible, almighty, omniscient, omnipresent, most wise, most holy, most free, most just, most gracious and merciful.³ He is in and of himself all-sufficient, having all goodness, glory, and blessedness in himself, not standing in need of any of his creatures, not deriving any essential glory from them, but manifesting his glory by them, unto them, and upon them. His ultimate end in all things, is his own glory, in the exercise and manifestation of the perfections of his nature. It is unworthy of God, as it is inconsistent with the whole tenor of Scripture, to represent his ultimate end as terminating in his creatures.

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 5. There is one God. Heb. xi. 6. He that cometh unto God must believe that he is. Job xi. 7. Canst thou by searching find

out God? Psal. xc. 2. From everlasting to everlasting thou art God. Rom. xi. 36. Of him, and through him, and to him are all things. Exod. iii. 14. I AM THAT I AM. Psal. cxlvii. 5. Great is our Lord and of great power; his understanding is infinite. Psal. cxxxix. 7. Whither shall I flee from thy presence? Mal. iii. 6. I change not. Rev. iv. 11. Thou hast created all things. Heb. i. 3. Upholding all things. Psal. ciii. 19. His kingdom ruleth over all. Jer. x. 10. The true God, the living God. ² John iv. 24. God is a Spirit. ³ 1 Tim. i. 17. The King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God. Rev. iv. 8. Holy, holy, holy. Eph. i. 11. Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty. Job xxii. 2. Can a man be profitable unto God? Prov. xvi. 4. The Lord hath made all things for himself. Rom xi. 36. For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever.—Con. II. 1, 2; Cat. 7.

2. The invisible and eternal Godhead is numerically ONE, a strict and proper unity.

Deut. vi. 4. The Lord our God is one Lord. James ii. 19. Thou believest there is one God. 1 Cor. viii. 6. To us there is but one God.—Con. II. 1.

3. The one true and living God subsists in three distinct and equal divine persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; distinguished by necessary personal relations, but the same in substance, and equal in all divine glory.

Mat. xxviii. 19. Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. 1 John v. 7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.—Con. II. 3; Cat. 9, 10, 11.

4. According to his own most free and wise counsel, and for his glory, God has, from eternity, ordained all the events of time, and unchangeably determined

the final states of all his creatures.¹ He has established such a connection between means and ends, as not to supersede nor destroy the agency of secondary causes ; so that he is not the author of sin, and offers no violence to the will of his moral creatures.²

¹ Acts xv. 18. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. Eph. i. 11. Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. Rom. xi. 33. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out ! ² James i. 13. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God. Acts ii. 23. Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.—Con. III. 1 ; Cat. 12.

5. It pleased the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the manifestation of the divine glory, to create, or make out of nothing, the world and all things in it ; thus imparting a finite existence to the various orders of creatures, adapting their natures to the place and purpose assigned them among the divine works.

Gen. i. 1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Heb. xi. 3. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God. John i. 3. All things were made by him ; and without him was not any thing made that was made. Job xxvi. 13. By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens. Psal. civ. 24. O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom thou hast made them all ! 1 Cor. xv. 38. God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.—Con. IV. 1 ; Cat. 15.

6. As the last and finishing part of creation in this world, God made man, consisting of a material body formed of the earth, and organized on principles of astonishing wisdom, and of a soul, distinct from the body, immaterial, rational, and immortal, endowed with noble faculties, capable of knowing, fearing, loving, and serving God.¹ The greatest glory of man consisted in being made after the

image of God, in knowledge, rectitude, and holiness.² He was placed in a state of moral subjection and responsibility to God.³

¹ Gen. i. 27. So God created man in his own image; ii. 7. God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. ² Job xxxv. 11. Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven. ³ 1 Cor. ix. 21. Being not without law to God.—Con. IV. 2; Cat. 17.

7. The Creator of the ends of the earth has a necessary propriety in all things, and sovereignty over them;¹ upholds them in being by the word of his power;² and by a secret, wise, and holy providence, directs, restrains, overrules, and disposes all his creatures, all their changes and actions, and all the events of time, to his own glory.³ He employs a variety of subordinate agencies, which are under his absolute control; and his providence extends to the actions of moral agents without violating their nature or abetting their sin.⁴

¹ 1 Chron. xxix. 11. All that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head over all. ² Heb. i. 3. Upholding all things by the word of his power. ³ Mat. x. 29. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father? ⁴ Prov. xxi. 1. The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of water he turneth it whithersoever he will. James i. 13. Neither tempteth he any man. Psal. lxxvi. 10. Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.—Con. V. 1; Cat. 18.

8. The providence of God maintains not only the natural order of the material world, but a moral dominion in the kingdom of men. The material and moral worlds are so balanced in the hands of the Creator and Ruler, that the one is made subservient to the other, the natural to the moral. Both having the

same Governor, and the scheme of both being determined in the same everlasting purposes, the physical or material world is placed in subordination to the moral, and thus subordinated in the hands of God, it is affected by the state of the moral world; the whole being so ordered as to manifest a moral character in the divine government.¹ The sin of man is, accordingly, often punished by the operation of the natural laws by which the world is governed, without changing these laws;² and it is impious, as well as unreasonable, to make the immutability of the laws of nature an objection to the obligation and efficacy of prayer and religious duty.³

¹ Psal. lviii. 11. Verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth. ² Psal. cvii. 33. He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water springs into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. Hos. ii. 21, 22. I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens; and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. ³ Zech. x. 1. Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain.—Con. V. 1.

Believing these doctrines of the Holy Scriptures, we condemn—the folly of the atheist who says there is no God, maintains that the world is eternal or an effect of chance, and is governed by fate, and that man has no immaterial and immortal soul which survives the dissolution of the body;—the pernicious heresy of those who hold that the names Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are merely official names of one person, and of those who maintain that the Father alone is supreme God, and that the doctrine of the Trinity is an impossibility and contradiction;—the arrogance of those who deny the decrees of God, and

hold them incompatible with the moral character of God and liberty of man ;—as well as the impiety of those who deny that the providence of God is particular, that man's sin has no influence on the course of events, and who refuse the efficacy of prayer as inconsistent with the established laws by which the world is governed, and ascribe events to chance, or fate, or fixed laws, so as to exclude the moral character of the providential administration.

The distinction of persons in the godhead does not arise out of the system of redemption, but is brought into clear light by it. And the sentiments of the Sabellian, Arian, Socinian, and Unitarian, must be testified against as subverting the fundamental doctrines of revelation. Persons denying the doctrine of Trinity may assume the name of Arius, Socinus, or any other human leader, but they have no exclusive claim to the designation Unitarian, in so far as this term denotes belief in the divine unity. Nor does the doctrine of a distinction of persons in the Godhead involve, as is alleged, a contradiction, inasmuch as God is not held to be one and three, in the same sense ; *one* referring to nature, and *three* to personality. While there is so much in finite being to confound, we should not feel offended that infinite being is unsearchable. The doctrine of Trinity is essentially connected with the peculiar doctrines of redemption, which the system of Unitarians does not embrace, being principally a system of natural religion. The doctrines of natural religion cannot be satisfactorily confirmed and illustrated without the Scriptures. In this sense, then, the doctrines of natural religion be-

long to revealed religion ; and though they do not constitute the doctrines of redemption, yet they are always supposed to be understood and acknowledged in the scheme of salvation. The exclusion of the peculiar doctrines of redemption, and the reducing of them to a system of natural religion, are entirely subversive of the designs of revelation, and incompatible with its language and spirit. The whole system must be regarded as one of masked infidelity, which, as it has renounced the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, has no claim to its name.

CHAP. III.

OF THE LAW OF GOD—COVENANT OF WORKS— MAN'S TRANSGRESSION—HIS PRESENT STATE.

1. GOD is the moral Governor of all intelligent creatures¹ —he has placed them under law to himself—and holds them universally responsible. The scriptures make known to us two orders of moral creatures, angels and men.²

¹ Psal. ciii. 19. His kingdom ruleth over all. Rom. xiv. 12. Every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Acts xvii. 31. He will judge the world in righteousness. ² Bless the Lord, ye his angels that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts, ye ministers of his that do his pleasure. Bless the Lord all his works in all places of his dominion.—Con. III. 3, 4 ; Cat. 16.

2. Angels were created pure spirits, excelling in knowledge and strength, holy and immortal. A part

of them have fallen into sin and condemnation, the others are established in moral excellence and felicity.

Psal. civ. 4. Who maketh his angels spirits. Mat. xxii. 30. But are as the angels of God. Mat. xxv. 31. And all the holy angels. 1 Tim. v. 21. The elect angels. Jude 6. The angels which kept not their first estate.—Con. III. 3, 4; Cat. 19.

3. Man is a free moral agent, bound, under the penalty of eternal death, to yield universal obedience to the law of God, and accountable to him for all his thoughts, words, and actions.¹ The rule which God at first revealed to man, and inscribed on his heart, was the moral law, afterwards promulgated and summarily comprehended in the ten commandments.²

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 21. Being not without law to God. Rom. vi. 23. The wages of sin is death. Rom. ii. 15. Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness. Psal. cxix. 96. Thy commandment is exceeding broad. ² Mat. xxii. 37. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.—Con. IV. 2; Cat. 17.

4. God created man male and female; and, having designed that mankind should exist by descent from Adam and Eve, he thus connected the whole human family by a bond of nature.¹ It pleased God to graft upon this natural relation a moral and federal connection, by constituting Adam the representative of the human race, and entering into a covenant with him, in behalf of himself and all his natural posterity, promising life and blessedness on the condition of obedience. The obedience of man to the authority and law of God at large, was subjected to a trial, by the

positive prohibition of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and enforced by a special revelation of the penalty of death in case of disobedience.² Reasonable creatures owe universal obedience to God as their creator and governor; and it was a fruit of sovereign goodness on the part of God to propose everlasting felicity unto man, by way of covenant, as the reward of his obedience—a reward which there was nothing in the obedience of man intrinsically to merit or claim. This constitution of things, called the *law* or *covenant* of works, manifested the condescension and favour of God, and was holy, just, and good; and viewed antecedently to the event, presented to the human family easier terms, a nearer prospect of felicity, and greater security for obedience and the attainment of happiness, than could have been afforded by distinct individual responsibility. It was a constitution of things not only in every respect beyond the reach of objection, but claiming to be readily and cordially embraced, as a display of the divine favour and condescension.

¹ Gen. i. 27. Male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth. ² Gen. ii. 17. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. Rom. v. 14. Adam—who is the figure of him that is to come. Rom. vii. 10. The commandment was ordained to life. Rom. x. 5. Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth these things shall live by them. Gal. iii. 12. And the law is not of faith, but the man that doeth them shall live in them.—Con. VII. 1, 2; Cat. 20.

5. Adam, being created holy, must have consented to the law and covenant of God. He was morally

able to obey ; but not being confirmed in a state of holiness, and being left to the liberty of his own will, through the temptation of Satan, he violated the condition of the covenant, by eating the forbidden fruit : and, thus throwing off all moral subjection to God, involved himself and all his natural posterity in guilt and misery.

Gen. iii. 6. She took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. 1 Cor. xv. 22. In Adam all die.—Con. VI. 1 ; Cat. 21.

6. The guilt of Adam's first transgression is, according to a righteous constitution of God, imputed to all his natural posterity ; and is as really their guilt in the account of the divine law, as if they had committed the transgression in their own persons. Adam and his posterity being, by that constitution, federally as well as naturally, one, are guilty in the sight of God ; and being found so, are by a righteous and legal imputation, declared guilty of the first transgression ; the act of imputation declaring, not constituting this guilt.

Rom. v. 18, 19. By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.—Con. VI. 3 ; Cat. 25.

7. In consequence of the entrance of sin into the world, all mankind are born in a state of guilt, are destitute of original rectitude, are depraved and opposed to what is good, in the faculties of their souls, sin reigning even in the members of their bodies.¹ They are utterly without moral ability to serve or enjoy God, are subject to disease and death, and liable to everlasting punishment in the world to come ; and

they are unable, as they are indisposed, by any effort to restore themselves to the favour and fruition of God.²

¹ Eph. ii. 3. And were by nature the children of wrath. Rom. iii. 9. Jews and Gentiles are all under sin. Eph. iv. 18. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.

² Rom. viii. 7, 8. The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Rom. vii. 5. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. Eph. ii. 1. Dead in trespasses and sins. Rom. v. 17. By one man's offence death reigned. Rom. v. 6. For when ye were yet without strength. —Con. vi. 3, ix. 3; Cat. 25.

Holding these humbling but obvious truths concerning man, we condemn the sentiments of those ;—who deny, and impugn as unjust, the constituting of Adam to be the representative of his posterity ;—who deny the imputation of the guilt of the first transgression of Adam to all mankind ;—who hold the absolute innocence and moral purity of infants ;—who maintain that man becomes sinful only by imitation of evil example ;—and who deny that actual sin flows from depravity of nature. We also condemn the sentiments of those who hold that the penalty annexed to the disobedience of Adam, and entailed on his posterity, is only temporal death ;—and of those who contend that man is still morally free to do all good, and retains moral power of himself to act faith and repentance, and to yield acceptable obedience to God.

Just views of the present moral state of man are essential to a right understanding of the gospel. The remedy is adapted, in divine love and wisdom, to the

disease. If we form mistaken views of the disease, if we apprehend it to be less deep and dangerous than it is, our views of the remedy must, in like manner, be defective and mistaken.

The infidel makes the doctrine of original sin the object of his virulent opposition and profane jesting, and is joined in this by Socinians and others, whose doctrines have a nearer affinity to infidelity than to revealed truth. The Arminian school, while admitting to a certain extent the doctrine of human depravity, rejects the representative character of Adam and the imputation of the guilt of his transgression to his posterity, and maintains the moral ability and freedom of man to save himself.

The spring of all this opposition to the truth is the pride of the human heart. The doctrine of original sin and of human depravity is humbling to man, and he will not humble himself. It should be remembered, that the language of inspiration draws an analogy, between the doctrine of our connection with Adam, and the method of our deliverance by Christ. Rom. v. 12—21. If we be ignorant of the one, we can have no proper knowledge of the other. And if we deny the one, we reject the other. The comments of enemies on these parts of the divine word are most deceitful, and are all calculated, at the expense of plain Scripture language, to flatter the human heart, and to bring down the divine dispensations to the views and dispositions of man—a deeply criminal and interested party, who cannot form an impartial judgment on the ways of God.

CHAP. IV.

OF ELECTION, AND THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

1. GOD, of his sovereign good pleasure, to the praise of his glorious grace, has, before the foundation of the world, chosen in Christ Jesus, and ordained a certain number of mankind to eternal salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.¹ The rest of mankind, being left in a state of sin, are by the retributive justice of God, in terms of the divine law, appointed to the punishment of their transgressions.²

¹ Eph i. 4. According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace. ² Thess. ii. 13. God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. ² Rom. ix. 22, 23. What if God—willing to shew his wrath and make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory.—Con. III. 3, 4, 5; Cat. 13.

2. This election is not founded upon foreseen faith or good works;¹ —it is an election not of communities to temporal and external privileges, but of persons to spiritual and external salvation;² —it connects the use of means with the end, in a way worthy of the divine perfections, and without superseding the diligent exercise of the human faculties;³ —and it is absolute and unchangeable.⁴

¹ Rom. ix. 11. For the children being not yet born, neither having

done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand; not of works, but of him that calleth. ² Acts xiii. 48. Ordained to eternal life. ³ Eph. ii. 10. Good works which God hath before-ordained that we should walk in them. 2 Pet. i. 10. Give diligence to make your calling and election sure. Psal. xxxiii. 11. The counsel of the Lord standeth. ⁴ 2 Tim. ii. 19. The foundation of God standeth sure. Rom. viii. 30. Whom he did predestinate them he also called, &c.—Con. III. 5, 6.

3. According to the good pleasure and everlasting counsels of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and for the manifestation of the divine glory in the salvation of sinners, it pleased the Father, from eternity, to enter into a covenant transaction with his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, promising to him great mediatorial glory, and the eternal life of the elect, upon condition of his fulfilling all righteousness as their surety.¹ To this covenant the Lord Jesus most voluntarily and graciously acceded, and being accepted, as the head and representative of the elect, was invested with mediatorial offices, and by the oath of God, constituted the surety of the everlasting covenant.² The Holy Spirit, one with the Father and the Son in the counsels of redemption, concurred in the federal arrangements, and is essentially connected with the execution of them.³ In this covenant there is not only a display of the divine perfections of godhead, but of these perfections as subsisting in the persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,—a mystery exhibited in its certainty and peculiar glory in the federal economy.

¹ Psal. lxxxix. 3. I have made a covenant with my chosen. Tit. i. 2. Eternal life which God that cannot lie promised before the world began. 1 Cor. xv. 22. As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. Isa. liii. 10. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed. ² Psal. xl. 7. Then said I, Lo, I come. Heb. vii. 22. By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better

testament. ³ Isa. xlvi. 16. The Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me. Isa. lix. 21. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, &c.—Con. VII. 3; Cat. 30, 31.

4. This covenant was in respect of Christ a covenant of redemption, nothing being promised to him excepting upon a condition fully adequate to the most extensive demands of justice;¹ yet, in respect of the persons interested in it, it is a covenant of pure and absolute grace, all its blessings being dispensed to them by promise and testament, exclusively of every consideration of merit.²

¹ Heb. ix. 15. He is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which were called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. ² Gal. iii. 17. And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise. Rom. iii. 16. Therefore it is of faith that it might be of grace.

Believing in these blessed mysteries of revelation respecting the origin of human redemption, we condemn the following errors:—That there is no election of particular persons to eternal life;—that it is unjust in God to choose some to salvation, and leave others to punishment;—that the election mentioned in the Scriptures is of nations, and merely to external privileges;—that it is conditional;—that the doctrine of election supersedes, or in any respect lessens, the obligation to use the means of salvation;—that any of the elect shall be lost;—that Christ is not the representative of the elect;—that there was no covenant from everlasting about the salvation of sinners;—and

that the righteousness of Christ was not the only meritorious condition of the covenant.

There is not a more common and fruitful topic of opposition and ridicule against the gospel, than the doctrine of divine decrees. The Bible is rejected altogether, because it contains the doctrine of election, and strong appeals are addressed to the feelings of men, on its implication of the divine character. It would not be difficult to establish this doctrine, as well as that of decrees in general, on the principle of the knowledge, wisdom, and supremacy of God. But this is unnecessary; the objection is, so far, an evidence that the doctrine is contained in the Scripture; and it were to be wished that opposition to it were confined to the enemies of revelation.

Socinian and Arminian writers enter fully into the views and spirit of the unbeliever on this subject. And all this is done with a view to vindicate the character of God, from the imputations of injustice and severity; while, at the same time, the persons spoken of, cast into the shade the doctrine of the divine sovereignty, and subvert the gracious character of the gospel, by suspending the enjoyment of its benefits upon human merit.

This doctrine is sometimes a matter of great difficulty to persons of tender minds. They perceive it revealed in the Scripture, and they are filled with a fear, that they may not be personally interested in election. Such persons ought to consider, that it is not their province to know the particular secret designs of God, respecting themselves or others—that the same objections are equally applicable against the

decrees of God, respecting the formation and government of the world—and that there is an inseparable connection between the end purposed, and the means leading unto it. To think, or to speak, of being saved without the means of salvation, argues ignorance of the doctrine—is a most guilty and unwarrantable presumption—and, when used as an objection against the gospel, is often the hollow pretext of a mind not feeling greatly the importance of salvation, and under deceitful aversions against the holy means by which it is enjoyed.

CHAP. V.

OF THE MEDIATOR—HIS PERSON, SATISFACTION AND MERIT—AND HIS DOMINION.

I. PERSON, OFFICES, INCARNATION OF CHRIST.

1. THE Lord Jesus Christ is the true God.¹ The Scriptures ascribe to him all the names, perfections, titles, works, and worship of supreme godhead, equally with the Father and Holy Spirit.²

¹ 1 John v. 10. This is the true God. ² Col. ii. 9. In him dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily. Phil. ii. 6. Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Isa. xl. 3. Prepare ye the way of Jehovah. Isa. ix. 6. His name shall be called the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father. Rom. ix. 5. Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Heb. i. 6. Let all the angels of God worship him. Rev. v. 11. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.—Con. VIII. 2; Cat. 11.

2. Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God.

This glorious personal distinction is ascribed to him—not in consequence of mediatorial office—not as become man—not as raised from the dead—not in the sense in which angels, men, or believers, are the sons of God—but on account of the necessary and ineffable relation he sustains to the person of the Father, a relation expressed in the Scriptures by the terms, “the only begotten of the Father,” but infinitely transcending the comprehension of creatures.

John i. 14. We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. John iii. 16. He gave his only begotten Son. John xx. 31. That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. Gal. iv. 4. God sent forth his Son. Heb. v. 8. Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.—Con. II. 3; Cat. 10.

3. The Lord Jesus Christ, the true God, and the only begotten of the Father, was chosen and set up, in the eternal purposes and counsel of God, to be mediator between God and men, the Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church.

Prov. viii. 22. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. 1 Pet. i. 20. Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world.—Con. VIII. 1.

4. In the fulness of the time the Son of God became man, taking into union with his divine person a true and perfect human nature, consisting of a material body and rational soul, wholly without sin.¹ — This human nature, appointed for him by the Father,² and miraculously formed by the Holy Spirit,³ was assumed by the personal voluntary act of the Son. He was born of the Virgin Mary, called Immanuel, and continues to be God and man in one person.⁴

¹ Gal. iv. 4. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman. 1 John iii. 5. In him is no sin. Heb. ii. 14. Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. Ver. 16. He took on him the seed of Abraham. ² Heb. x. 5. A body hast thou prepared me. ³ Luke i. 35. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee. ⁴ Mat. i. 23. Immanuel. Heb. x. 12. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.—Con. VIII. 2; Cat. 36.

5. In his holy humanity the Lord Jesus Christ received an immeasurable unction of the Holy Spirit, by which he was extraordinarily and perfectly furnished for the work of mediation.

John iii. 34. God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. Isa. vi. 1. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.—Con. VIII. 3; Cat. 42.

6. The human nature of Christ retains its essential properties¹ —remains in its actings perfectly distinct from the divine nature² —and is constantly united with the Son of God, never having had a separate subsistence.³ All its moral and mediatorial actings, being performed in a state of union with the Son of God, are ascribed to him personally, and derive their value and efficacy in the redemption of sinners, from the infinite dignity of his one divine person.⁴

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 16. God was manifest in the flesh. ² Rom. ix. 5. Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came. 1 Pet. iii. 18. Being put to death in the flesh. ³ Acts xx. 28. Feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood. ⁴ Heb. i. 3. He by himself purged our sins. 1 John i. 7. The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.—Con. VIII. 2; Cat. 38, 39, 40.

7. In contemplating this great mystery of godliness, we are to keep in view—the truth of the supreme deity of Christ¹ —the reality of his human nature² —the unity of his person³ —the continued distinctness of the two natures, although united in one

person⁴ —and the ascription of the properties and actings of both natures, in the work of mediation, to the one person; so that, by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature, is sometimes in Scripture attributed to the person denominated from the other nature.⁵

¹ Rom ix. 5. Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. ² Luke xxiv. 39. Behold my hands, and my feet, that it is I myself. Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. ³ Eph. iv. 5. One Lord. ⁴ 1 Pet. iii. 18. Put to death in the flesh. ⁵ Acts xx. 28. The church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood. John iii. 13. The Son of man which is in heaven. 1 John iii. 16. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.—Con. VIII. 7; Cat. 40.

8. The offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, are distinctly and emphatically ascribed to the Lord Jesus Christ, and are comprehended in the one office of Mediator. These offices are distinguished by their particular reference to God and man, and by the relative order in which they stand to one another; but they are all inseparably executed by the one incarnate mediator for the good of the elect. Christ is a true Prophet, revealing the will of God for salvation—a true Priest, making atonement by the sacrifice of himself, interceding for his people, and blessing them—and a true King, ruling in the heart, in the church, and in the world.

¹ Deut. xviii. 15. The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee. Psal. cx. 4. Thou art a Priest for ever. Psal. ii. 6. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. ² Zech. vi. 13. He shall be a Priest upon his throne. Rev. v. 6. A Lamb as if it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes. John xiv. 6. I am the way, and the truth, and the life.—Con. VIII. 1; Cat. 42.

II. SATISFACTION AND MERIT OF CHRIST.

1. THE determination to save sinners, results from the sovereign good pleasure of God ;¹ yet, in order to the accomplishment of that purpose, the holiness and justice of God, the tenor of his law, and the ends of his moral government, rendered it absolutely necessary, that a true and proper satisfaction be made to him for all the sins of those who shall be saved.²

¹ Exod. xxxiii. 19. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will shew mercy to whom I will shew mercy. ² xxxiv. 7. That will by no means clear the guilty. Heb. ix. 22. Without shedding of blood is no remission. Heb. ii. 10. It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.—Con. III. 5 ; Cat. 30.

2. Having for this end assumed a holy human nature, the Son of God was made under the law in the place of the elect¹ —he gave a perfect obedience to the precept of the law² —he suffered the curse of the law, the just for the unjust, enduring in his soul unutterable sufferings, which no creature could inflict or sustain ;³ and by obedience and suffering, conjoined in the same acts in his life, and perfected in his death, he has made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness.⁴

¹ Gal. iv. 4. Made under the law to redeem them that were under the law. ² Rom. v. 19. By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. ³ 1 Pet. iii. 18. Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust. Gal. iii. 13. Being made a curse for us. Luke xxii. 44. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Phil. ii. 8. And became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. ⁴ Dan. ix. 24. To make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.—Con. VIII. 4, 5 ; Cat. 38, 39.

3. Jesus Christ the true and great High Priest, has offered himself to God, one perfect sacrifice of infinite value;¹ on the ground of which he intercedes with God in heaven, in the behalf of his people, and imparts to them his gracious benediction.² He, in his priesthood and sacrifice, is the consummation of all that was prefigured and signified by the priests and sacrifices that were under the law: these, being in themselves of no value to take away sin or purge the conscience, excepting as they pointed to Christ, are now abrogated for ever by his death.³

¹ Heb. iv. 14. We have a great High Priest. x. 12. But this man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins. vii. 27. He offered up himself. ² Heb. ix. 12. By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place. ³ Heb. x. 1. The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices, which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereto perfect. Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.—Con. VIII. 5; Cat. 44.

4. Christ Jesus has not only made atonement for sin by his sufferings, but, by his obedience, has merited for his people eternal life.¹ The tenor of the law, the scriptural account of the righteousness of Christ and of the privileges of believers, confirm the doctrine of the meritorious obedience as well as satisfactory sufferings of Christ.² The law has a precept as well as a penalty.³ Jesus obeyed as well as suffered, and believers are not only pardoned the guilt of their offences, but are accepted as righteous, and made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.⁴

¹ Rom. v. 21. Even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. ² Rom. x. 4, & For Christ

is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them. ³ Dan. ix. 24. To make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness. Mat. iii. 15. Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. ⁴ Tit. iii. 7. That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.—Con. VIII. 5; Cat. 39.

5. From the dignity of the Son of God, the blood of Christ is necessarily of infinite intrinsic value;¹ it was, however, according to divine purpose, and according to compact between the Father and the Son, shed for the elect only.² They only enjoy spiritual blessings, and shall inherit eternal life, through the blood and mediation of Christ.³

¹ 1 Pet i. 19. The precious blood of Christ. 1 John i. 7. The blood of Jesus Christ his Son. ² John. x. 11. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. Eph. v. 25. Christ who loved the church and gave himself for it. Acts xx. 28. The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. ³ 1 Cor. iii. 21. All things are yours, things present or things to come, all are yours and ye are Christ's. Rev. v. 9. Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. 1 Tim. iv. 8. Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. 2 Cor. i. 20. The promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen.—Con. VIII. 5; Cat. 30, 31.

6. The preservation of the world in its present state¹ —the bestowment of temporal favours and the protracted forbearance of God² —the suspension and the shortening of judgments³ —the dispensation of the gospel, and its beneficial influence on society—and much outward peace⁴ —are consequences of the mediation of Christ, and of the special favour of God to the redeemed, in which men in general participate; yet the redeemed only enjoy the proper fruits of the death of Christ, and possess, by right acquired from him, the good things of the present life.

¹ Psal. lxxv. 3. The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Isa. xlv. 1. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight, and I will give thee the treasures of darkness and hidden treasures. 4. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect. ² Gen. xviii. 25. Then will I spare all the place for their sakes. ³ Mat. xxiv. 22. For the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. ⁴ Mat. v. 13, 14. Ye are the salt of the earth. Ye are the light of the world. ⁵ Isa. lxv. 8. As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sake, that I may not destroy them all. 2 Tim. ii. 10. I endure all things for the elect's sake. Acts xviii. 9, 10. Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace. For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city.

III. DOMINION OF CHRIST.

1. JESUS CHRIST, whose dominion as God is over all, equally with that of the Father and Spirit, has received, for the execution of his mediatory trust, a fulness of power and authority. He undertook the care of the church from the beginning of her existence, and the government of the world, in subserviency to her interests; and he is now, in human nature, exalted to all power in heaven and in earth.

John. v. 22. The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son. Isa. lxiii. 9. The angel of his presence saved them. Mat. xxviii. 18. All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.—Con. VIII. 8.

2. Jesus is King of saints, ruling in the hearts of his children by his gospel and Spirit, subduing graciously to the obedience of the faith, and preserving and furthering by his providence and grace, the kingdom of God within, which cometh not with observation.¹ He is King in Zion—being the only Head of the church, having authority in her as her

supreme legislator and judge.² — He has also a dominion over all things—over angels, principalities and powers³ —over all mankind⁴ —over the kingdoms of the world and their rulers⁵ —and over the whole residue of creation,⁶ —administering the vast kingdom of providence in subserviency to the display of the divine glory in the redemption of the church.

¹ Rev. xv. 3. King of saints. Psal. xlv. 5. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee. Luke xvii. 21. The kingdom of God is within you. ² Eph. i. 22. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church. ³ 1 Pet. iii. 22. Angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him. ⁴ John xvii. 2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. ⁵ Psal. lxxxii. 1. God standeth in the congregation of the mighty: he judgeth among the gods. Dan. vii. 14. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him. ⁶ Psal. viii. 6. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.—Con. VIII. 8; Cat. 45.

3. All intelligent creatures, in every possible relation, are placed in a state of subjection to the mediator, and are bound to acknowledge and obey his revealed will, when made known to them. The mediator possesses a power, not only of universal providential government, but of unlimited moral dominion, giving him a claim to the voluntary obedience of every creature capable of yielding it. His authority is extended to all angels and men, to men as individuals, and in all the relations of life, to communities and their representatives and office-bearers, to judges, to governors, and to the whole family of the nations of the world. He only is excepted who did put all things under him.

Phil. ii. 10. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of

things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. Psal. ii. 10. Be wise now therefore, O ye Kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish. Heb. ii. 8. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet; for in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. 1 Cor. xv. 27. But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him.

Opposed to the testimony of Scripture concerning the person and office of Christ, are the doctrines of the Arian and Unitarian, who deny that supreme deity belongs to Christ, and hold him to be inferior in glory to the Father; and of the Socinians who deny that Christ existed before his incarnation, holding that he is only a person of our own order, and that he was peccable, that is, might fall into sin—all which sentiments we most pointedly condemn, as subversive of the whole scheme of revelation.

We also condemn the following errors;—That retributive justice does not belong to God, and is inconsistent with his love and mercy;—that God may pardon sin by an act of his sovereignty, without satisfaction to his justice;—that Christ died only as a martyr and example, and did not make a true and proper atonement;—that he did not suffer the wrath of God, this being inconsistent with divine mercy and justice;—that he is not a true and proper Priest, who has offered a real sacrifice to God for sin;—that he has made an atonement for all men;—that believers do not enjoy temporal blessings through the mediation of Christ.

And it is greatly opposed to the testimony of the Scriptures, and to the glory of the Lamb that was slain, to restrict his mediatorial power to the saints, or

to the church of God. To admit any ecclesiastical or civil ruler to be vested with the title of the Head of the church, and to prescribe the doctrines of her faith, or institutions of her worship, on the one hand ; and on the other, to deny that the kings of the earth are, in their official character, subject to the Messiah, and bound to recognise his revealed will, and promote the interest of his kingdom—are errors equally inconsistent with the divine word, and incompatible with the true character and welfare of the church of Christ.

In the errors which we have condemned, on the person and work of Christ, we have in view, chiefly, Arians, Unitarians, and Socinians, who deny the proper divinity of Christ, ridicule the mystery of the incarnation, and reject the truth of the atonement : thus leaving nothing in the gospel on which a guilty trembling sinner can repose his confidence. Reconciliation to God by the death of his Son is an essential and distinctive doctrine of the gospel.

On the part of those admitting the doctrine of the atonement, views are entertained of its extent and design, inconsistent with the truth. Arminians hold that a general atonement has been made for the human race, in consequence of which, they have been brought into a state in which they may be saved. The doctrine of a universal atonement has been pled by imposing appeals to the feelings, founded on the goodness, the justice, and the sincerity of God. And it has been urged chiefly from those passages in which the terms *all* and *world* occur, regarding more the sound than the sense, as elicited from the true scope of the passages. The words *all* and *world* are often

taken in the sense of ‘all of every sort and without difference ;’ where to interpret them as signifying absolute universality, would involve absurdity. It is evident from the word of God that the design of the death of Christ was special : “ He giveth his life for the sheep. Christ loved the church and gave himself for her.” The interpretation of the words *all* and *world* as signifying every sort, when applied to those objects for whom Christ died, harmonizes with the above declarations ; whereas the sense of absolute universality cannot be reconciled with those passages in which the design of the death of Christ is represented as particular ; because we do not read of a redemption of the human race, and also a redemption of some out of every kindred, and people, and tongue. And we condemn the doctrines of the universal salvability of the human race, and of universal pardon, as unscriptural, and giving false views of the actual present condition of man, and subverting the doctrines of special and sovereign grace.

CHAP. VI.

OF THE REVELATION AND DISPENSATION OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

1. THE covenant of grace was revealed immediately after the fall of man.¹ All revelations of this covenant have been made by the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Prophet of the church. By a voice in Eden—by his appearances in human form, and otherwise to

patriarchs—by extraordinary interview with Moses on Mount Sinai—by the inspiration of the prophets—by his own personal ministry—and by the inspiration of the Evangelists and Apostles, he has given successive revelations of the divine mercy and grace to men.² And these successive communications of the divine will, in the Patriarchal, Mosaical, and New Testament ages, have been made effectual by the Holy Spirit, to the salvation of them that believe.³ Differing in extent and clearness, they have increased in light as they were multiplied, and now form one revelation of the covenant of grace.

¹ Gen. iii. 15. I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Heb. xi. 4. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. ² Gen. vi. 18. With thee will I establish my covenant. Gal. iii. 17. The covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ. Luke xxiv. 44. All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Gal. iii. 8. The Scripture preached before the gospel unto Abraham. ³ 1 Pet. i. 10. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you. 11. Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. 12. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you, by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Heb. xi. 13. These all died in faith. Luke i. 72. To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant. Acts iii. 22. Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren.—Con. VII. 5; VIII. 6; Cat. 34, 43.

2. The covenant of grace was made with Christ upon condition of making his soul an offering for sin, and bringing in everlasting righteousness;¹ but it has been *established, made, or dispensed*, to men, by

a free unconditional promise and testament.² The promises are yea and amen in Christ. The blessings contained in them, being purchased, and received by him in the behalf of his people, are freely disposed by promise, and bequeathed by testament; which testament, as it was ratified by his death, he lives to execute and administer. That which was a proper covenant between God and Christ, has become, by the death of Christ, a true and proper testament of Christ to the church.³

¹ Isa. liii. 10. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed. ² Eph. ii. 12. Covenants of promise. Heb. viii. 10. This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel—I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. Heb. viii. 6. Covenant established upon better promises. Gal. iii. 18. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise. ³ Heb. ix. 16. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.—Con. VII. 4.

3. In the gospel there is an exhibition of the plan of salvation by a Redeemer, and a call, invitation, or offer, addressed to all who hear it.¹ The obligation to believe is not made void by the sinner's disinclination and spiritual inability, nor is the universality of the gospel offer inconsistent with, or contradictory to, the particular purposes of God, or limited extent of the redemption of Christ.² Man's inability is of a moral nature, and does not arise from external physical restraint; and the infinite merit of Christ abundantly warrants the gospel call; the gospel offer fully authorising the acceptance and embrace of faith, without laying any obstacle whatever in the way of the sinner.³

¹ 1 Tim. i. 15. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. 2 Cor. v. 20. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. Prov. viii. 4. Unto you, O men, I call. Isa. lv. 1. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. Mat. xi. 29. Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden. Mark i. 15. Repent ye, and believe the gospel. Mark xvi. 15. Preach the gospel to every creature. ² Deut. xxix. 29. The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us. ³ John iii. 36. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. John vi. 37. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.—Cat. 159, 160.

4. Sinners obtain by faith an interest in Christ, take hold of his covenant, and actually participate in its blessings.¹ The believer, having an actual interest in the constitution and dispensation of the covenant, by relation to him who engaged in it, not for himself, but in the behalf of sinners, may say, in the language of David: "The Lord hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure."²

¹ Isa. lv. 3. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Isa. xlii. 6. I will give thee for a covenant of the people. Isa. lvi. 6. And taketh hold of my covenant. ² 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.—Con. XII. 3; Cat. 32, 69.

We condemn the following errors;—That there was no revelation of the covenant of grace under the Old Testament dispensation;—that there is not a free offer of Christ in the gospel to all who hear it;—that faith and imperfect obedience are the condition of this covenant, and of man's salvation. This is the sentiment of the Arminians, who hold, that in the

gospel a covenant is made, or offered to be made, with the sinner, upon the condition of faith and obedience, and that these now take the place of that perfect obedience, which the law originally required. But to make faith a condition in this sense, is to make another covenant of works, and to overturn the doctrine of faith and grace. Rom. iv. 16. *Therefore it is of FAITH, that it might be by GRACE.* Eph. ii. 8. *For by grace ye are saved through FAITH, and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God ; not of works, lest any man should boast.* We testify against these views as equally mistaken and dangerous.

CHAP. VII.

OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

1. THE Holy Spirit is a true and proper person, and not an attribute or influence of deity.¹ He is distinct from the person of the Father and of the Son, and is distinguished by a necessary personal relation. He is in scripture said to proceed from the Father, and is called the Spirit of the Son.² He is, equally with the Father and the Son, the Supreme God, the Creator, Preserver and Ruler of the world.³

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 11. But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he wills. John xiv. 16. He will give you another Comforter, even the Spirit. ² John xv. 26. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father,

he shall testify of me. Gal. iv. 26. The Spirit of his Son. ³ Gen. 1. 2. The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. Job xxxiii. 4. The Spirit of God hath made me. Mat. xxviii. 19. Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Isa. xxxiv. 16. His Spirit it hath gathered them.—Con. III. 3; Cat. 11.

2. The Holy Spirit, necessarily participating in the purposes and covenant of redemption, sustains an essential and glorious part in the sublime economy. ¹ He formed and endowed the human nature of the Saviour, and still rests upon him in an abundant measure.² And it is by his special influences that the dispensation of the covenant of grace is made effectual to the salvation of sinners.³ The blood of Christ was not more necessary to harmonize the divine attributes, than are the special influences of the divine Spirit effectually to apply redemption to the souls of men. The Holy Spirit worketh secretly, powerfully, supernaturally, and irresistibly, in the hearts of men.⁴ His work upon and in the faculties of the soul, is carried on by means of the word; yet is in itself so distinct and so essential, that without it no evidence of truth—no power of argument—no persuasion of love or of terror—no human eloquence—no combination of the most favourable circumstances, can be effectual in producing conviction, imparting illumination, or rendering the soul savingly obedient to the faith.

¹ Hag. ii. 5. According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, lo, my Spirit remaineth among you. Isa. lix. 21. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart from thee. ² Luke i. 35. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee. John i. 34. It abode upon him. Psal. xlv. 7. God thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. ³ Zech. iv. 6. Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the

Lord of hosts. ⁴ John xvi. 7. If I depart, I will send him unto you. And, when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. 1 Cor. ii. 5. My preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Eph. i. 17. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling. 2 Cor. iii. 17, Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.—Con. VIII. 8, X. 1, 2, 4.

3. By the Holy Spirit the revelation of grace has been made effectual for the salvation of sinners, from the earliest age of the church of God.¹ There is now a more full and clear revelation of his office and work; and the promise of the Spirit is the great promise of Christ to the church.² By appropriate means, and by his influences on the soul, he teaches, guides, sanctifies, and comforts the children of God; dwelling in them, the author of all good—the helper in all their infirmities—the witness of their adoption—and the earnest of their inheritance.³

¹ Gen. vi. 3. My Spirit will not always strive with man. Acts ix. 20. Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them. ² John vii. 39. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified. Acts ii. 33. Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. Gal. iii. 14. That we might receive the promise of the Spirit. ³ John xiv. 26. He shall teach you all things. Rom. viii. 14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Rom. xv. 16. Being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. John xiv. 17. He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. Gal. v. 22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Rom. viii. 26. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities. Rom. viii. 16. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. 2 Cor. i. 22. And given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.—Con. VII. 3, XII. 1, XVIII. 2; Cat. 32, 59.

4. Persons enjoying great external advantages, and who have never savingly believed the gospel, may, by aggravated iniquity, resist the common influences of the Holy Spirit in their minds, to their awful condemnation;¹ but his special and saving influences are irresistible.² Believers also, by negligence and sin, grieve the Spirit of God, and quench his influence in their souls. It is their duty to watch against such criminality, and to maintain a habitual dependence on the person, office, and work of the Holy Spirit.³

¹ Gen. vi. 3. My Spirit will not always strive with man. Acts vii. 51. Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost. Heb. x. 29. And hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace. Mat. xii. 31. The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. ² 1 Thess. i. 5. Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost. Psal. xlv. 5. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; the people fall under thee. Psal. cx. 3. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. ³ 1 Thes. v. 19. Quench not the Spirit. Eph. iv. 30. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God.

On this head we condemn the following errors;—That the Holy Spirit is not a distinct divine person;—that reliance on the influences of the Spirit is enthusiasm;—that man has an ability to do spiritual good without the Spirit;—that the saving influences of the Spirit may be finally resisted;—that there is no irremissible sin against the Holy Ghost.

Unitarians deny the personality of the Holy Spirit, and treat with despite the doctrine of his influences. Arminians, that they may vindicate their sentiments on the liberty and power of the human will, hold that the influences of the Spirit may be resisted. It is de-

plorable to think how this doctrine is not only neglected, but secretly ridiculed by many who have not openly disavowed Christianity.

CHAP. VIII.

OF THE INITIATORY BLESSINGS OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

1. All mankind are by nature children of wrath, and dead in trespasses and sins. In this state they are utterly incapable of producing that spiritual change of character, denoted in the Scriptures by the term regeneration, and without which they cannot enter into the kingdom of God.¹ The truths, arguments, calls, and motives of the gospel, may affect the rational mind, and move the natural affections; but the Holy Spirit alone can convince of sin, illuminate in the knowledge of Christ, and produce saving submission of will and of heart to the righteousness of God in the gospel.² This is regeneration, and is the commencement of spiritual life. The change is supernatural, spiritual, and universal. From the nature of the case, the sinner must, in the commencement of this life, be the passive subject of divine power; but he is instantaneously made alive unto God.³

¹ Eph. ii. 1, 3. Dead in trespasses and sins, and by nature the children of wrath. John iii. 3. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ² John i. 13. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. James i. 18. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth. Gal. ii. 19. I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. ³ Rom. vi. 13. Alive from the dead.—Con. IX. 3, 4; X. 1; Cat. 67.

2. Under the influence of the Spirit, by the call of the gospel, the sinner that is born again believes in Christ Jesus to the saving of his soul;¹ not only admitting the testimony of the gospel to be truth, but receiving the word of God with all readiness, and embracing and resting on Christ for salvation, on the ground of the gospel offer.² Saving faith, in its own nature, or in its immediate operation, includes the exercise of the will and affections in submitting to and embracing the Saviour.³ This faith is not simply believing that the gospel is true—nor is it a person's believing that he is particularly elected to eternal life, or that he has an interest in Christ—but a personal taking hold of Christ, on the offer of the gospel, for salvation.⁴ It does not necessarily include a subjective assurance of a person's interest in Christ, but an objective assurance that he is able to save, and, under this persuasion, the actual embracing or appropriating of him for salvation.⁴

¹ John v. 1. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. Col. ii. 12. Ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God. ² Acts xvii. 11. They received the word with all readiness of mind. John i. 12. But as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. ³ Isa. xxvii. 5. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me. Heb. vi. 18. Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Heb. vii. 25. He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him. ⁴ John iv. 42. We believe not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world. Heb. xi. 13. And were persuaded of them, and embraced them.—Con. XIV. 2; Cat. 72.

3. Assurance that a person is in a state of salvation is not inseparably connected with true faith.¹ This privilege being attainable by the proper use of

means, it is the Christian's duty to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure.² Faith is ascertained by its fruits—love, repentance, zeal, and holiness.³ The want of assurance may arise, not from rejecting the offer of the gospel, but from a person's doubting the work of grace in his own soul.⁴ Without excusing the indolence which is very frequently the cause of the want of assurance, it may be asserted that the truly pious are sometimes perplexed with doubts, when the presumptuous and enthusiastic are inflated with false confidence.⁵

¹ 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith. ¹ John v. 13. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life. ² 2 Pet. i. 12. Give diligence to make your calling and election sure. ³ James ii. 18. I will shew thee my faith by my works. ⁴ Isa. l. 10. Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. Heb. x. 35. Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. ⁵ Luke xviii. 14. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—Con. XVIII. Cat. 80, 81.

4. All believers are vitally united to the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit and by faith.¹ In consequence of this real, though mysterious union, they have not only a representative, but a vital, oneness with the Saviour—participate in the blessings of his death—receive divine grace from him as their living Head—have communion with him in grace and glory—and have fellowship with one another as members of the same body.²

¹ 2 Cor. v. 17. If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature. John xv. 5. I am the vine, ye are the branches. Eph. v. 30. For we

are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 1 Cor. vi. 17. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. ² 2 Cor. v. 14. We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead. Col. ii. 12. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith. Eph. ii. 6. And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Gal. iii. 28. Ye are all one in Christ Jesus. Rom. xii. 5. So we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.—Con. XXV. 1; XXVI. 1; Cat. 79.

5. Believers in Christ Jesus are justified.¹ In justification they obtain the full remission of all their iniquities, the acceptance of their persons as righteous with God, and a title to eternal life. The righteousness of Christ, his active obedience and voluntary sufferings, or his obedience unto the death, is the only meritorious ground of this privilege.² Justification is the act of God imputing the righteousness of Christ to the sinner believing in him. There is a necessary and intimate connection between justification and faith.³ The sinner is united to Christ by faith, and is thus interested in him as the Lord his righteousness.⁴ Justification is altogether of grace, and in no sense founded upon good works; these following and giving evidence of it.⁵ From the first it is complete and irrevocable.⁶

¹ Rom. v. 1. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² 18. By the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. Rom. iii. 24. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. ³ Rom. viii. 33. It is God that justifieth. Rom. v. 1. Being justified by faith. Rom. iv. 24. But for us also to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. 28. The justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. ⁴ Rom. viii. 1. There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ. Jer. xxiii. 6. This is the name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. ⁵ Tit. iii. 5—7. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to

his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour: That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. ⁶ Rom. viii. 33, 34. It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?—Con. XI: Cat. 70.

6. It is also the honourable distinction of those that are justified, to be made, by adoption, the sons of God; and to receive from him, as a gracious Father, the spirit of adoption, instruction, protection, provision, chastisement, liberty, and other privileges of children here, and an eternal inheritance hereafter.

Gal. iv. 5. To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 2 Cor. vi. 18. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Heb. xii. 7. God dealeth with you as with sons. Rom. viii. 17. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.—Con. XII. Cat. 74.

Believing in these truths, we condemn the following errors;—That water baptism is regeneration;—that regeneration consists simply in moral reformation;—that it depends on the free will of man;—that it is a result merely of moral arguments or persuasion;—that a mere acknowledgment of the authority of the Scriptures, or an assent to the truth of the doctrines they contain, is saving faith;—that there is no reception or appropriation of Christ in saving faith;—that an assurance of an interest in Christ is essential to faith;—that men are justified before God, by their repentance and obedience, or by their faith, regarded as a meritorious work;—that an unbeliever is justified;—that Christ did not fulfil the precept of the law as well as endure its penalty;—that justification is incomplete and uncertain till the last judgment.

CHAP. IX.

OF THE PRIVILEGES AND DUTIES OF THE COVENANT
OF GRACE.

1. It is the peculiar excellency of the constitution of the covenant of grace, that the duty of the Christian is secured as his privilege: the duty being in the covenant a matter of promise. As promised by God, it is a grace and privilege—as prescribed by him, it is a duty. Thus we find the commandment, “Make you a new heart and a new spirit;” and we have a corresponding promise, “and a new spirit will I put within you.” We have the precept, “Wash you, make you clean;” and the promise, “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.”¹ We have both connected in the words, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”²

¹ Ezek. xviii. 31; Ezek. xxxvi. 26; Isa. i. 16. Ezek. xxxvi. 25;

² Phil. ii. 12, 13.

2. Inseparably connected with regeneration and faith, is repentance unto life—a gracious principle wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit.¹ There may be convictions, alarms, and regrets, on account of the dishonour, loss, or pain connected with sin: but there is no repentance unto life, or toward God, without faith in Jesus Christ. Contemplating the divine holiness, and especially the love and mercy of God mani-

fested in the sufferings of Christ, the believing soul is led to hate sin, and to be grieved and ashamed on account of it in the sight of God; his painful convictions and alarms are succeeded by penitential sorrow, which works by love and hope in God, and by turning from sin unto God with a holy purpose of, and endeavour after new obedience.³ The blood of Christ alone, not penitence, is the ground of pardon.⁴ Repentance is not a transitory emotion; but a habitual principle wrought in the soul, the exercise of which the Christian is called daily to cherish, in cleansing himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the fear of God.⁵

¹ Acts xi. 18. Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. ² Mat. xxvii. 3. Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself. ³ Jer. xxxi. 19. Surely after that I was turned I repented. Zech. xii. 10. And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn. ⁴ 2 Cor. vii. 10. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death. Luke vii. 47. Her sins which are many are forgiven; for she loved much. ⁵ Eph. i. 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. ⁶ Psal. li. 3. My sin is ever before me. ⁷ 2 Cor. vii. 1. Having, therefore, these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh, and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.—Con. XV; Cat. 76.

3. Although believers are delivered by the death of Christ from the condemning and preceptive power of the law as a covenant of works, they are still under law to God.¹ The original obligation of the law is not made void, but established by faith: and believers are indispensably bound, by superadded obligations, to yield obedience to the law, as a rule of life and a standard of holiness.² United to Christ, they must,

in the strength of his grace, study universal conformity to the law of God; this being the original glory of man, the design of the death of Christ, and required by the obligations of gratitude and love. Good works are necessary to give evidence of grace, to express gratitude, to strengthen assurance, to edify the brethren, to adorn the profession of Christianity, to silence adversaries, to prepare for the fruition of God in heaven, and promote the divine glory.³

¹ Rom. vi. 4. For ye are not under the law, but under grace. ² Rom. iii. 31. Do we then make void the law, through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law. 1 Cor. ix. 21. Under the law to Christ. ³ Tit. iii. 8. These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works: these things are good and profitable unto men.—Con. XVI. 2.

4. It is the unspeakable privilege of those who are justified, to be also sanctified.¹ Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit, in and by believers themselves, whereby they are renewed after the image of God, and enabled progressively to die unto sin and live unto righteousness, and advanced unto the consummation of holiness, which will be the glory and felicity of man in a future state.²

¹ 1 Cor. i. 3. Christ Jesus is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification. ² 1 Pet. i. 2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit. 1 Thes. v. 23. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly. Eph. iv. 22. That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt. And be renewed in the Spirit of your mind: And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Rom. vi. 22. Ye have your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life.—Con. XIII; Cat. 75.

5. Justification and sanctification, though insepar-

ably connected, are distinct from one another.¹ The one has a respect to the state of the person in the reckoning of the law, the other to his nature and life. The one is perfect at once, the other progressive. The one is the same in all, the other is of different degrees. Though always to be contemplated in their connection and order, it is erroneous and dangerous to confound them with one another.²

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 11. Ye are sanctified, ye are justified. ² Rom. iii. 20. By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. Rom. viii. 1. There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Phil. i. 6. Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. —Cat. 77.

6. However externally conformed to the letter of the law, useful to society, or amiable in the eyes of men, the works of the unregenerate may be, they cannot be pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God, nor effect any thing toward their salvation.¹ The law is nevertheless obligatory upon all, and by the omission of its requirements or violation of its prohibitions, guilt is contracted. Yet no obedience is acceptable to God which does not proceed from a heart purified by faith, which does not accord to the spirituality of the divine law, nor is directed to the divine glory.²

¹ Heb. xi. 6. Without faith it is impossible to please him. Rom. viii. 8. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Hag. ii. 14. And so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer is unclean. ² Rom. vii. 14. The law is spiritual. Mat. xxiii. 23. These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. xxv. 43. Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.—Con. XVI. 7.

7. The best works of the saints in this life are defiled, and afford no claim of merit, or ground of glorying.¹ The unfeigned, though imperfect obedience of God's people is, from their relation to Christ, acceptable and well-pleasing to God; and though it cannot deserve the smallest favour, it receives a gracious reward.² The saints are imperfect in this world. Their sins are offensive to God, peculiarly aggravated, and provoke his Fatherly chastisements; which, nevertheless, are blessed by the Spirit, as means of turning them from iniquity, and of making them partakers of his holiness.³

¹ Psal. cxix. 96. I have seen an end of all perfection; but thy commandment is exceeding broad. Luke xvii. 10. We are unprofitable servants. ² Rom. xiv. 18. For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God. Rom. iii. 27. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. Rom. iv. 2. For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt. Heb. xi. 26. He had respect to the recompense of the reward. ³ Rom. vii. 23. I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind. Psal. lxxxix. 32. Then will I visit their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with stripes. Heb. xii. 10. That we might be partakers of his holiness.—Con. XVI. 6; XVII. 3.

8. Mournful observation and Scripture facts shew that the professors of religion may fall into a hatred and contempt of it, draw back unto perdition, and perish for ever.¹ And the saints of God may fall into grievous sins, and continue for a time under their power, to the great dishonour of God, the offence of others, and prejudice of their own souls;² yet the divine purposes, the constitution of the everlasting covenant, efficacy of the merit and intercession of Christ, and the abiding influences of the Holy Spirit,

render it impossible that any who have been called and accepted in the Beloved should finally perish.³ This doctrine gives no encouragement to indolence or security in the Christian life ; but, as revealed in the divine word, is a most powerful incentive to the study of universal holiness, and to press, by all appointed means, toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.⁴

¹ 1 John ii. 19. They went out from us, but they were not of us. Heb. x. 38. But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition. Mat. xii. 45. And the last state of that man is worse than the first. ² Mat. xxvi. 72. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. Mic. vii. 9. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him. 2 Sam. xii. 14. By this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. ³ 2 Tim. ii. 19. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. Jer. xxxii. 40. I will make an everlasting covenant with them—that they shall not depart from me. Heb. x. 14. By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. vii. 25. He is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. John xiv. 16. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. ⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 58. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

9. There is a glorious and indissoluble connection between the purposes, covenant, and privileges of salvation ; for whom God did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified : these are links of a golden chain which cannot be broken. Rom. viii. 30.

Believing in these important doctrines, we condemn the following errors :—That the unregenerate can

exercise evangelical repentance ;—that repentance unto life precedes faith in Jesus Christ ;—that repentance is the proper foundation of the pardon of sin ;—that believers are not under the obligation of the moral law as an authoritative rule ;—that the gospel of divine grace encourages inattention to holiness ;—that sanctification is not the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit ;—that the human will can accomplish sanctification ;—that there is perfection in holiness in this life ;—that a saint of God may at any time become totally destitute of grace and finally perish ;—that perseverance in religion rests wholly on our own resolution ;—that the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is inimical to holiness.

On the subjects of these two chapters there exists a great variety of error. The absolute impotency of man to effect his regeneration, is denied. Instead of viewing justification as an act of God, absolving the sinner from all guilt, and adjudging him to eternal life, on the ground of the righteousness of Christ, it is suspended on the condition of faith. It has been distinguished into *first* and *secondary*, the former grounded on faith, the latter on works. It has been denied, that it comprehends the forgiveness of future sins—the active righteousness of Christ and the imputation of it to the believer have been opposed—and it has been denied that justification is final. Against these false and self-flattering views of Arminians, we are constrained to give our decided testimony.

CHAP. X.

OF CHRISTIAN PRACTICE.

1. THE doctrine of God our Saviour is not only to be known, and believed, and professed, but obeyed and adorned.¹ The gospel of Christ displays its proper power, in the visible beauties of universal holiness.²

¹ Rom. vi. 17. Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Titus iii. 10. That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. ² James ii. 17, 20. Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead, being alone. Rom. vi. 21. Ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

2. The whole law of the ten commandments, the positive institutions of Christianity, and the practical precepts of Christ, his own example, and the approved examples of the saints, form the standard of Christian practice; to which those who believe in Christ are, in dependence upon the grace of God, to study universal conformity.¹ Christian practice embraces all our duties to God, to man, and to ourselves.² The violation of morality is inconsistent with Christianity; but mere external morality is not practical Christianity, nor evangelical holiness.³

¹ Rom. iii. 31. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. John xv. 14. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. 1 John ii. 6. He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. Heb. vi. 12. That ye be followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises. ² Titus ii. 12. Teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. Mat. xxii. 37. Thou shalt love the

Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38. This is the first and great commandment. 39. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. ³ 1 Cor. xiii. 3. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

3. Prayer in the closet, and the worship of God in the family, on the morning and evening of every day ¹ —reading the scriptures² —habitual reverence in our conversation, of the name, word, and providence of God³ —the sanctification of the Lord's day—the celebration of the public worship of God⁴ —the orderly observation, in their seasons, of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, belong to the visible practice of the Christian, as duties which he owes to God.⁵

¹ Psal. xcii. 2. To shew forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night. ² Acts xvii. 11. And searched the Scriptures daily. ³ Exod. xx. 7. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. ⁴ Lev. xix. 30. Ye shall keep my sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary. ⁵ Acts ii. 38. Repent, and be baptized every one of you. 39. For the promise is unto you and to your children. Luke xxii. 19. This do in remembrance of me.

4. While the Christian, in dependence on the grace which is in Christ Jesus, must study to mortify his members which are on the earth, cleansing himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, he owes to himself watchful care over his own life¹ —strict sobriety and temperance² —purity in speech and conduct³ —government of spirit⁴ —dutiful attention to his civil affairs⁵ —regard to his moral and Christian character, and to his privileges civil and religious⁶ —and unremitting attention to the best interests of his immortal soul.⁷

¹ Col. iii. 5. Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Eph. v. 29. No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it. ² 2 Pet. i. 6. And to knowledge, temperance. ³ James iii. 2. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. Mat. v. 37. But let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay. ⁴ Prov. xxv. 28. He that hath no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down and without walls. ⁵ Rom. xii. 11. Not slothful in business. Prov. xxvii. 23. Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds. ⁶ 3 John 12. Demetrius hath good report of all men. Eccl. ix. 1. A good name is better than precious ointment. Acts xxii. 25. Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman? 28. But I was free born. Gal. ii. 4. Who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus. ⁷ 2 Pet. iii. 14. Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace. Mark xiii. 37. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.

5. Under the obligation of the precepts, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” and “whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them,” the Christian owes unto his fellow-creatures, not only veracity in speech,¹ and integrity and equity in all his transactions,² but charity, courteousness, sympathy, help, protection, and other good offices.³

¹ Zech. viii. 16. Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour.

² Mark x. 19. Defraud not. ³ 1 Pet. iii. 8. Be pitiful, be courteous. Luke x. 36, 37. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise. Mat. v. 44. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust.

6. As the precepts of Christianity extend to all the common relations of life, so its principles and spirit ought to have their influence in the discharge of the

relative duties of the Christian husband and wife,¹ parent and child,² master and servant,³ ruler and subject,⁴ neighbour and neighbour.⁵ The Christian, in these relations, ought to manifest in his practice his subjection to the law of Christ, discovering by the love and fidelity with which he attends to his duty, that true religion affords the strongest motives and best security for the discharge of the relative obligations.

¹ Col. iii. 18. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. 19. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. ² 20. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord. 21. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. ³ 22. Servants, obey in all things your masters, according to the flesh: not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God. iv. 1. Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. ⁴ Rom. xiii. 1. Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. 3. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. 2 Sam. xxiii. 3. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. ⁵ Rom. xiii. 10. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour. xii. 18. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Tit. iii. 1. Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work. 2. To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

7. It belongs to the practice of Christians, to walk in the fellowship of the gospel,¹ by a due attendance on the private and public ordinances of religion,² a dutiful submission to those who are set over them in the Lord,³ the regular observation of the decency and order of the Christian church,⁴ and, in compliance with the new commandment, a faithful discharge of the stated and occasional duties of brotherly love.⁵

¹ 1 John i. 3. That ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly

our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. Phil. i. 5. For your fellowship in the gospel, from the first day until now. ² Heb. x. 25. Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together. ³ Heb. xiii. 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that must give account. 1 Tim. v. 17. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour. ⁴ Col. ii. 5. Yet I am with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. 2 Thes. iii. 6. Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly. ⁵ Eph. v. 2. Walk in love. John xiii. 35. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. John xiii. 34. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.

8. Christian practice is not confined to one branch of the divine precepts, or to some of them; but must extend unto them all, in their time, place, and due proportion. The obedience of the Christian should be universal.

Psal. cxix. 128. Therefore, I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right. 6. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. Luke i. 6. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Luke xi. 42. These ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone. Col. iv. 12. That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

9. The life of the believer should adorn the doctrine of God the Saviour, by manifesting the peculiar virtues and graces of the Christian character, in the fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness,—bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind. He must add to faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.¹ While he is diligent in providing

things honest in the sight of all men, he is to study to be crucified to the world; and as the Lord prospers him, to consecrate his gain to the God of the whole earth, by devoting of his substance to works of mercy, and to the support and extension of the Redeemer's kingdom.² He is not called to go out of the world, but should observe a conscientious, though not an affected or ostentatious, separation from it.³ He is not prohibited necessary and lawful recreations, yet he should study a particular tenderness and circumspection of conduct; denying himself to the vanities and sinful customs of the world; abstaining from even the appearance of evil; and endeavouring to maintain a habitual heavenliness of aim and pursuit.⁴

¹ Gal. v. 22, 23. Col. iii. 12. ² Pet. i. 5. ³ Prov. iii. 9. Honour the Lord with thy substance. ⁴ Rom. xii. '2. Be not conformed to this world. John xv. 19. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. ⁵ Phil. iv. 8. Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. 1 Thes. v. 22. Abstain from all appearance of evil. Heb. xi. 13. And confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth. Phil. iii. 20. Our conversation is in heaven.

We testify against the following practical evils, as incompatible with the purity of the gospel, and the holiness and circumspection of the Christian character:—The neglect of secret prayer, and of family worship;—the neglect of the public ordinances of religion; profane swearing in its various degrees and forms; performing, by vocal or instrumental music, for public entertainment, passages of the Holy Scrip-

tures, as is done in oratorios; or acting the most solemn scenes recorded in the Bible:—Profanation of the holy Sabbath, by idleness; pleasure walking; visiting friends; convivial parties; reading newspapers; attending coffee-rooms or other reading-rooms; receiving and answering letters of civil business:—Drunkenness, tippling; gambling; playing cards and dice; private or public lotteries; horse-racing; brawling and fighting; duelling; cruelty to fellow-creatures, or to the inferior animals; resentful and implacable spirit or conduct:—Unchaste conversation; immodest apparel; promiscuous dancings; theatrical exhibitions:—Idleness; all dishonesty between man and man:—Lying, equivocation, deceit, backbiting, evil-speaking, envious and malicious conduct.

We have enumerated some of the most prevailing practical evils; but it is impossible to specify every evil, and every shade of evil. It is matter of regret, that public sentiment and the discipline of the church, do not treat sins with more impartiality; many being overlooked which are as fit objects of reprobation and censure, as others which are viewed and treated as scandalous. And though much sin, by its secrecy, disguise, commonness, and through inadvertency, may evade the censures of the church, yet it is offensive in the eyes of divine purity, and is hurtful and reproachful to Christian character.

CHAP. XI.

OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

1. IN its most comprehensive sense, the term church includes all the elect whom Christ has redeemed with his blood, who have been, or shall be gathered into one in him.

Eph. v. 26. Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.
—Con. XXV. 1.

2. To understand the Holy Scriptures, it is necessary to distinguish between the visible and invisible church, because what is affirmed of the one cannot always be affirmed of the other.

John xv. 2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away. Eph. v. 27. A glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.—Con. XXV. 1, 2; Cat. 62, 64.

3. All true believers, savingly united to the Lord Jesus Christ, belong to the invisible church—the spouse, body, or fulness of Christ; have communion with him in grace and glory, and a real and spiritual fellowship with one another.

Rom. xii. 5. So then we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Eph. v. 30, 32. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.—Con. XXV. 1; Cat 65.

4. The visible church stands in an external relation to Christ, in the dispensation of the covenant of grace. It comprehends all adults, professing the

doctrines, observing the institutions, and obeying the precepts of Christ, together with their children.

Acts ii. 38, 39, 47. Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ—for the promise is to you and to your children—and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. 1 Cor. i. 2. Unto the church of God which is at Corinth.—Con. XXV. 2; Cat. 62.

5. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Living Head of every believer, and of the whole church, united to him by the Spirit and by faith. He also is the only King and Head of the visible church, having authority to prescribe the doctrines of her faith—the institutions of her worship—the principles of her fellowship, order, government and discipline.

Eph. i. 22. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church. v. 23. Christ is the head of the church. Isa. xxxiii. 22. The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us. Rev. iii. 7. He that hath the key of David; he that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth.—Con. XXV. 6.

6. The Lawgiver in Zion has not left his church to be organized and governed by the maxims of human policy, as expediency may dictate; but has appointed a definite government to his church, distinct from, and altogether independent of civil government.

Isa. ix. 6, 7. The government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice. Psal. cxxii. 3. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together. Tit. i. 5, 6. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city. Heb. xiii. 17. Obey them that have the rule over you. 1 Cor. xi. 2. And keep the ordinances as I delivered

them to you. 1 Cor. xiv. 33. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.—Con. XXX. 1.

7. The Lord Jesus has committed the government of the church, in subordination to his own authority and law, into the hands of Presbyters, or Elders, chosen by the members of the church, and regularly ordained. These elders are of two kinds, the elder labouring in word and doctrine, and the elder who only rules : and these are the ordinary and permanent rulers in the Christian church.

Heb. xiii. 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves : for they watch for your souls as they that must give account. 1 Tim. v. 17. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour ; especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. Acts xiv. 23. And when they had ordained [*margin*—with lifting up of hands had chosen them] elders in every church. Tit. i. 5. And ordain elders in every city.—Con. XXX. 2. Act of Assembly at Edinburgh, Aug. 27, 1647, sess. 23. Form of church government.

8. The Christian minister, or Pastor, is an ordinary officer in the church.¹ The supernatural gifts of the Spirit having ceased, it is proper that the minister be well acquainted with the original languages of the Holy Scriptures, with the principles of theology, and with the general literature and science of the times in which he lives.² He must give evidence of talent, soundness in the faith, and piety ;³ and he must be called by the people over whom he is set, and ordained by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. ⁴ It is his duty to preside in the public worship—to pray and praise with his flock—to read the Scriptures and expound them—to preach the gospel, and apply it for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness⁵—to administer the sacraments, and

church censures⁶ —to pronounce publicly the apostolical benediction⁷ —to catechise⁸ —teach from house to house⁹ —visit the sick¹⁰—and, along with the other elders, rule in the church.¹¹

¹ Jer. iii. 15. And I will give you pastors according to my heart.
² 1 Tim. iv. 13. Give attendance to reading. ³ 1 Tim. iii. 2. Apt to teach.
² Tim. ii. 2. The same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. ⁴ 1 Tim. iv. 14. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. ⁵ 2 Tim. iv. 2. Preach the word. ⁶ 1 Cor. x. 16. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? ⁷ 1 Tim. v. 20. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. ⁸ Num. vi. 23. with 2 Cor. xiii. 14. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ; and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, Amen. ⁹ Heb. v. 12. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God. ¹⁰ Acts xx. 20. And have taught you—from house to house. ¹¹ James v. 14. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church. ¹¹ 1 Tim. v. 17. The elders that rule well.—Form of church government. *Pastors.*

9. The elders who only rule, being chosen by the people, proved and ordained by the session, are to be associated as helps with the pastor in the whole duties of government, and to unite with him in the admission or exclusion of members—in investigating scandals and adjudging censures—in visiting the sick and the poor—in the official oversight of the congregation—and judicial deliberation on the public interests of the church.

Acts xiv. 23. And when they had ordained elders in every church, Rom. xii. 8. He that ruleth with diligence. 1 Cor. xii. 28. *Helps, governments.* Acts xi. 30. Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. Acts xv. 2. Apostles and elders.—Form of church government.

10. In every regularly organized church, or congregation, assembling for public worship and fellow-

ship, it is requisite that there be at least one pastor, with a plurality of ruling elders; these form the session, are vested with the judicial charge of the congregation, and are authorized to meet in the name of Christ, for government and discipline.

Acts xiv. 23. They had ordained them elders in every church. Mat. xviii. 15, 20. If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he shall neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen—whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven:—For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Tit. i. 5. Ordain elders in every city.—Form of church government. *Congregational assemblies.*

11. Deacons are ordained, upon the choice of the congregation, and are associated with the teaching and ruling elders in distributing to the necessities of the poor, and managing other temporalities in the church.

1 Tim. iii. 8. Likewise must the deacons be grave. Phil. i. 1. To all the saints which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons. Acts vi. 2, 3. It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables—look ye out men; whom we may appoint over this business.—Form of church government. *Deacons.*

12. The New Testament exhibits several distinct worshipping assemblies, with their regular office-bearers, as one church; and thus gives authoritative sanction to the principles of representation, subordination, and union, in the government of the house of God. The rulers of several congregations may meet by their representatives in a presbytery; presbyteries, again, in like manner, in synods; and synods, in a provincial, national, or even ecumenical assembly. Each of these courts is a consistory of elders, a pres-

bytery ; and the highest a meeting of them all by representation.

Acts ii. 42. They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. xxi. 20. Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe. Acts xiii. 1. Now there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers ; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen. Acts xix. 6, 7, 20. They spake with tongues, and prophesied—and all the men were about twelve—So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed. Acts xx. 17. He sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church. 25, 28. Rev. ii. 1. 1 Cor. i. 2. Unto the church of God which is at Corinth. xiv. 34. Let your women keep silence in the churches. Acts xv. throughout. —Form of church government. *Of classical assemblies.*

13. In the present circumstances of the church on earth, there must be distinct congregations, and distinct judicatories : yet according to the institution of Christ, the visible church is one among all nations. This principle ought, therefore, to be recognized, and as much as possible, kept in view in administering her government.

Eph. iv. 3, 4. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. 1 Cor. xii. 12. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 1 Cor. xii. 13. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free. 1 Cor. iii. 3. For ye are yet carnal ; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men ?—Form of church government. *Of the church.*

14. It belongs unto the elders of a congregation, as necessity and edification require, upon the choice of the people, to prove and ordain others to be associated with them in government : and it belongs unto a presbytery, upon the call of the people, to try and

ordain to the holy ministry, faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.

Acts xiv. 23. And when they had ordained them elders in every church. 1 Tim. iii. 10. And let these also first be proved. v. 22. Lay hands suddenly on no man. 2 Tim. ii. 2. The same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. 1 Tim. iv. 14. The laying on of the hands of the presbytery.—Form of church government. *Doctrine of ordination.*

15. Among the ministers of the gospel there is a perfect parity in the power with which they are invested; and among them and the elders that rule in the church there is, in respect of government, an equality of power. And this delegated power even in the highest judicatory, is not legislative nor compulsory, but ministerial, regulated by the law of Christ, and spiritual, being addressed to the conscience, and affecting only the ecclesiastical standing of the persons concerned.

Mat. xx. 25, 26. Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. Acts xx. 28. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God. Heb. xiii. 17. They watch for your souls, as those that must give account. 1 Thes. v. 12. Over you in the Lord.

16. All ecclesiastical courts have an intrinsic power, independently of all foreign authority, to appoint, continue, and adjourn their meetings, as they see cause, and to discuss and determine all matters within their province, and to give them full authority as ecclesiastical deeds, independently of the concurrence or sanction of the civil powers.

Acts iv. 19. Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. Gal. v. 1. Stand fast in the

liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.—Con. XXX. 1. Act of Assembly at Edinburgh, Aug. 27, 1647, Sess. 23.

17. The church must have explicit terms of communion, to which every member gives his assent. A perfect unity of mind about every object of thought is not to be expected in the present state. But Christians cannot co-operate for all the ends of christian fellowship, unless they be of one mind about the great principles of religion, and the institutions and government of the church. Terms of communion should embrace nothing but divine truth, and reject no scriptural truth for which the church has faithfully contended.

Amos iii. 3. Can two walk together except they be agreed? Phil. i. 7. With one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. Jude 3. Ye should earnestly contend for the faith. Rev. iii. 10. Thou hast kept the word of my patience. Acts ii. 42. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship. Phil. iii. 16. Nevertheless whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.—Con. XXV. XXVI.

18. It is the duty of every christian to enter into the communion of the church; and in its present divided state, while he prays for the peace, and seeks the good of Jerusalem, it is his duty to inquire what department of it adheres most closely to the Scripture rule, and to join in that communion which is most pure, in which he may best promote his own edification, and prove most useful to the kingdom of Christ.

Acts xxi. 47. And the Lord added daily to the church such as should be saved. 1 Thess. v. 21. Prove all things: hold fast that which is good. Psal. cxxii. 6. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. Because of the house of the Lord I will seek thy good. 1 Cor. xi. 2. Keep the ordi-

nances as I delivered them to you. 34. That ye come not together to condemnation.

19. Persons giving satisfactory evidence of knowledge, soundness in the faith, repentance of sin, and obedience to the precepts and institutions of Christ, are admissible to the fellowship of the visible church. Church rulers can receive only a profession of religion, and judge of the external evidences of its truth; but persons greatly deceive themselves and others, who seek membership in the church, without having believed in Jesus to the saving of the soul.

Acts viii. 37. If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. Gal. v. 22, 23. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. Acts xxvi. 20. And do works meet for repentance. Psal. xxiv. 3, 4. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity. Mat. vii. 20. By their fruits ye shall know them. 2 Tim. iii. 5. Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

20. All true believers have spiritual fellowship with one another in Christ. Christians may have communion with one another in what is common to them in their private Christian capacity. But ecclesiastical fellowship in the ordinances and privileges of the church cannot be maintained, in purity and power, without submission also to the government and discipline of the church. It is the design of church fellowship not only to promote spiritual edification, and prepare the saints for heaven, but to exhibit a system of sound principles, and to maintain the ordinances of the gospel church as they are delivered by

her Head, and faithfully to transmit the knowledge of them to posterity.

Eph. iv. 12. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body. Col. ii. 2. Being knit together in love, to the acknowledging of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. Phil. i. 27. Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel. Psal. lxxviii. 5. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our Fathers that they should make them known to their children.

21. Jesus has instituted discipline in his church. Heresy, immorality, and neglect and contempt of the ordinances of religion are to be proceeded against by judicial censures, to vindicate the honour of Christ, preserve the purity of the church, avert the displeasure of God, as well as to promote the good of the individuals concerned.

2 Cor. x. 8. Our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification. Tit. iii. 10. A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject. 1 Cor. v. 11. If any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one, no not to eat. 2 Thes. iii. 6. Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition which he received of us. Rom. xvi. 17. Mark them which cause divisions contrary to the doctrines which ye have learned, and avoid them.—Con. XXX. 2, 3.

22. It is competent to Christians in their private capacity, prudently and faithfully, to reprove one another: but the administration of church censure belongs exclusively to the authorized judicatories of the church. It admits of various degrees—admonition, suspension, rebuke, and excommunication, according

to the aggravations and publicity of the scandal, and the penitence or contumacy of the offender.

Rom. xv. 14. Able also to admonish one another. Mat. xviii. 17. Tell it unto the church. 2 Cor. v. 4. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ when ye are gathered together. Tit. iii. 10. The first and second admonition. 1 Tim. v. 20. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. Tit. iii. 10. Reject. 1 Cor. v. 13. Therefore put away from among you that wicked person. Con. XXX. 4.

We condemn the prevailing sentiment ;—That Christ Jesus has given no intimation of his will on the subject of the government of his Church, but has left it to be modelled by human prudence according to circumstances. And we testify against ;—all dominion usurped over the church of God by ecclesiastical or civil rulers ;—the blasphemous supremacy of the Roman Pontiff ;—the exclusive right of ordination, and of government over the ministers and church of Christ, claimed by Archbishops and Bishops ;—the headship over the church, ranked among the prerogatives of the British crown ;—and the union of civil and ecclesiastical offices in the same persons, as in the case of the Lords Spiritual, and of ministers of the gospel acting as justices of the peace. We testify against patronage, in presenting ministers to vacant congregations, whether exercised by king, by bishops, town councils, or landed proprietors ; and against the practice of selling or purchasing the right of patronage, either on the part of individuals, or of the members of a congregation. We also testify against submission to these encroachments on the privileges, and liberty, and spirituality, of the church of Christ.

We also testify against the practice of persons, while laudably interesting themselves in the erection of houses of worship and formation of new congregations, taking it upon them to present a candidate, or candidates for the choice of the people ;—and against the practice of permitting persons, on the mere qualification of contributing to the property, or renting seats, to exercise the privilege of choosing a minister. Although the continuance of these things be not vindicated ; yet they cannot be justified upon the principle of expediency, even in the peculiar circumstances in which a congregation is erected. In all cases the *initiative*, or originating movement, should be in strict accordance with the free and spiritual constitution of the church of Christ.

We testify against the lamentable relaxation of ecclesiastical discipline which so extensively prevails among the churches—by the admission of the ignorant, immoral, or profane, into fellowship—the conniving at, or but slightly animadverting on, heretical doctrines—the administration of private censures, even in the case of flagrant and notorious offence—and the substitution of pecuniary fines for public censures.

We must also testify against preaching the gospel, or dispensing the ordinances of religion, without an orderly appointment ;—and against ordaining ministers to preach, and dispense the sacraments, without powers to exercise the government and discipline of the church. And we also testify against those who hold ;—that real saintship is the only condition of church fellowship ;—that government or rule is vested in

the whole body of a congregation ;—that there is no ruling elder instituted in the church ;—nor any institution of a presbytery, or court of review ;—and that the government of the church is a matter of inferior importance, about which Christians are not bound particularly to inquire, or concern themselves ;—that church fellowship may be extended to all professing saints, whether or not they are objects of judicial oversight ;—and that occasional church fellowship may be allowed to those who cannot be received into stated communion, or held with those churches from which there is just ground of maintaining a separation.

On the subject of church fellowship we are anxious to guard against two opposite extremes. As it is not the province of man to search the heart, we account it both unwarrantable and impracticable to make actual saintship the ground of admission to the communion of the church. The visible church, although one in profession, is mixed in respect of real character, being a net in which good and bad are caught—a floor containing corn and chaff. On the other hand, as the special privileges of the church belong to the children of God only, it is the solemn duty of ecclesiastical rulers to guard with the utmost vigilance against the intrusion of unworthy persons. It is dishonouring to the Saviour, it tends to defeat one principal design for which the church has been erected in the world ; and it is exceedingly dangerous to the souls of men, when, either through negligence or with the view of extending a church, the solemn privileges of the house of God are dispensed to those who are man-

ifestly destitute of Christian character. It is therefore absolutely unlawful for church rulers to admit persons to the enjoyment of sealing ordinances, until they shall have obtained satisfaction by careful examination and inquiry, that they possess a correct knowledge of the doctrines of salvation by Christ, and of the principles of religion generally—that they are sound in the faith—and that in their deportment they are not only free from any charge of known immorality, but that they actually take on the yoke of Christ, by observing all his ordinances, in private, in the family, and in the congregation. Nor do we admit into the fellowship of the church, upon a general profession of what is alleged to be essential to salvation; the distinction between essentials and circumstantials, as it is usual to speak, it is impossible to draw; and though it were possible, it would be presumptuous to attempt it, in connexion with making any part of the revealed will of Christ indifferent in the Christian profession and practice. The distinction supposed is undefined and arbitrary, and does not apply to the Christian's duty. The doctrines, institutions, and precepts of the gospel, form a connected whole, reflecting the glory of the Saviour, conducing to the real interests of the church; and they are committed to her fidelity, to be preserved inviolate, exhibited, and transmitted, according to the measure of her attainment.

On this subject we must also testify against the practice of dispensing baptism to the children of parents who habitually neglect the Lord's Supper. The censures of the church are often made a matter of

mere formality, and by being administered in comparative privacy, do not give that testimony against sin, nor that vindication of the purity of the Christian church, nor that evidence to the church of the penitence of the offending, nor produce that salutary fear upon the minds of others, which should be contemplated in the censures of the house of God.

We cannot approve of the practice of admitting to the communion of the Lord's Supper, persons not professing the same faith, nor submitting to the government of the church. Catholic communion may, by an appearance of christian charity, commend itself to the feelings ; but it violates one design of the Supper, the joint profession of the name of Christ, the partakers of one bread being one body. Even the interests of practical holiness must be marred, when communicants are not followed with faithful inspection. Spiritual profit is to be expected in observing the ordinance, with a due regard to all its ends. And it is to be borne in mind, that individual edification is not exclusively contemplated in the ordinance. The celebration of the Supper is church communion, and a public profession of the name and cause of the Saviour.

CHAP. XII.

OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

1. **THE** true God is the only object of religious worship. Now made known in the glorious gospel,

he is to be worshipped, through a mediator, according to the prescriptions of his revealed will, and by the help of the Holy Spirit.

Mat. iv. 10. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan : for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. John iv. 24. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth. Mat. xv. 9. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men. Eph. ii. 18. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.—Con. XXI. 1 ; Cat. 109.

2. It is the duty of every Christian to cherish habitually in his heart the fear of God,¹ and to devote at least a part of every morning and evening, to secret prayer.² Reading the Scriptures,³ meditation on the word and providence of God,⁴ praise, self-examination, self-dedication,⁵ and fasting and thanksgiving occasionally,⁶ are exercises required of the private Christian, necessarily and intimately connected with the existence and growth of personal piety.

¹ Prov. xxiii. 17. Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

² Matt. vi. 6. But when thou prayest enter into thy closet. 1 Thess. v. 17. Pray without ceasing. Psal. cxix. 147. I prevented the dawning of the morning and cried. 148. Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate on thy word. Psal. xcii. 2. To shew forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.

³ John v. 39. Search the Scriptures. ⁴ Psal. i. 2. And in his law doth he meditate day and night. Psal. cxliii. 5. I meditate on all thy works.

⁵ Psal. cxvi. 16. O Lord, truly I am thy servant. ⁶ Matt. vi. 17, 18. When thou fastest, appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. Psal. xcii. 1. It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High.—Directory for Family Worship, Sect. I.

3. It is the duty of every Christian family to wor-

ship God in the exercises of praise, reading the Scriptures and prayer, in the morning and evening of every day. And the heads of families should enjoin and require the regular attendance of all the members.

Jer. xxxi. 1. At the same time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel. Psal. cxviii. 15. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous. Deut. vi. 6. And shall talk of them when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. Jer. x. 25. Pour out thy fury—upon the families that call not on thy name. Gen. xviii. 19. He will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord. Exod. xx. 10. Thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant. Lev. xxiii. 3. It is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings. Psal. lxxviii. 5. Which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children. Eph. vi. 4. Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Zech. xii. 12. And the land shall mourn, every family apart. Deut. xiv. 26. Thou shalt rejoice, thou and thy household.—Directory for Family Worship.

4. The members of the church ought to meet together in private, for devotional and instructive exercises, to strengthen the faith, promote the comfort, and quicken the piety and zeal of one another.

Mal. iii. 16. Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another. Acts xvi. 13. And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made. Col. iii. 16. Admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. Heb. x. 25. Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together—but exhorting one another.—Con. XXVI. 2.

5. The first day of the week, the Christian Sabbath, is to be sanctified, by resting from all civil labour and recreation, and by being exclusively devoted to the public and private exercises of religion, excepting in works of necessity and mercy. The Sabbath is a whole day from midnight to midnight, and is of universal moral obligation. It should be sanctified

in families. On that day children and servants are to be carefully instructed in the principles and duties of religion, in the family, as well as enjoined attendance upon the public institutions.

Exod. xx. 8, 10. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy—in it thou shalt not do any work. Isa. lviii. 13. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, &c. Mat. xii. 12. Wherefore, it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days. Acts xx. 7. Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them. John xx. 19. Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week,—came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.—Directory for Family Worship, Sect. VIII.

6. It is the duty of Christians to wait upon the ordinances of public worship, celebrated according to the will of God.¹ Persons who have been regularly sent, and these only, are authorized publicly to read and expound the Scriptures, and preach the gospel for the instruction and edification of the hearers.² Sermons ought to be delivered from recollection, after careful study, and in dependence upon the Holy Spirit.³ And the preached gospel is to be attended with diligence, preparation, and prayer, received with faith and love, remembered and obeyed.

¹ Lev. xix. 30. Ye shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary. ² Rom. x. 15. And how shall they preach except they be sent? Acts x. 33. Now, therefore, we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. ³ Acts xx. 7. Paul preached to them, and continued his *speech* until midnight. Tit. ii. 1. But *speech* thou the things that become sound doctrine.—Con. XXI. 5; Cat. 158—160.

7. Praises are to be offered to God in worship, with the understanding and the Spirit, in a grave and melodious manner, the whole congregation joining in

this part of worship. The Book of Psalms having been given by inspiration for this purpose, and being richly fitted to direct the individual and the church, in every variety of condition, is to be appropriated to this service.

Psal. xcv. 1. O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. Eph. v. 19. Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. 2 Chron. xxix. 30. Sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. The sweet Psalmist of Israel said, the Spirit of the Lord spake by me. Eph. v. 19. Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, (songs dictated by the Spirit.) Mark xiv. 26. And when they had sung an hymn. James v. 13. Is any merry, let him sing psalms.—Directory for Public Worship.

8. Prayer is to be presented to God, by the Christian Minister, as the mouth of the congregation, in a solemn and reverent manner, and in faith in Christ Jesus; the whole congregation joining in the attitude of prayer, and giving close attention.¹ It ought to precede and follow the preaching of the word. It ought not to be read from a book, nor servilely repeated from memory, but presented to God after thoughtful premeditation, and in dependence on the Spirit.² And that all present may join, it ought always to be in a known tongue.³

¹ Acts ii. 42. And they continued steadfastly in prayers. 1 Chron. xvi. 36. And all the people said, Amen. Mat. vi. 7. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do. 1 Cor. xiv. 12. Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. ² Rom. viii. 26. The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ³ 1 Cor. xiv. 14. For, if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. 15. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, I will pray with the understanding (with meaning) also. 16. Else, when thou shalt bless

with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen, at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?—Con. XXI. 34; Cat. 178—196.

9. It pertains to the office of the Christian Minister, immediately before dismissing the public assembly, solemnly to pronounce the apostolical benediction; during which the congregation should stand, and with reverence and faith wait on the blessing from the Lord.

Num. vi. 23—27. Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel—and I will bless them. Deut. x. 8. Separated to bless in his name. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.—Form of church government. Pastors.

10. The ordinance of Baptism belongs to the public worship of God. 'It is to be dispensed by an ordained pastor, to unbaptized adults upon their profession of faith and repentance, to their infant children, and to the infants of church members. ¹ Sprinkling with water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is the appropriate visible sign. Baptism is a seal of the covenant of grace, signifying regeneration, union to Christ, and participation of the blessings of the covenant. It ought to be administered without any ceremony of human device. It is not essential to salvation, nor is it to be regarded as equivalent with regeneration, nor as certainly imparting regenerating grace; but it is to be celebrated in obedience to the divine command, as a public sign and discriminating badge of relation to Christ, and distinction from the world, and as a special means of

grace. The preaching of the gospel, or other public instruction, and prayer, should accompany the administration of baptism; and, in ordinary cases, it ought to be celebrated in the presence of the congregation assembling for worship.² Baptism is not to be repeated.

¹ Mat. xxviii. 19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Mark xvi. 16. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved. Acts ii. 38, 41. Repent, and be baptized.—Then they that gladly received his word were baptized. Acts ii. 39. The promise is unto you and to your children. Mat. xix. 14. Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. Rom. iv. 11. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith. Gal. vi. 15. In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. ² Mat. xxviii. 19. Teach all nations, baptizing them. 1 Cor. xii. 13. We are all baptized into one body.—Con. XXVIII. Cat. 165—167.

11. Jesus Christ has instituted the Lord's Supper in commemoration of his death.¹ It is to be administered by an ordained pastor, who, having taken the simple elements of bread and wine, after the example of Christ, is to give thanks; then breaking the bread, and giving it to the members of the church, and in like manner giving the cup to all the communicants; pronouncing, at the same time, the words of institution, as Paul received and delivered them from the Lord, to shew the signification of the ordinance; and addressing appropriate exhortations, to direct the views, confirm the faith, and elevate the devotion of the communicants.² The elements undergo no material change in their substance, by being set apart to the service, but are to be used as external signs, assisting and confirming faith in the body and blood of

Christ, and representing participation of the benefits of the covenant of grace, bequeathed by the testament of Christ to the children and heirs of God.³ In this ordinance God confirms to the heirs of promise their interest in Christ, while they, on the footing of the covenant of grace, surrender themselves in solemn profession and engagement to the Lord. This ordinance is a precious means of furthering the spiritual life in the soul, a visible bond of fellowship in the church, and a public confession of the name of Christ. The Lord's Supper is a standing ordinance in the Christian church. When celebrated, it is to be observed ordinarily on the Christian Sabbath, but it is not an essential part of ordinary Sabbath sanctification.⁴ Special exercises of humiliation and self-examination are required to the worthy and profitable celebration of this ordinance.

! Luke xxii. 19. This do in remembrance of me. ² 1 Cor. xi. 23. For have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: And, when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For, as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. ³ 1 Cor. x. 16. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? Mat. xxvi. 26, 27, 29. Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it.—I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink new with you in my Father's kingdom. ⁴ Acts

xxvi. 7. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread. 1 Cor. xi. 28. But let a man examine himself.—Con. XXIX. Cat. 168.

12. It is competent to individuals and families to appropriate time to fasting and other religious exercises. When the divine goodness is remarkably withheld or expressed, when the divine displeasure is inflicted, continued, or removed, congregations, churches, and even nations, are called to the occasional duties of public Fasting or Thanksgiving. Such appointments, when made by lawful authority, are obligatory, and should be religiously observed. But, with the exception of the weekly Sabbath, there is no periodical holy-day in the Christian church.

Mat. vi. 17. When thou fastest anoint thy head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast—and thy Father which seeth in secret will reward thee openly. Joel ii. 12. Turn ye even to me with all your heart and with fasting. Neh. xi. 17. And Mattaniah was the principal to begin the thanksgiving with prayer. Psal. cxvi. 17. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.—Con. XXI. 7. Cat. 116.

13. The law of God, and not the dictate of conscience, is the supreme rule by which we are to be directed in offering worship. Conscience, instructed from the law of God and in submission to it, ought freely to offer to him the worship he requires, and no human being may prescribe unto it. Although the Lord Jesus Christ has purchased a glorious liberty to believers, yet, inasmuch as conscience is only a subordinate rule under law to God, none can, without manifest sin, under pretence of conscience or Christian liberty, reject any of the divine ordinances, or change or corrupt them, by mixing with them human

inventions. To plead for a liberty of this kind is to plead for licentiousness.

Rom. ii. 14. These, having not the law, are a law unto themselves, their consciences also bearing witness; and their thoughts, in the meanwhile, accusing or else excusing. 1 Tim. i. 5. The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience. 19. Holding faith and a good conscience. Gal. ii. 4. And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage. To whom we gave place by subjection, no not for an hour. Gal. v. 13. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only, use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh. 2 Pet. ii. 19. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption. 1 Pet. ii. 16. As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. James ii. 12. So speak ye and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.—Con. XX.

On the subject of the worship of God, we condemn the following errors;—that there is no obligation to maintain secret prayer, family worship, and private social prayer;—that persons supposed to be in a state of unregeneracy, ought not to be called to engage in the duties of prayer and praise;—that to worship God in any way that conscience may dictate, is the right of all men;—that all worship which is offered to God according to conscience is acceptable to Him: sentiments at variance with, and destructive of the obligations of the divine law.

We also condemn the following errors;—that the Sabbath is not obligatory under the New Testament;—that it has not been changed from the seventh to the first day of the week;—that the sanctification of the Sabbath does not require a total rest from civil labour and recreations, excepting in works of necessity and mercy, and that the keeping it holy respects only, or chiefly, the time of public worship;—and we testify

against the celebration of Christmas, or other festivals of the Papal or Episcopal church.

We also condemn the sentiments, and testify against the practice, of those who deny the suitableness of the Psalms of David to New Testament worship, and on this account introduce, into their place, songs of human composition.

We testify against those who hold ;—that water-baptism is not an institution of Christ ;—that the infants of church members are not to be baptized ;—that baptism is essential to salvation ;—that it necessarily imparts regenerating grace ;—that immersion of the body is essential to baptism ;—and we condemn the ceremony of crossing, and other superstitions of the church of Rome, in the celebration of this ordinance. And we testify against the prevailing practice of private baptism, and the administration of it to the children of the ignorant and scandalous.

We condemn ;—the transubstantiation of the Romish church ;—the consubstantiation of the Lutherans ;—the giving of the bread only to the laity ;—the celebration of the ordinance kneeling ;—and the promiscuous admission of persons to it, as inconsistent with the scriptural institution, design, and purity of the ordinance.

The persons and practices referred to, and testified against, under this chapter, will be readily recognized. The Roman Catholic, and Episcopalian churches—the Baptists, or more correctly, antepedobaptists—certain abuses among Presbyterians—and a prevailing vagueness of sentiment on liberty of conscience, are severally alluded to.

CHAP. XIII.

OF THE NATURAL RELATIONS OF LIFE, AND
CIVIL MAGISTRACY.

1. Christianity does not destroy those relations which have their foundation in the law of nature ; but reveals them anew, and brings them under the regulation of Christian, as well as of clear moral principles.

1 Cor. ix. 21. Being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ. Rom. iii. 31. Yea, we establish the law.—Cat. 124—133.

2. Marriage is an ordinance of God, instituted when man was in a state of innocence, and designed, in subserviency to the divine glory, to promote the mutual help and comfort of the individuals, and to serve other obvious purposes in society. It is a solemn vow, or covenant, between one man and one woman, to live together in mutual love and fidelity. To prevent abuses, and to give due solemnity to the ordinance, the celebration of it should be committed to duly qualified office-bearers. And from the Christian principles and duties necessary to be enjoined on such occasions, it is proper that, in all ordinary cases, marriage be solemnized by a regular Christian minister. The parties must not be within the degrees of consanguinity, or affinity, prohibited intermarriage

in the divine word. Marriage is inviolably binding on the parties, excepting in the case of adultery or of irremediable wilful desertion ; and can be dissolved, while both parties are living, only by a regular bill of divorcement. Although marriage is common to all sorts of people, yet Christians are under obligation, in entering into this relation, to connect themselves with Christians.

Gen. ii. 18. It is not good that man should be alone. Mat. xix. 4. Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female. And said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh. Mal. ii. 14. Yet is she the wife of thy covenant. Mat. xix. 6. Wherefore they are no more twain but one flesh. Deut. xxiv. 1. When a man hath taken a wife and married her. xxii. 16. The damsel's father shall say unto the elders of the city, I gave my daughter to this man to wife, &c. Lev. xviii. 24. Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things, for in all these the nations are defiled which I drive out before you. Mat. xix. 3. Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? They are no more twain but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery. 1 Cor. vii. 39. The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth ; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will ; only in the Lord. 2 Cor. vi. 14. Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers. Eph. v. 22. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 25. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.—Con. XXIV. ; Cat. 20.

3. Christian parents are bound, not only to provide for their children, and train them up for the employments of life, and in good morals ; but to dedicate them to God, pray for them, instruct them in religion, and prepare them for membership in the Christian church. Children are bound to honour and obey their parents in the Lord.

1 Tim. v. 8. But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. 2 Cor. xii. 14. But the parents for the children. Prov. xxii. 6. Train up a child in the way he should go. Eph. vi. 4. Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. vi. 1. Children, obey your parents in the Lord.—Cat. 129.

4. The principles of equity and mercy, revealed in the gospel, bind Christians when related as masters and servants, and should influence them in the performance of their respective duties.

Eph. vi. 5, 9. Servants be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ.—And ye masters, do the same things unto them—knowing that your Master also is in heaven.—Cat. 126—130.

5. It is the will of God, declared in the constitution of human nature, and clearly revealed in the Scriptures, that mankind should voluntarily associate together in civil society for their mutual help, protection, and happiness, in subserviency to godliness and honesty. Mankind, thus associated, should be governed by definite laws, and the administration of these laws committed to qualified rulers. Civil government is not merely the suggestion of necessity, nor the invention of man, like the arts and sciences, but a moral ordinance of God, for the divine glory, and individual and social good.

1 Cor. xi. 14. Doth not even nature itself teach you? Rom. xiii. 2. Whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God. Exod. xviii. 21. Thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness. 22. And let them judge the people. 1 Tim. ii. 2. For kings and all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.—Con. XXIII.

6. The Scriptures reveal the will of God respecting this ordinance of the law of nature : and it is the duty of all communities enjoying these Scriptures to submit to the authority of the divine word, framing their constitution, enacting their laws, appointing their governors, and regulating their obedience, by the certain moral dictates of this infallible standard.

Deut. xvii. 15. Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose. 16. And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests the Levites. Psal. cxix. 138, 144. Thy testimonies, that thou hast commanded, are righteous and very faithful. The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting. Hosea viii. 3. Israel hath cast off the thing that is good. 4. They have set up kings, but not by me. Rom. xiii. 1. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers ; for there is no power but of God : the powers that be are ordained of God. 2. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God ; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. 3. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power ? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. 4. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. —Cat. 129.

7. The constitution of the relation between rulers and ruled, is voluntary and mutual. The lawful appointment of civil magistrates is by the election of the people, and the consent of those that are chosen, with certain stipulations, according to Scripture and right reason, obliging both to the duties of their respective relations. To such magistrates Christians are bound to give conscientious subjection and obedience, in their lawful commands, to pray for the divine blessing upon them in their official character, to pay them tribute, and to defend them in the lawful exercise of their authority.

Deut. i. 13. Take you wise men and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you. 2 Kings xi. 17. And Jehoiada 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. 1 Sam. xi. 15. And all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the Lord. Rom. xiii. 5. Wherefore, ye must needs be subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. That prayers be made for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. Rom. xiii. 7. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due. Tit. iii. 1. Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.—Con. XXIII. 1; Cat. 127.

8. Nations are placed in a state of moral subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of the kings of the earth; and they are under obligation to acknowledge his mediatorial authority, and submit to his sceptre; framing their laws, appointing their rulers, and regulating their obedience, in agreeableness to the moral principles of the gospel, and in subserviency to the interests of the kingdom of Christ.

Heb. ii. 8. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all things in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. Psal. ii. 10. Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. 12. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Dan. vii. 14. There was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him. 27. And all dominions shall serve and obey him. Psal. lxxii. 11. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. Rev. i. 5. The Prince of the kings of the earth. Isa. xlix. 28. And kings shall be thy nursing-fathers. Rev. xxi. 24. And the nations of them that are saved, shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

9. The Christian civil ruler cannot lawfully be vested with a power in and over the church, as she

possesses an intrinsic and independent power from the Lord Jesus, and is not placed in subjection to any other. He may not, by his authority, call or adjourn her meetings—he may not interfere with her proceedings, when these do not injure the public peace—he may not prescribe to her a confession of faith, or forms of worship—he may not enforce the profession of religion by the sword—nor assume any manner of power or authority in the church of Christ. But it is his duty to see that the violation of the moral law—in open contempt of the being of God—in gross and public idolatry—in open blasphemy of the name of God—or in open profanation of the Sabbath—as well as by injustice, licentiousness, and violence, be duly restrained, as scandalizing to religion and the church of God, as hurtful to the peace and good order of society, and as provoking the displeasure and rebukes of the Almighty against the nation. He also ought to remove external impediments to the progress of Christianity—to protect the church in the enjoyment of her liberties, from the abuse and contempt of the profane and malignant—and make regulations for the external support and welfare of the church of Christ—but he must not assume authority, nor presume to legislate, in her internal concerns. In order to all this, the civil ruler must personally profess and exemplify Christianity, and officially give his power and his strength to the Prince of the kings of the earth. In certain states of the church and of the world, it may be difficult to point out the manner and extent, in which he may be, lawfully and constitutionally, authorized to exercise his power for the visible

interests of religion. Yet this principle is not, on this account, to be rejected. The Scriptures enjoin that kings shall kiss the Son ; and they prophetically exhibit a time when, without any improper blending of civil and ecclesiastical authority, each shall, in its own sphere, promote, and both, in a friendly manner, co-operate in advancing the glory of God and the interest of the kingdom of Christ, and the happiness of mankind.

Mat. xxiii. 10. One is your master even Christ. Mat. xvi. 19. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Eph. v. 23, 24. Christ is the head of the church. The church is subject to Christ. 2 Chron. xxvi. 18. It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord. Rom. xiii. 4. For he beareth not the sword in vain ; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. 2 Chron. xiv. 2. And Asa did that which was good and right. 3. He took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down their images. 1 Kings xv. 12, 25. and he took away the Sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols which his father had made. Exod. xx. 10. Nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. Isa. lx. 10. Kings shall minister unto thee. 12. For the kingdom and nation that will not serve thee shall perish. 2 Chron. xxix. 2. And he did right in the sight of the Lord. 4. And he brought in the priests and the Levites and gathered them together. 15. And they gathered their brethren and sanctified themselves, and came, according to the commandment of the king, by the words of the Lord, to cleanse the house of the Lord. Dan. vii. 22. And the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Psal. ii. 12. Kiss the Son. Rev. xi. 15. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and his Christ.

10. When Christians do not enjoy a constitution of civil society, founded on the basis of scriptural morality, and recognizing the interest of true religion, it is still their duty from a conscientious regard to the ordinance of God, as much as in them lies, to promote all the scriptural ends of civil government, by peaceable

deportment, and by the support of whatever is moral and praiseworthy, when they are permitted to do so, without being required to acknowledge the lawfulness of authority constituted on immoral principles. In nations not illuminated with the light of the Word, civil authority should be recognized when it does not violate the law of nature. In these nations the design of God by the institution of magistracy, as a moral ordinance, for the divine glory and human good, is not fully accomplished, nor can the chief purpose for which it has been placed under the feet of the Redeemer be secured. The introduction, and application of scriptural light should, therefore, be an object of earnest desire, and even of conscientious and prudent aim and endeavour. In parts of the world enjoying revelation, when a people in framing their civil constitutions and appointing their magistrates, overlook, reject, or relinquish the scriptures as the supreme standard, enact laws inimical to the kingdom of Christ, and favour the interests of anti-christ, the constitutions and authorities, becoming thus immoral and antichristian, cannot innocently be recognized. In this case, the Christian, having entered his protest, and continuing to testify against authority so constituted and administered, still regarding the ordinance of God as it is delivered in the Scriptures, will conscientiously perform things moral and just, and promote the peace and good order of society. To imposts, even of an oppressive nature, if not exacted expressly for an immoral purpose, nor required as a pledge of subjection to authority, Christians may submit, for wrath's sake. But

they cannot swear allegiance to, nor recognize as the moral ordinance of God for good, authority that is immoral and antichristian.

1 Pet. ii. 12. Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, 13. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. 16. As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness. Rom. ii. 14. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves. Jer. xxix. 4. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives. 5. Build ye houses, and dwell in them. 6. Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters. 7. And seek the peace of the city, whither I have caused you to be carried away captive; for in the peace thereof, ye shall have peace. Acts iv. 19. Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye. Rev. xvii. 14. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called and chosen and faithful. Hab. i. 12. O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment: and O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction. Neh. ix. 37. And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us, because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress. Mat. vi. 10. Thy kingdom come. Isa. i. 26. And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterwards thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, The faithful city. Num. xxiii. 9. Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Rev. xi. 3. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

11. Christians living in peace, and, in their private capacity, furthering the ends of civil government and good order, while they do not incorporate with the national society, and are submitting to certain disabilities and privations on this account, are nevertheless entitled to protection in their lives, property, and liberty, having contributed their proportion of the common taxations. Christians may live within the limits of the soil, and enjoy the protection of strang

ers within the gates, without being incorporated with the national society, or involved in the guilt that may attach to its constitution or administration. To compel them to do those things which are inconsistent with their declared conscientious dissent, would be cruel and unjust. In this case, it will be their duty to submit to temporal privations, rather than forego or contradict their testimony.

1 Tim. ii. 2. That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty. Exod. xxii. 21. Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him : for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Esth. iii. 8. And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, there is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom ; and their laws are divers from all people ; neither keep they the king's laws ; therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them. 9. If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed. Heb. xi. 36. And others had trial of cruel mockings, and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments. 38. (Of whom the world was not worthy) they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth. Rev. xi. 3. They shall prophesy clothed in sackcloth. 7. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

We testify against the following errors ;—That marriage is not an ordinance of God, nor necessary to parties living together as husband and wife ;—that vows of celibacy may be entered into ;—that polygamy is lawful ;—that marriage is unlawful to the ministers of religion ;—that a man may marry any of his wife's kindred nearer in blood than he may of his own ;—or, that a woman may marry any of her husband's kindred, nearer in blood than she may of her own ;—and that divorce is lawful in other cases than adultery or irremediable desertion.

More particularly, on the subject of civil government, we testify against the following errors ;—That civil government is not the moral ordinance of God ;—that Christians are not bound to submit to civil authority ;—that the light of nature is sufficient to direct man to glorify God in the natural and moral relations of life ;—that divine revelation is not the rule by which Christians ought to direct their civil conduct, even in nations possessing the Scriptures ;—that magistracy is founded in grace ;—that a government existing by the providence of God, and by the consent of the people, is, independently of its moral character or conformity to the divine law, to be fully recognized as the moral ordinance of God ;—that infidel, heretical, or immoral persons may be lawful civil magistrates, in a land enjoying the bible ;—that a magistrate, as such, has no concern whatever with religion, or the kingdom of Christ ;—that the repression of gross outward public acts of idolatry or blasphemy is persecution ;—that a magistrate may be constituted the Head of the church ;—that blasphemy and idolatry may be authoritatively and legally tolerated in a kingdom ;—that allegiance may be sworn to immoral antichristian constitutions ;—that prayers are to be offered up to God for the establishment of such constitutions ;—that Christians are bound to effect a change in the moral state of the nations by the sword, or to attempt reformation by other than moral means ;—that the doctrine of magistracy does not come within the province of the pulpit, and should form no part of a testimony for the truth ;—that it is lawful for civil rulers to sanction the sale or

purchase of human beings as an article of traffic ;— that it is unlawful, in any case, to wage war in defence of liberty or religion.

In the present day, it is, perhaps, unnecessary to say any thing on the exploded doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance. This is a doctrine of the Romish school ; and it has operated most prejudicially to the cause of Christianity, particularly in those countries where Christianity and Popery are not known to be different. The claim to indiscriminate and absolute submission, which has been set up by civil and ecclesiastical rulers, the one often supporting the other, has led many to disavow, and to reprobate Christianity altogether. And it has been attempted to support these unreasonable claims by an appeal to those passages which enjoin obedience, exhibited apart from those which describe the character of the powers and authorities to which that obedience is due. The legitimacy of existing powers has always been assumed, rather than confirmed by an appeal to scriptural authority. The principles of Episcopacy, acknowledging the superiority of Archbishops and Bishops, their subjection to the Crown, and close incorporation with the state, natively lead to the doctrine of passive obedience, and foster the spirit of arbitrary power. These principles have, in former times, led to the oppression, and even persecution to the death, of those who dared to try the claims of rulers by the infallible standard of right and wrong. Under the accusation of rebellion and treason, many of the saints have been put to death, because they would not acknowledge, nor give allegiance to unlaw-

ful powers, nor yield obedience to their unrighteous mandates. The tide of opinion ran high in this matter, and obedience was inculcated in the strongest, and most indiscriminate terms; while no care was shown to ascertain, by a scriptural test, the character of the powers for which this obedience was claimed. Recent political discussions have produced a considerable change in the public sentiment on this subject. It is matter of regret that this has arisen more from the current of political opinion, than from a direct regard to scriptural authority; many in the Christian community remaining strongly averse to bring the subject to the test of scriptural principle. The exceeding broad commandment of God embraces this branch of duty as well as others; and the Christian, esteeming all the precepts of God concerning all things to be right, yields himself to the divine authority, and is not ashamed when he has a respect to all God's commandments.

In this part of our testimony, we have in view the sentiments;—That “whatever power is set up by the majority of the people, and exists by the providence of God, is to be acknowledged and obeyed for conscience sake;—and that there is no distinction, in respect of obligation, between magistrates set up by the preceptive will of God, and such as exist by his providential will only; all providential magistrates being also preceptive.” The protracted argument of our fathers, on this subject, did not arise, as must appear from the history of the controversy, from strange fancies and abstract views, on their part, but from an endeavour to abide by the entire interest of

the covenanted reformation, and to give a faithful testimony against defections from it, in the state as well as in the church. Although the controversy led into abstract reasoning, we have not lost sight of the original object of their testimony on this subject—a dutiful adherence to the scriptural excellencies of the reformation, as embraced by the state as well as by the church. Recent discussions have brought this argument into greater publicity and popularity, in certain departments of the Christian church, than it obtained in former times. And, on this account, it may be less necessary to revive it, in all its bearings. While the general principle of the subjection of the nations to God and his Anointed is by many conceded and ably pled, it is also desirable that it were faithfully applied to the conduct of the nation at the Revolution, at the Union, in recent public acts tending to subvert our Protestant constitution, and to our present national character, as a means of pointing out our sin, and recalling us to the path of duty. And O ! how much is it to be desired, that persons, who are of one heart and of one soul in these matters, were so united, as to give unity and effect to their testimony, prayers, and endeavours, that the Lord may heal the breaches with which our land shakes, restore us judges as at the first, and counsellors as at the beginning, and make us again a “ habitation of justice and mountain of holiness.”

CHAP. XIV.

OF OATHS AND COVENANTS.

1. Swearing is an ordinance of God, founded on the moral law, revealed in the Scripture, and not abrogated in the New Testament. By an oath, the person is brought under a distinct, and superadded obligation. When lawful in their matter and manner, and lawfully required and administered, oaths are to be sworn to the glory of God, for confirming evidence, strengthening obligation, and terminating strife. An oath is to be taken in the plain and obvious sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation, in the name of God, with the lifting up of the right hand. It is an act of religious worship, and is a solemn appeal to the omniscience and retributive justice of God.

Deut. vi. 13. Thou shalt fear the Lord—and shalt swear by his name. Exod. xx. 7. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Mat. v. 33. Thou shalt not forswear thyself; but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths. Heb. vi. 16. An oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Gen. xiv. 22. I have lifted up my hand unto the Lord, the most high God. Rev. x. 5, 6. And the angel—lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever. 2 Cor. xi. 31. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—knoweth that I lie not. Num. v. 19. And the priest shall charge her by an oath.—Con. XXII. 1, 2, 4; Cat. 112, 113.

2. No man should be admitted to make, or to administer an oath in an official character, who does not

understand its nature, and who does not appear to know and fear God. Oaths are to be sworn only on just and weighty occasions, and with due solemnity and reverence.

Exod. xx. 7. 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. Eccl. ix. 2. The good—the sinner—he that sweareth—he that feareth an oath. Exod. xxii. 9. The cause of both parties shall come before the judges. Then shall an oath of the Lord be between them both. Num. v. 19. And the priest shall charge her by an oath. Deut. xix. 15, 17. At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established. Then both the men between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the Lord, before the priests, and the judges which shall be in those days. Exod. xviii. 21, 22. Thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, and let them judge the people at all seasons.—Con. XXII. 3.

3. Mutual oaths may be sworn by rulers and people, for the glory of God, and their mutual security—rulers binding themselves to put in faithful execution the laws of God—and people binding themselves to maintain and defend righteous rulers, in the lawful exercise of their authority.

2 Kings xi. 17. And Jehoiada made a covenant—between the king also and the people. 4. And Jehoiada fetched the rulers and took an oath of them in the house of the Lord. Eccl. viii. 2. I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God, or, *but according to the word of the oath of God.*—National Cov. Sol. League.

4. It is competent to the individual Christian, and it is his duty, to dedicate himself to God, by solemn vow, or oath. In this case a vow, or oath, assumes a Christian or spiritual character, and is not merely civil, or moral. It is the taking hold of the everlasting covenant of God, and engaging in the strength

of grace, to perform all the duties which it requires. No Christian may bind himself to do any thing which is forbidden in the word of God, which would hinder any commanded duty, which is not in his power, or for the performance of which there is no promise of ability.

Num. xxx. 2. If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word. Psal. lxxvi. 11. Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God. Isa. xlv. 5. One shall say, I am the Lord's. Zech. xiii. 9. They shall say, the Lord is my God. Isa. lvi. 6. Every one that taketh hold of my covenant.—Con. XXII. 7.

5. It is the duty of the Christian church, in her social capacity, occasionally, to vow to the Lord; embracing the covenant of grace, for the maintenance of truth, the observance of the ordinances of religion, and performance of all commanded duties, to confirm her unity, and maintain her stability in the Christian cause.

Exod. xix. 8. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. Isa. xix. 21. Yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord. Jer. 1. 5. Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant. 2 Cor. viii. 5. And this they did not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. Heb. viii. 8, 10. I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.—I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.

6. Nations, being necessarily under the moral law, and having received and embraced the Christian religion, ought, in their social capacity, to enter into solemn covenant with God, for the preservation of their liberties, and for maintaining the interests of the kingdom of Christ, as the surest basis of public peace and prosperity.

Dan. vii. 14. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him. Isa. lxii. 4. Thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. Psal. lxxviii. 31. Princes shall come out of Egypt: Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God. Rev. xi. 15. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ. Zech. ii. 11. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people.

7. The oaths, or covenants, of a church or nation, when lawful in their matter, and founded on the word of God, continue binding, until the design of them has been fully accomplished, and their obligation descends upon the posterity of those who have entered into them; which distinct descending obligation arises—not only, from the unchangeable obligation of moral and Christian duty—nor only from the social body remaining, virtually, the same moral subject, though the individuals are changed—but from the divine will, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. God may bring his moral subjects under obligation unto him, in whatever way he pleases; and it is no injury, but an advantage and honour, to have privileges thus entailed, with their corresponding obligations.

Eccl. v. 4. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it. Better it is that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow, and not pay. Deut. xxiii. 21. When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. Deut. v. 2, 3. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even with us, who are all of us here alive this day. Deut. xxix. 14. Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath. But with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day. Josh. ix. 15. And Joshua made

a league with them, to let them live : and the princes of the congregation swore unto them. Compared with 2 Sam. xxi. 1. It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites. Jer. xi. 10. The house of Israel, and the house of Judah have broken my covenant, which I made with their fathers.

We testify against those who maintain that it is unlawful in any case to make an oath :—we condemn the unnecessarily frequent, and gross profanation of this ordinance in the ordinary affairs of trade and commerce ;—the superstitious form of swearing, by laying the hand upon, or kissing, the Gospels ;—the appointment of irreligious men to offices in which they are called to administer oaths ;—and all oaths of allegiance to immoral and antichristian constitutions.

We must also testify against those who deny ;—that religious covenanting in the Christian church is a moral duty ;—that nations should embrace the interest of the kingdom of Christ, and vow allegiance to Him ;—and that the scriptural oaths of the church, or of the nations that have embraced Christianity, continue obligatory on their posterity.

The society called Friends, or Quakers, deny the lawfulness of swearing an oath in any case. In England and Ireland, an oath is administered by the person kissing, or laying his hand upon the Gospels or New Testament. This is a custom of heathen origin. It was adopted by the Romish church, and has been received from her by the church of England. The multiplication of oaths in civil business, particularly in custom-houses, and in the department of the excise, has long been matter of deep regret to Christian observers. There is reason to fear that there is not only an unnecessary and irreverent use of this

ordinance, but that thousands are involved in the guilt of perjury. But our testimony under this head, has a special reference to the *National Covenants*.

The National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League of Scotland, England and Ireland, held a conspicuous place in the memorable reformation, by which our land was distinguished. It may justly be expected that these national deeds should be brought into honourable and prominent view, in connexion with a testimony for the great cause, in behalf of which they were framed and sworn. Adherence to the grand object of these covenants, the scriptural reformation of the two great moral associations of Church and State, and to the obligation lying upon these lands, from these deeds, which were repeatedly renewed, forms a chief ground of our distinct ecclesiastical standing.

CHAP. XV.

OF A TESTIMONY FOR TRUTH.

1. EVERY Christian should be a witness for Christ. It is his duty to make a decided and public profession of the truths of his gracious Master, to the glory of God, the gaining of disciples, and the conviction of gainsayers.

Isa. xlii. 10. Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord. John xv. 27. And ye also shall bear witness. Acts i. 8. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you : and ye shall be witnesses

unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Mat. x. 32. Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. Rom. x. 10. With the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Heb. iv. 14. Let us hold fast our profession. 1 Cor. i. 6. The testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. 2 Cor. ix. 13. They glorify God for your professed subjection to the gospel of Christ.

2. The ministers of the Christian church, being set for the defence of the gospel, are doctrinally to state and defend the truths of the Scriptures, in particular opposition to the contrary and prevailing errors. And it is their duty, in conjunction with the helps and governments set in the church, acting in the name of Christ, and as the representatives of the church, to exhibit a public confession, or testimony, in behalf of the truths of the gospel, the ordinances of God, the institutions of Christ, and the universal interests of the kingdom of the Redeemer.

Acts xxvi. 16. I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness. Phil. i. 7. Knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. 2 Tim. i. 8. Be not thou, therefore, ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. Acts xv. 16. And the apostles and elders came together, for to consider of this matter. xvi. 4. The decrees that were ordained of the apostles and elders, which were at Jerusalem. Rev. ii. 2. Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars. 1 Tim. iii. 15. The church of God, the pillar and ground of truth. Zech. viii. 3. Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth. Isa. lxii. 10. Go through, Go through the gates: prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the high way; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.

3. This testimony should comprehend all the truths of the Bible, in so far as they have been ascertained.¹ In the discernment and profession of divine truth, the church has hitherto been only in a state of pro-

gress.² Her testimony should embrace all her past attainments, the truths which have been confessed by faithful martyrs, and sealed by their blood;³ the present truth or word of Christ's patience,⁴ together with a faithful exposure of prevailing errors.⁵

¹ John xvi. 13. When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. xv. 26, 27. He shall testify of me. And ye also shall bear witness. ² Phil. iii. 16. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. ³ Rev. ii. 13. Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr. ⁴ Rev. iii. 10. Thou hast kept the word of my patience. 2 Pet. i. 12. Though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. ⁵ 1 John iv. 6. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. Phil. iii. 18. Many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ. Rom. xvi. 17. Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. Tit. iii. 10. A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject.

4. The testimony of the church, although founded upon the Holy Scriptures, is, in various particulars, distinct from them. The Scriptures are inspired, infallible, perfect, invariable, and the foundation of the church's testimony. The testimony of the church is uninspired, imperfect, variable, and built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets; and because it must be adapted to the movements of error, and the evolution of the scheme of providence, it is progressive. And it ought to be exhibited in the form that is most eligible, and best fitted to promote the various uses of a testimony for the truth.

Rev. vi. 9. I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. 2 Tim. i. 13. Hold fast the form of sound words. Rev. xii. 11. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their tes-

timony. Rev. iii. 10. Thou hast kept the word of my patience. Col. i. 10. Increasing in the knowledge of God. Heb. vi. 1. Let us go on unto perfection. Isa. viii. 20. To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

5. The church is not at liberty to recede from a more clear and particular testimony, to one more general and indefinite. She ought not to suffer important truths, to the knowledge and profession of which she has attained, to drop from her testimony, even with the view of promoting union and enlargement: but holding fast that which is good, it should be her endeavour to go forward unto that state of comparative perfection, which there is reason to expect she shall attain, even on the earth.

1 Thes. v. 21. Prove all things: hold fast that which is good. Rev. ii. 25. But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come. Rev. xi. 7. And when they shall have finished their testimony. Isa. xxx. 26. Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be as the light of seven days. Rev. xx. 4. And judgment was given unto them—and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Accordingly we testify against the following sentiments:—That a person acknowledging Christianity may live without making any particular profession of it;—that the Bible is the only testimony of the church;—that creeds and confessions are of no use in the church, but are unwarrantable and pernicious;—that the church has nothing to do with the faithful contendings and testimonies of the witnesses of Christ in former generations;—that testimony-bearing is inconsistent with faithfully attending to the interests of practical religion in the soul;—that it is lawful, in order to enlarge the church and extend her

communion, to recede from a more particular scriptural testimony, to one more general and undefined.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church has been organized, on an adherence to the principles of the Protestant Presbyterian Covenanted Church of Scotland. These principles have been exhibited in the Covenants, Westminster Confession, Catechisms, the Form of Presbyterial Church-Government, the Directory for Worship, and in the Testimonies of the Martyrs ; and we believe them to be substantially founded on the Bible. When we specify these writings, we are not pledged to defend every sentiment, or expression, to be found in them. We have given a declaration of the scriptural principles to which we adhere. And while we have endeavoured to give the reason of our faith from the Holy Scriptures, we cheerfully refer to the testimonies of the Church of Scotland, in proof that these principles have been embraced by her, and of our approbation of her zeal and fidelity.

CHAP. XVI.

OF SCRIPTURE PROPHECY, AS AFFECTING THE CHURCH'S TESTIMONY AND PRACTICE.

1. BESIDES the light which the Scripture throws upon every subject of morals and religion, and upon the grand designs of Providence, it comprehends in it a scheme of Prophecy—a prospective outline of the whole duration of time, in relation to the kingdom of

Christ. It has pleased Him, who declares the end from the beginning, to give a prophetic view of the kingdom of Christ, from its commencement, to the consummation of all things. Besides what is scattered through the sacred volume at large, the book of Daniel and the Revelation of John exhibit a regularly digested scheme of divine prediction. In the latter particularly, the scheme of prophecy, as relating to the kingdom of Christ in the last days, is carried forward through its several stages, to the end of the world; with the design of affording increasing evidence of the truth of divine revelation, light and comfort to the saints in the study of divine providence, special direction in duty, and, by strengthening the faith, hope, patience, and zeal of the saints, to give particular preparation for the events foretold. These prophecies, besides announcing future events relating to the kingdom of Christ, embody in them moral and Christian principles, to direct the faith and practice of the saints.

Isa. xli. 10. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. Amos iii. 7. Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. 2 Pet. i. 19. We have also a more sure word of prophecy: whereunto ye do well that ye take heed; as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts. Mat. xxiv. 25. Behold, I have told you before. John xiv. 29. And now I have told you before,—that when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Rev. i. 19. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter. Rev. xiii. 10. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. Rev. xix. 10. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

2. It is the duty of every Christian, and of the Christian church, to study the prophecies—comparing

them with other parts of the divine word—carefully observing the movements of providence—and, in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, endeavouring to derive from them confirmation to faith, direction in prayer and duty, and patience and comfort under the most trying aspects of the divine dispensations. Rash dogmatical explanations, fanciful and illiterate interpretations, premature and sanguine expectations, and partial and political expositions, form no just objection, or ground of prejudice, against the study of the inspired predictions. The moral principles and Christian doctrines implied in them, equally with the other parts of scripture, are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. And although it is not for us to know the times and the seasons with perfect chronological precision, it never having been intended that the prophecies should be perfectly understood before the events, yet so much of their meaning may be learned by the humble inquirer, as is sufficient to give him present direction in maintaining a testimony for the truth, and to inspire him with patience and hope, while waiting for the events.

Rev. i. 3. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that keep the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein : for the time is at hand. Dan. xii. 10. But the wise shall understand. 12. Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and fifty and thirty days.

3. At this advanced period of the history of the world, we are sufficiently assured, by comparing the predictions with the events, that the apostacy described by

Paul, in his second epistle to the Thessalonians, and in his first epistle to Timothy, is that gross corruption of Christian doctrines and institutions, and abuse of ecclesiastical and civil power, which have so long existed in the Romish church. And there is ample evidence to prove that the same corruption is represented in the book of Daniel, and in the Revelation of John, under various striking symbols. There is no reason to surrender the position that was assumed by the faithful Waldenses, and afterwards by the whole succession of protestants: "That the church of Rome is the Babylon described in the book of the Revelation." These prophetic books ought to be employed, in connection with other parts of Scripture, in confirming the Protestant cause, and in giving authority to a faithful testimony against the perversions of Christian doctrine and institutions by the church of Rome. They are valuable, not merely for an ultimate confirmation of the truth of Christianity by their fulfilment in the events, but for present direction and comfort in the Christian testimony and practice, till the Lord shall consume that Wicked with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming.

2 Thes. ii. 3—12. 1 Tim. iv. 1—3. Dan. xi. 36—38. Rev. xii. xiii. xiv. &c. &c. Rev. xviii. 4. Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. xix. 2. They shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. 10. These two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

4. We believe that a period approaches, in which the kingdom of Christ shall triumph over all opposi-

tion, and have a universal diffusion, influence, and prosperity.¹ The Romish antichrist shall be destroyed, and shall cease not only to exert a malignant influence of any kind, on the ecclesiastical and social institutions of those countries where it has prevailed, but to have an organized existence on the face of the earth.² The Jews shall be converted to Christianity, and added to the church.³ The greater fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in.⁴ Mohammedan and Pagan nations shall embrace the religion of Jesus, and all mankind shall possess the knowledge of revealed truth. There is reason to believe, that the truth shall be felt in its illuminating, regenerating, and sanctifying efficacy, by the greater number of those who profess it. Knowledge, love, holiness, and peace shall extensively prevail, under the copious effusions of the Holy Spirit. Arts, sciences, literature, and wealth shall be consecrated to the service of Christ. The social institutions of men shall be erected and administered under the influence of scriptural principle.⁵ Oppression and tyranny shall terminate ; wars shall cease from the earth, and the nations be united in peace. The inhabitants of the world shall be exceedingly multiplied, and pure and undefiled religion shall exert supreme dominion over the hearts and lives of men, and diffuse universal felicity. This happy period shall be of long duration. It will be succeeded by a general defection from truth and holiness, and the prevalence of irreligion and crime, which will immediately precede the second coming of the Son of man from heaven.⁶

¹ Dan. vii. 14. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion. 27. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Psal. lxxii; Isa. lx. throughout. ² Dan. vii. 11. I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. 26. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. 2 Thess. ii. 8. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming. Rev. iii. 15. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. xix. 20. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him.—These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. xviii. 2. Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen. ³ Rom. xi. 27. For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. ⁴ Rom. xi. 15. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? 25. Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. ⁵ Isa. ii. 4. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. Isa. xi. 6—9. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, &c. Zech. xiv. 9. And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: In that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one. ⁶ Rev. xx. 4. And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 7, 8. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations. 11. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away.—Cat. 191.

Embracing these views of the nature and design of Scripture prophecy, we testify against;—those who neglect to read and study the inspired predictions, as if nothing certain or profitable could be learned from them;—those who refuse to admit the canonical authority of the book of Revelation;—those professing

Christians who do not point their testimony against the errors of the Romish Antichrist. We also testify against the introduction of the corruptions of Popery into either civil or ecclesiastical constitutions ; and particularly against the usurpation of a supremacy over the church by the civil magistrate—against the legal establishment, or authoritative toleration of Popery — against all contributions and alliances for its support and establishment—and against the omission of prayer for its final overthrow.

We would not be confident, or dogmatical, in the interpretation of unfulfilled prediction. At the same time, we condemn all interpretations of the prophecies of the Old Testament, which are inconsistent with the exposition given of them in the New, and all interpretations of scripture prophecy which are inconsistent with the established doctrines of revelation. We testify against those who interpret the predictions of the future glory of the kingdom of Christ on earth, in the sense of a temporal kingdom, which Jesus Christ is to descend to earth to possess and administer along with his saints, to be raised from the dead for this end : views incompatible with the nature of the kingdom of Christ, and with the doctrines of the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment, as set forth in the scriptures—to say nothing of the errors and extravagance, which have usually attended these sentiments in every age, in which they have, under some temporary excitement, been revived.

CHAP. XVII.

DEATH—FUTURE STATE—LAST JUDGMENT—
ETERNITY.

1. Death entered into the world by sin, and passes upon all men, because all have sinned. It is, therefore, in the first view, a legal consequence of sin : and though changed in its character to the believer by Christ, its universal prevalence is a standing monument of the displeasure of God against sin, and a solemn confirmation of the doctrine of Scripture, respecting the first transgression.

Gen. iii. 19. Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return. Rom. v. 12. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. 1 Cor. xv. 22. In Adam all die.

2. Man is possessed of an immortal spirit, which survives the dissolution of the body, and, retaining all its consciousness, returns immediately to God who gave it. The souls of men at death enter upon a state of felicity in heaven, or of misery in hell.

Eccl. xii. 7. The spirit shall return unto God who gave it. Mat. x. 28. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. Luke xxiii. 43. To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise. xvi. 22, 23. The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom : the rich man also died, and was buried. And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.—Con. XXXII. 1.

3. The souls of the righteous are, at death, made perfect in holiness, and are immediately received into the highest heavens.¹ There they are with Christ,

and behold the face of the Lord in light and glory, and wait the redemption of their bodies, which, continuing united to Christ, rest in their graves till the resurrection.² And the souls of the wicked are at their death cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, and their bodies are kept in their graves, as in prisons, till the resurrection and judgment.³

¹ Heb. xii. 23. And to the spirits of just men made perfect. ² Cor. v. 8. Willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. ² Phil. i. 23. Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. Rom. viii. 23. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. Psal. xvi. 9. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope. ³ Luke xvi. 23. And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Acts i. 25. That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. Jude 6, 7. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them, in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal life.—Con. XXXII. 1; Cat 86.

4. "God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." For this end Jesus will descend from heaven, in glorious majesty. Then there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust.

Those bodies which were deposited in the graves, shall be re-united to the spirits that left them at death; and the dead being raised, shall, along with all those who shall then be alive on the earth, appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.

Acts xvii. 31. xxiv. 15. John v. 28, 29. Marvel not at this: For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. 1 Cor. xv. 31. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. 2 Cor. v. 10. For we must all appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ.—Con. XXXIII Cat. 88.

5. The righteous shall be raised in glory, and, their bodies being fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, they shall be separated from the wicked, honourably acquitted, and adjudged to everlasting life, on account of the meritorious righteousness of Christ, and according to their works;—their works being evidences of their gracious state, as distinguished from the wicked, and of the degrees of their faithful services to Christ, as distinguished from one another. They shall be assessors with Christ in the judgment of men and angels. Whereas the wicked, raised to shame and everlasting contempt, shall be adjudged to everlasting punishment, on account of their guilt and depravity, and their punishment apportioned according to their wickedness.

Rev. xx. 12. And I saw the dead small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 1 Cor. xv. 43. Raised in glory. Mat. xxv. 33. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand. 34. Then shall the King say unto them on the right hand,

Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Mat. xxv. 28. Take, therefore, the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. 1 Cor. vi. 2. Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? 3. We shall judge angels. Mat. xxv. 31—46. Luke xii. 47. And the servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. Mat. xi. 24. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.—Con. XXXII. 2, 3; Cat. 89, 90.

6. The saints and holy angels shall triumphantly pass into glory, whereas the wicked shall be cast into the place of everlasting punishment. The blessedness of the righteous, and the punishment of the wicked, shall be everlasting, in the fullest extent of the meaning of the word, as expressive of duration absolutely without end.

Mat. xxv. 46. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. Job xxxvi. 18. Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke, then a great ransom cannot deliver thee. Rev. xiv. 11. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever. Rom. v. 21. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Thess. iv. 17. And so shall we ever be with the Lord. Mark viii. 14. Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.—Con. XXXIII. 1; Cat. 90.

Believing in these truths concerning the future and final state of man, we condemn the following errors :—That death is a debt of nature ;—that at death the soul of a man sinks into a state of unconsciousness and inactivity until the resurrection ;—that there is an intermediate state, or purgatory. While we condemn the sentiments held on those subjects by Socinians, Romanists, and others, we also condemn the views of those who represent the doctrine of the feli-

city of the saints in the state of separate spirits to be cold and shadowy, airy and fantastical—views which are inconsistent with the scripture testimony, and with the hopes and consolations of the saints of God. While the saints look for a consummated felicity on the appearing of the great God and Saviour, they ought not to be derided when they believe that, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, and that to depart and to be with Christ, is far better.

We testify against the following errors;—that there shall be no resurrection of the dead;—that there shall be no resurrection of the wicked;—that the bodies which shall be raised at the resurrection shall differ in identity from those which were laid in the grave;—that the wicked shall, after suffering punishment in hell for a time, be liberated, and brought to the enjoyment of happiness;—that the punishment of the wicked shall issue in their annihilation.

CONCLUSION.

HAVING thus exhibited our testimony, and given reasons of the hope that is in us, we trust with meekness and fear, we conclude with a few general observations.

1. We have endeavoured to found our testimony for truth on the word of God. In common with other professors, we put forth the plea, that our confession is *Scriptural*, and we submit it to this test. To scripture we make our appeal, we regard it as the first and

paramount authority. Nor do we reckon ourselves justly liable to the imputation of substituting the Confession, or Testimony, of the church in the place of the word of God, and of receiving, or calling upon others to receive it with a divine faith. No, the word of God alone is the foundation of faith. The testimony of the church is only the declaration of her faith in the truths of the divine word. It is adopted as compared with and found agreeable to the Scriptures, and is always subject to revision. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

2. We trust that our testimony is strictly *Evangelical*. It embraces the great doctrines of the gospel of Christ, respecting man's sinful state and character, the necessity, reality, and efficacy of the atonement, the fulness and riches of divine grace, the influences of the Holy Spirit for regenerating and sanctifying the human character, and the essential importance of faith in the christian life. While we hold the word to be the rule of the christian profession, we equally contend for precious faith in the soul, as the grand subjective principle of this profession, in the absence of which it is impossible to please God, and the strictest profession is hypocritical and vain. We solemnly enjoin upon the members of the church, the love of God and of Christ, as the grand impelling principle, the word of God as the directing rule, and the glory of God and the Saviour, as the ultimate end, in the profession of Christianity, and in every department of the christian life.

3. We regard our testimony as *Protestant*. In

the authority ascribed to the word of God, and in the light in which it regards its doctrines and institutions, it claims this character. The reformation originated in a testimony against the errors, idolatries, and usurpations of Popery. Against these the National Covenant was particularly directed, as were the faithful contendings of the reformers. We consider the testimony of the witnesses in western Europe, as specially pointed against the Romish Antichrist. Here is the faith and the patience of the saints. We lament that some of the evils of this system remain incorporated with our civil and ecclesiastical establishments, and involve us still in a sinful connexion with Antichrist. We testify against the legal establishment of Popery in our colonies, against unhallowed alliances with antichristian powers, against expending the public treasury in the maintenance of Popery, and the violation of our constitution, in the admission of its votaries to the legislative councils. We have no doubt on the subject of its final overthrow, but we cannot behold with apathy its recent visible increase in Britain. The general discontinuance of the application of the divine predictions to this system, and of particular prayer to God for its removal, is ominous. The aspects of the times, and the universal agitation which is shaking society to its basis, give emphasis to the divine call, "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his own soul; be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; he will render unto her a recompense." Jer. li. 6. "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.

4. Our testimony is also *Presbyterian*. A primary place is to be given to vital christianity; and it should be the first care of the christian, to be added to the Lord. But he has a social as well as an individual character, and it should be his care also, for his own sake, and for the glory of the Saviour, to be added to the church. In the performance of this part of christian duty, the injunctions of the Holy Scriptures are to be obeyed, as well as in matters of faith, and of personal religion. The institutions, communion, and government of the church, pertain to the law of Christ, as well as the doctrines and precepts of the gospel, and may not be regarded with indifference. They conduce, under the blessing of the Spirit, to advance vital Christianity in the soul; they give visibility and influence to christian character, and they enable christians to work together, in accomplishing the great ends for which the church is erected in the world. Provision is made for this purpose in the intimations of the Redeemer's will respecting the government of his house. We have stated, above, our reasons for adopting the presbyterial regimen; and regarding it, in its grand principles, as the will of Christ, we view it on this account, as important, obligatory, and, of course, more than any system of human device, conducive to the prosperity of the church. Alas that it should so often have been regarded merely as the suggestion of human wisdom, and a device of worldly policy, to be modified as circumstances may seem to render expedient! We cannot regard in this light

the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Presbyterianism we view as adapted to the nature and circumstances of man—as agreeable to the principles upon which society conducts its affairs, more or less important—as providing for the order, purity, unity, extension and perpetuity of the church—as happily removed from the despotism of episcopacy and the anarchy of congregationalism. By such considerations as these Presbyterian government is recommended. But we are constrained to recognize it on a still higher consideration, and to submit to it as the Institute of Christ, and as such, having the sanction of his high authority, and the promise of his special blessing.

5. The testimony which we have exhibited also embraces the *Civil relations* of man. It is not political, in the popular sense of this word; but we are not ashamed to avow the sentiment that the word of God is the supreme standard of the political conduct of men, in every thing respecting morality and religion, whether they be viewed individually, or in a corporate capacity; and this sentiment is founded upon the fact, that God has given in his word, plain, numerous, and diversified precepts, in reference to man's civil relations, which we are not at liberty to disregard. The acknowledged importance of this subject, and the difficulty felt in all discussions on it, would suggest the wish, that divine wisdom and authority should interpose their sanction. The goodness of God might foster the expectation that it would be so. And when he has interposed, it is due to the divine authority to receive and obey his will, and to the divine goodness to regard this will as making the

best provision for human happiness. Nor have the civil communities of men, or those who rule them, any thing to fear from genuine Christianity. It does not interfere with previous moral obligations and institutions, excepting in so far as it throws upon them a clearer light, and confirms them with its peculiar sanctions; it will supply the surest bond of social union, nourish and cherish the social virtues, afford the most salutary and effective check against the abuse of power, and promote obedience and subordination. It will give dignity to the throne, energy and stability to the government, and promote and diffuse peace and felicity among the people. Hypocrites, who are destitute of religion, may assume its garb to deceive and oppress, and persons under the influence of false views, may, in the name of Christianity, persecute and destroy; but these things are not to be laid to the charge of uncorrupted christianity, whose spirit breathes peace on earth, and good will toward men. Prevailing ignorance, immorality, infidelity, and division, may place society in a state that it cannot avail itself of the advantages to be derived from the ascendancy of the christian religion in the laws and counsels of nations. But is not such a state to be deplored? What Christian can suppress the wish and the prayer, that the principles of pure and undefiled religion may so leaven mankind, that they shall enact their laws, and appoint their rulers, in agreeableness to it? Why should we argue from a disordered state of things, and from prevailing abuses, against a principle which all christians wish to see adopted and acted upon, and which the word of

God assures us shall finally prevail? For communities and their rulers absolutely to neglect the interests of religion, and of the kingdom of Christ, is to be wanting in duty to the Redeemer, and to omit that which above all things is calculated to promote their prosperity. We avow, then, the obligation of the word of God, over the nations and their rulers, and the subjection of both to the Head of all principality and power. We have protested against the violation of this principle, in different particulars, by the nation at the Revolution. We still protest against abuses of every description ; but we dare not proscribe a sacred principle, which equally involves the divine glory, the honour of Messiah, and the interests of mankind. When we cast an eye upon the distracted state of the kingdoms, we cannot help regarding religion as that alone which can heal them, and the kingdom of Christ, appreciated and embraced, as that alone which can consolidate their peace, and union, and prosperity. “He shall judge thy people with righteousness and thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people ; and the little hills by righteousness. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish, yea, these nations shall be utterly wasted.” It is true, the special kingdom of the Redeemer is not of this world ; but it is equally true, that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

6. We have also to remark, that the great and leading truths of our testimony, have been embraced *in solemn covenant* with God. Ours is a testimony

for the covenanted Reformation in Britain and Ireland. Divine truth has, in itself, a supreme authority over all to whom it is revealed. It has a claim to be believed with the heart and confessed with the mouth. But a distinct and superadded obligation arises from a solemn profession and engagement. This obligation is recognized in the word of God, in the transactions between man and man, and in those between God and man. It is specially brought into view in the transactions between God and Israel, in the capacities of a church and a commonwealth: the successive generations of which were held identified with their predecessors, both in respect of privilege and obligation. "He found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us. He turned the sea into dry land. They went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." Hos. xii. 4. Psal. lxvi. 6. Deut. v. 2, 3. How can posterity claim privileges, and plead promises, if they cast obligations behind their back?

Our fathers in the ages that are past consulted not only for themselves but for posterity, in the reformation which they achieved, and to the prosecution of which they pledged themselves. In the national covenant of Scotland, the errors, idolatries, and tyranny of Rome, were renounced, and a solemn pledge given to defend and preserve the Reformed religion. In the Solemn League, a similar pledge was given for the preservation of the reformed religion in the church of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and gov-

ernment, against common enemies, and the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland, according to the word of God. The National Covenant of Scotland was directed against Popery, and the Solemn League and Covenant was specially directed against Prelacy, or the government of the church by Archbishops, Bishops, and all other unauthorized officers belonging to that hierarchy. Viewing Popery and Prelacy in the light of the Scriptures, we find them condemned by their letter and spirit; and contemplating them in the light of history and observation, we know that they have exercised, and do exercise, a most pernicious influence upon the church, and upon society. Our forefathers were warranted, from the evil character and tendencies of these systems, to renounce them as they did; and they were loudly called by the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed, to put themselves in an attitude of defence against that ascendancy which these systems sought, plotted, and attempted to obtain, under the secret countenance of rank, and wealth, and power. In doing so they did well; and we owe to them, under God, our present civil and religious liberties. As we profess to identify ourselves with the generations that are past, in their covenants, and in their subsequent contendings for the truth, so we should recognize and feel the obligation of truth, and of vows. These covenants have been treated with the utmost contempt, and those adhering to them persecuted unto death; and even when Providence did put a stop to bloody persecution, the nation set them aside, and the church suffered them to fall into neglect. We fear to participate in the

guilt of this conduct; and we lift our testimony against the sin; and we call upon ourselves and others to remember that the God with whom we have to do, is the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him and keep his commandments, and the jealous God who visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate him; a God who brings his sword, or other instrument of his displeasure, to avenge the quarrel of his covenant. Shall we break the covenant and escape?

7. Our testimony has been *sealed with the blood of faithful martyrs*. This indeed is not the first consideration by which any doctrine is commended to our approbation. A martyr's blood can give no authority to error. But when scriptural truth is held fast to the death, the blood of martyrs supplies a special obligation. "The blood of thy martyr Stephen." "Antipas was my faithful martyr." It cannot be denied that our land is stained with martyrs' blood. Without going back to the period of the reformation from Popery, we refer to the blood that was shed from the time of the restoration of the 2d Charles, till the Revolution, comprehending a period of twenty-eight years, during which it is computed, eighteen thousand Presbyterians were subjected to severe sufferings. And for what did they suffer? They could not acknowledge the supremacy which the king had usurped over the church, and which was confirmed to him by national acts—they could not submit to the Episcopal hierarchy and superstitions—they could not re-

nounce, as treasonable and unlawful, the covenants in which prelacy had been abjured—they could not give allegiance to power vested with supremacy over the church, depriving her of her liberties, and persecuting her members to the death. The page of impartial history testifies that these were the chief grounds on account of which the martyrs suffered. Their blood was shed like water in our land. The adherents to episcopacy, and the flatterers of royalty, basking in its sunshine, may chime the stale charges of rebellion and treason, and contrive apologies for a barbarous persecution, which should make them blush, and feel appalled; but these things will no longer deceive. The presbyterians in Scotland know, or should know, and feel otherwise. And the moral and scriptural question in connexion with this subject is, At whose hands is this blood to be required? Has the nation repented of it, has the professing church of God given a faithful testimony against it? or do we in days of comparative ease remain silent, and content ourselves with building the tombs and garnishing the sepulchres of the righteous, and saying, if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets? The subject is solemn. The moral Ruler makes inquisition for blood. He will avenge the blood of his servants. The lapse of a century of years or more will not remove the guilt of shedding innocent and righteous blood, nor exempt posterity, if found partakers in it, from the consequences. Blood cries to God from the ground, and will continue to cry till it is heard. And if God do not find

repentance, we may expect that he will assuredly avenge the blood of his servants.

8. We have yet to remark, that important truths in our testimony have been *publicly departed from*, and the cause of the reformation seriously injured. This is, indeed, the immediate occasion of our assuming, and occupying our position of Dissent. Believing it to be our duty to identify ourselves with our fathers, in times of reformation, and in times of suffering for the truths of Christ, we are constrained, from conviction, to adhere to the views of the minority, who dissented from the conduct of the nation and the church at the Revolution. Not to say any thing here of the sin of overlooking entirely the acts of the Reforming Scottish Parliament, and of leaving them under the degradation of an infamous rescission, we cannot shut our eyes from the fact, that in direct opposition to the public covenants, to the word of God upon which they were founded, and to the struggles and blood of the martyrs, Prelacy was re-established in England and Ireland, and the crown of Britain re-invested with supremacy over the church. We also disapprove of the Church of Scotland having received her presbyterian Constitution, and her Confession, from the state, instead of acting on her own intrinsical authority, and immediately recognizing the supremacy of Jesus and of his law. We disapprove of her refusing to recognize the work of God in the reformation, commencing in the year 1638, and of her not condemning its subsequent sinful overthrow, and the cruel persecution of those who adhered to it. The civil supremacy over the church was not condemned, nor

the exclusive headship of Christ asserted, as they should have been. The public covenants were not acknowledged; and after a short time, the liberty of the church, in the election of her ministers, was timidly and faithlessly surrendered into foreign hands. The evils resulting from these departures from scriptural truth and reformation have been great, and continue still to be felt; and they loudly call, "Remember whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works." We rejoice to observe that the minds of many are now awakened to these things, and shall still more rejoice to see faithful efforts prosecuted till they shall be crowned with success, and the scattered friends of the Redeemer rallied, and united under one standard for his interest. We cannot view the re-establishment of episcopacy, and of the civil supremacy over the church, the neglect of the public covenants, and the surrender of the church's liberty, as minor concerns. A dissent, under a testimony for the truth, however painful in itself, we still consider to be our present duty, and we view it as intimately connected with the glory of Christ, the good of Zion, the prosperity of our country, and the happiness of man.

9. In closing our general observations, we beg to remark, that we view the principles which we have exhibited, as forming an excellent *ground-work for further reformation*. Attached as we are to the Reformation, we do not hold it out as perfection. The word of God is perfect. It admits of no improvement. We may neither add to it, nor diminish from it, nor change it in any way. It is not so with the Reforma-

tion. As compared with the state of religion in these lands, antecedently to its commencement, it was a great attainment. And when we compare it with the state of things which has succeeded, it retains a decided superiority ; and it were equally the duty and the wisdom of the church and nation to return to it. Still the reformation was not perfect. It had been little more than begun. There was not time to have it completed and consolidated, when, in the mysteries of Providence, it was stopped, undermined, and persecuted. But it contains, in our views, the great elementary principles which lie at the basis of the prosperity which we expect in future days. It provides for the duty and interest of man as an individual, and as a member of society. It provides for the prosperity of the church, and of the kingdoms of the earth. And it provides for all this, by subjecting men, in all relations, to a perfect rule, and to one rightful Sovereign ; and by bringing the original law of love to God and to man into full operation, in appropriate institutions, offices, relations, and duties, it promises to bind up the wound of the daughter of Zion, and to heal the breaches of society, under the reign of Him who is the Truth and Peace. This blessed consummation may the Lord hasten in his time !

We make no apology for exhibiting our Testimony, having acted from a conviction of truth, and a sense of duty. Other Christians will allow to us the liberty which they claim for themselves, of professing that system of divine truth which we deem to be in nearest accordance with the supreme standard, and of adher-

ing to it, till one more comprehensive and faithful shall appear. The doctrines of our testimony have not the charm of novelty ; they have been confessed by our fathers, and some of them sealed with their blood. It is not, however, their antiquity, nor the blood of our fathers, but their accordance with the Scriptures, which is the primary ground of our attachment.—In making this profession, we arrogate to ourselves no superiority in Christian character and attainment ; as if we were holier and did more than others. We appreciate the talent, piety, and benevolence of Christians in other churches. We lament the divisions which unhappily prevail, and would mourn over them as tokens of the divine displeasure. And, while we assign a reason for the preference which we give to the reformation cause, we are humbled, when we behold the defects in vital spirituality and visible sanctity which attach to ourselves as well as others.—We cannot admit that the views which we have taken are contracted, and illiberal. They comprehend the whole range of faith and practice, and provide, in a greater extent, than any other system we have seen, for the personal, the social, the temporal, the spiritual, and the eternal interests of the human family.—Nor can we admit the justice of the charge that our sentiments are unpatriotic or anarchical. We love the country that has given us birth and privileges, and know not how to consult better for its prosperity and happiness, than by striving to diffuse the knowledge of pure and undefiled religion. We are friends of order and peace ; and we know not how to give better security to these interests, in the

adjustment and subordination of society, than by a faithful application of the principles of Scripture, in all their amplitude and impartiality. . We are not ignorant of the odium that has long been attached to the cause we have professed. But not judging of a cause, by the popularity or reproach in which it is held, we wish to prove all things, by the infallible standard, and to hold fast that which is good. Having endeavoured to ascertain, by an application of the proper test, the cause of the Redeemer, we esteem it our duty and honour to go forth to him, even without the camp, bearing his reproach. And assured that truth shall yet prevail, we endeavour to be faithful to her interests.

In thus exhibiting our Testimony, for what we consider to be the cause of Christ, we have our eyes on the past, on the present, and on the future. In the light of history we have learned, and our fathers have told us, the great things which the Lord has done for his Church, and we gratefully record them. In the light of observation we reverentially regard the signs and events of the present day. And in the light of prediction, we look forward to the future, with trembling, and with high anticipations. Viewing all these aspects of time, in the light of the Scriptures, we desire to do our part in serving our generation, according to the will of God. We call upon ourselves to know well the truth, to yield ourselves to its sanctifying influence, and stedfastly to profess and adorn it. We cast an affectionate and earnest look to our rising youth, inviting them to come to the help of the Lord, and to take our place. And we cast an anxious eye

over the agitated face of Christian society, and beseech the friends of Christ to declare themselves, and to do their duty. And we lift an imploring eye to heaven, that the Lord may look down and behold from the habitation of his holiness, and of his glory. “Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.” May the Lord, in the never-failing resources of his providence and Spirit, cause “the old wastes to be built, and raise up the former desolations—the desolations of many generations.”

“Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our guide, even unto death.”

“UNTO HIM BE GLORY, IN THE CHURCH, BY CHRIST JESUS, THROUGHOUT ALL AGES, WORLD WITHOUT END.” AMEN.

NOTES.

I. ELECTION.—CHAP. IV.

HUMAN pride is the chief spring of objection to this doctrine. The existence of the objection which the apostle Paul so triumphantly repels, has the force of a thousand arguments on the subject: "Thou wilt then say unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will? Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" Rom. ix. 19—21. This passage clearly evinces that the above doctrine is taught in the Scripture; for it is the only one against which such an objection could have the most distant semblance of plausibility. And the manner in which the apostle answers it, confirms the doctrine, as a nail fastened in a sure place. He answers the objection, not by explaining and modifying the doctrine, as if it had been misapprehended, but by a direct challenge on the subject of divine sovereignty. The objection and the answer are equally absurd, on any other principle than the truth of the doctrine in question. The fact, that it is still upon the same principle that the doctrine is chiefly objected against, shows the sameness, in all ages, of the depravity of the human mind, and of the objections made against the doctrines of the gospel. Writers and preachers of the Arminian school, represent election as merely *national*, yet seem to forget that even this is liable to the very same objection as a sovereign personal election. If the sovereignty which confers salvation on one individual, and not on another, be liable to objection on the score of the divine character, the extension of this to a great multitude of individuals, a district, or a people, is liable, even in a greater degree, to the same

objection. Nor will the matter be mended by having recourse to the doctrine of an election only to the external means of salvation; for this, though it seems to reserve something for human merit, by no means removes the difficulty, inasmuch as the means of salvation are privileges denied to others. These views are very dangerous, as they hide from the eye of man the true doctrine of sovereign grace conferring upon the unworthy the gift of eternal life by Jesus Christ.

II. SONSHIP OF CHRIST.—CHAP. V.

When bearing our testimony to the doctrine of the person of Christ, we are constrained not only to declare our belief in the divinity of Christ, but in his proper sonship. Our belief rests on the direct evidence of the Scripture testimony. The expression, *the only begotten of the Father*, is used synonymously with *the Word*—a character which Christ had antecedently to his incarnation. John i. 14. “The word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of *the only begotten* of the Father.)” Christ Jesus is the Son of God antecedently to his mission, incarnation, or manifestation. “God *sent forth* HIS SON.” Gal. iv. 4. “God *sent not* HIS SON into the world to condemn the world.” John iii. 17. “For this purpose the SON OF GOD *was manifested* that he might destroy the works of the devil.” 1 John iii. 8. His character as the Son of God is represented in the Scriptures as preceding the constitution of his official character—giving dignity to his office—and efficacy to his sufferings. “The law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, *maketh* THE SON (High Priest) who is consecrated for evermore.” Heb. vii. 28. “We have a great *High Priest* that is passed into the heavens, *Jesus the SON OF GOD*.” Heb. iv. 14. “The *blood of Jesus Christ* HIS SON cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John i. 7. This name stands associated with divine persona in the administration of baptism, and signifies the divine person of the Saviour. Mat. xxviii. 19.

And the love of God is represented as receiving an inexpressible character from the relation to himself of him whom he gave to save the world. "*God so loved the world that he gave HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON.*" John iii. 16.

Every believer should be able to answer his Lord's question, "But whom say ye that I am?" in the words of Peter, "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God;" or in the language of the eunuch, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." This view of Christ is greatly important, as bearing upon the revealed character of the immediate object of faith, and entering into the first confessions of faith. John vi. 69. iii. 18. xx. 31. Acts viii. 37. 1 John iv. 15, &c. How will the confession of a believer in the deity of Christ be distinguished from that of him who refuses it, if there is nothing in the term Son, expressive of divine character? It is true, that faith does not fix merely upon the abstract idea of the peculiar divine personality of Christ Jesus. It contemplates this personality invested with office, manifested in flesh and blood, and having made atonement for sin. But there is not one of these ideas that is an object of faith, or a source of comfort to the sinner, if abstracted from the deity of Christ. The Messiah is divine, which is the same with his being the Son of God; only the latter expression points out the distinctive character of his divine person. Jesus Christ is called, in the Scriptures, the Son of God, and this Son of God is sent to be the Saviour of the world. "We have seen and do testify, that the Father *sent* the SON to be the Saviour of the world." 1 John iv. 14.

III. COVENANT OF REDEMPTION AND GRACE.—CHAP. VI.

A dispute has been maintained on the subject of two distinct covenants; a covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son, on the condition of his fulfilling all righteousness, and a covenant of grace between the sinner and God, on the condition of faith. In correct language, this distinction cannot be vindicated, yet it does not involve any essential error, as it is admitted that faith is connected, by divine appoint-

ment, in the order of means, with our actual interest in the covenant.

The unity of the covenant of grace ought ever to be kept in view. It is always spoken of in the singular number, excepting in some passages, where the different dispensations of it are alluded to. Rom. ix. 4. Eph. ii. 12. We read particularly of the blood of the covenant. The covenant is one, and the way of our acceptance with God is one : and it is important that Christ and his seed should always be viewed as one ; a fact which the doctrine of two covenants is calculated to obscure. Christ had no private personal relation to the covenant. He acted as the representative of the elect. To make faith the condition of the covenant is improper, because it was not the condition required of Christ—because the unregenerate cannot believe—because faith itself is provided in the covenant—and because it is not of the nature of a condition, for the office of faith is to receive, and not to render unto God any thing in the way of merit.

The covenant is not made with us, as it was made with Christ, in the way of proposing conditions. We have to do solely with its blessings, as exhibited in the promises and offer of the gospel. Nor is there a secret mysterious making of the covenant with the soul, distinct from the revelation of it to faith in the gospel. Christ is *given* for a covenant of the people. God says, in the gospel, “ I will make with you an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David. Such is the gospel testimony, by which the covenant is made with us. And we are called only to believe it. There is a difference, indeed, between the gift *offered* and the gift *received*. The former is the privilege of all who enjoy the dispensation of the gospel ; the latter, the benefit only of those who believe. The former is a visible external privilege, the latter an invisible and internal benefit. The sinner does nothing more than believe in that testimony, in which God is said to make the covenant with us. It is by faith in the covenant, as revealed in the gospel, and not by some new making of it with the soul, that the believer is actually interested in it, and may say, “ The Lord hath made with me an everlasting covenant.” At

the same time, it is not denied, that faith is the appointed means of interest in the covenant—or that covenanting with God, upon the footing of the covenant of grace, belongs unto the nature and exercise of true godliness. Nor is it designed to accuse those, who retain the terms covenant of grace and covenant of redemption, of holding views radically erroneous of the doctrines of grace. When the terms are explained, the views entertained on both sides identify. The chief objection is against the phraseology.

IV. SAVING FAITH.—CHAP. IX.

Great disputes have been agitated on the subject of saving faith. Many resolve it into merely the assent of the mind to the speculative truths of the gospel testimony, denying that faith appropriates its object, the Lord Jesus Christ. This general view of saving faith seems to be alike incompatible with the nature of the case, and with the Scripture representations of the subject. The Scriptures address man upon subjects of the last importance, affecting most deeply his personal and eternal interest. He cannot truly believe in his danger, without fear—in the way of escape, without fleeing to it—in the inestimable blessings of the gospel offered to him, without accepting them. The sinner is called to *look* unto Christ, to *incline* his ear and *come* unto him, to *flee* from the wrath to come. The believer receives Christ Jesus the Lord, Col. ii. 6. he eats the flesh of the Son of man, John vi. 53. he is *persuaded* that Christ is able to keep what is *committed* to him, 1 Tim. i. 12. he *embraces* the promises, Heb. xi. 13. he *trusts* in Christ, Eph. i. 12. he believes *with the heart* unto righteousness, Rom. x. 9. Saving faith includes an intellectual belief of the doctrines of the gospel; but this is not all. Faith is an exercise of the soul as possessed not only of understanding, but of will and affection. It is an embracing, and resting on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. A persuasion of the truth of the divine mission of Jesus Christ, and of the speculative doctrines of the gospel, may be in the mind without saving faith.

Simon believed and was baptized, while his heart was not right with God. A man may believe that food can nourish him; yet if he have no appetite and do not eat, he will die of want. A person may believe that garments would cover him; yet if he feel no inconvenience from nakedness and do not put them on, he may perish from cold. One may see a refuge that would shelter him from evil; yet if he see no danger, and do not run for protection, he may be at last surprised with destruction. It is worthy of notice, that the blessings of the gospel are represented under the images of food, clothing, and protection from danger; and faith by the corresponding acts of eating, putting on, and fleeing for refuge. As unfeigned precious faith is essentially connected with an interest in salvation, it is the imperative duty of every one to examine himself whether he be in the faith, by considering its Scripture characters and evidences. "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God."

V. CHURCH GOVERNMENT.—CHAP. XII.

'The sentiment, that there are no intimations of the will of Christ on the subject of church government, appears to us incompatible with the necessities of the church—with the love and wisdom of her Head—with his revealed character, as having the key of David, ordering and establishing his kingdom with judgment and with justice—and is contrary to the fact that the Scriptures do contain declarations on this subject, that are neither obscure nor ambiguous. 'The Redeemer, knowing well all the circumstances in which the church can be placed, has given in his word certain principles of order and government, wisely adapted to every situation. These principles, distinguished by their wisdom, and sanctioned by the gracious authority of Christ, ought to be ascertained, acted upon, and preserved inviolate.

Episcopalians claim for Bishops authority over many congregations and ministers, regarding them as vested with an exclusive right of ordination, and assigning to them great secular power and dignity. 'The *overseers* or *Bishops*, of

whom we read in the New Testament, are the same with presbyters or elders ; the terms, being used synonymously, are convertible titles for the same office. Acts xx. 17, 28. The persons called elders in the 17th verse, are called overseers (or Bishops) in the 28th. Tit. i. 5, 7. Titus is directed to ordain elders, persons of certain qualifications, assigning, as a reason for this specification of character, that a bishop ought to be blameless as the steward of God. 1 Pet. v. 1, 2. The elders are exhorted to feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof; *i. e.* according to the meaning of the original word, exercising the office or functions of a Bishop over them. The three orders in the church of England, *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*, have no appointment in the New Testament ; Bishop being the same with the Pastor ; Priest being never applied to office ; and Deacon being another office altogether. There is not, in the Christian church, any officer, having power or superiority above the teaching presbyter. The principle upon which this superiority is claimed, is in express contradiction to the precept of the Saviour, Mat. xx. 25—27 ; and the fact of the possession of such superiority cannot be established from the Scriptures, either in the case of Peter, or of any other Apostle. It is vain to found such a claim upon the infallible inspiration, and extraordinary powers, of the Apostles. And as to Archbishops, Diocesan Bishops, Archdeacons, Deans, Prebendaries, &c. it is enough to say, that they have neither a name, nor the shadow of a place, in the Scriptures.

From a strong perception of the unrighteousness of prelatic or papal authority, and from a sense of the incompatibility of subjection to such authority with Christian liberty and a good conscience, the mind may run to an opposite extreme, and contract an aversion to the legitimate authority which Christ has ordained for edification. Here Presbyterians have walked between the opposite extremes into which Episcopalians and Independents have gone.

Presbyterians derive their principles from a few plain Scriptural facts. 1st. They find a distinction between *rulers* and *ruled*, 1 Thess. v. 13. Heb. xiii. 7, 17, &c. 2d. They find the work of ruling connected with *elders*, 1 Tim. v. 17. 3d. They

find in the regular organization of the Christian church a *plurality* of elders, Acts xiv. 23. Tit. i. 5. 4th. They find a distinction between elders who only rule, and those who labour in word and doctrine. 1 Tim. v. 17. From the duties required of the teaching elder, and from the support which he must receive from the church, that he may give exclusive attendance on the duties of his office, it is unreasonable to suppose, that there could be a plurality of them, in each of the primitive churches.

On the subject of superior courts, presbyterians not only reason, from the unity of the church, and the necessity of a government embracing the whole—and, from the reasonableness, propriety, and advantages of such institutions—but they appeal to facts recorded in the New Testament. 1st. The Scriptures speak of the church at Jerusalem—at Antioch—at Ephesus—and at Corinth. Acts viii. 1. xiii. 1. xx. 28. Rev. ii. 1. 1 Cor. i. 2. 2d. In each of these places, there were several distinct worshipping assemblies. This latter fact is not asserted in so many words, but it is deduced from the Scripture statements in the respective cases. Take, for example, the case of the church at Jerusalem. Three thousand on one day; five thousand on another; and after this, multitudes, men and women, were added to the church. Acts ii. iii. iv. The number of disciples still greatly increased. Multitudes were added to the Lord, and they remained in peace at Jerusalem, until the persecution recorded Acts viii. Again, “the churches had rest throughout all Judea.” The word of the Lord increased and multiplied. There were in Jerusalem several *myriads*, Acts xxi. 20. The doctrine is confirmed by considering the diversity of languages, which required their meeting in different places—the multitude of apostles, prophets, and elders that remained at Jerusalem—as also, the limited accommodations which they had for assembling. This vast number of persons, who could not assemble under one roof, form the church at Jerusalem, and are never called the churches. Acts ii. 47. v. 11. viii. 1. xii. 5. xx. 4. And by a similar process of reasoning from the facts in the other cases, the same conclusion will be drawn.

We refer to the Scriptures for the authority of a congregational session; Acts xiv. 23. There must be elders in every church. Mat. xviii. 15—20. The church in this passage signifies not the multitude, but the two or three gathered together in the name of Christ, for judgment. That the term church should signify the elders of the church, is no uncommon use of language. Nation often signifies the rulers of the nation. The *congregation* and the *elders* are used synonymously, as may be seen by comparing Num. xxxv. 24, 25, with Deut. xix. 11, 12.—And with respect to a Presbytery, we distinctly refer to the Holy Scriptures for the name and the thing. 1 Tim. iv. 14; Acts xx. 17, 28; xv. 2, &c.—And with respect to higher courts than a Presbytery, we consider that we have authority in the example recorded in the 15th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. 1. We cannot suppose that assembly acting under the extraordinary inspiration of the Holy Ghost; for upon this supposition it was altogether unnecessary, one Apostle, delivering an inspired decision, being sufficient to determine the question. In the original discussion at Antioch, Paul and Barnabas acted as ordinary ministers—the reference was made, not only to the Apostles, but to the elders—and the reference was discussed. “Synods,” says Dr. Owen, “are consecrated unto the use of the church, in all ages, by the example of the Apostles, in their guidance of the first churches of Jews and Gentiles.” 2. The whole members of the church at Jerusalem did not enact the authoritative decree. This is impossible; they could not meet in one assembly. Besides, they had no authority over the churches of Syria. 3. It was a meeting of the elders of the church. The reference was made to the Apostles and elders—the Apostles and elders came together—the decrees were ordained of the Apostles and elders. The *whole church* and the *brethren*, as they cannot signify the whole church literally, must be explained in harmony with the scope of the passage.

It would not be difficult to expatiate on various excellencies, by which the presbyterian government is recommended; but it is the divine authority, expressed as above, that binds our consciences. For the evils, which men may have associated

with it, we are not accountable. For its grand principles of *representation, union, and subordination*, we contend ; not for every iota of the forms which churches may have adopted. It is against the abuses of presbytery, chiefly, that objections have been raised. Separate the things of man improperly connected with it, remove from it the reproaches which its professors, by the improper management of it, or by their personal conduct otherwise, have brought upon it ; and let it be seen in its scriptural simplicity and purity, and its enemies will not be so numerous. The approaches to presbyterian practice among Independents, in the formation of associations and unions, the education of youth for the ministry, and the recommendation of them to the church, and in the ordination of pastors by the imposition of the hands of presbyters of other churches, afford hope that the time is coming, when the grand principles of presbyterianism shall form a foundation for keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace in the church of God ; the prejudices and alienations which the collisions of party have produced and cherished being laid aside.

We give our testimony in behalf of Presbyterian church—government, because its principles are laid down and exemplified in the Scriptures. It is commended to us, not merely by the wisdom and profession of our forefathers, but by the love and wisdom of the King of Zion, and by the sanction of his supreme authority. And we contend for it in its scripture purity and liberty. We protest against all dictation to the church, by the civil authorities, on the subject of her faith and government—against all civil control in things spiritual over her ministers, and over the assemblies of her ministers and elders—and against all interference whatever with the liberty of her people to choose their office-bearers.

VI. PATRONAGE.—CHAP. XI.

The rights vested in patrons we protest against, as—a violation of natural equity—incompatible with the liberty of the gospel—hurtful to christian edification—and contrary to scriptu-

ral principle and example, Acts i. 15—26 ; vi. 2—7 ; xiv. 23.* —to the practice of the primitive church—and to the principles of our Reformation. The amount of injury produced by patronage under its various forms, it is impossible to declare. In despite of worldly policy and unworthy timidity, the church is called to assert and to use her liberty without compromise or foreign control, leaving all consequences in the hands of her Head.

VII. LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE.—CHAP. XII.

We pointedly declare that conscience is subject to no Lord but Christ. Every disciple has liberty to profess all the truths, to observe all the institutions, and to obey all the precepts of Christianity. This is at once his right, and duty, and privilege. Kings, and bishops, and ecclesiastic officers, have no authority to prescribe to conscience. It is subject to Christ alone, and is entirely free from all subjection to the traditions and commandments of men. To worship God—to erect and organize congregations—to furnish them with pastors—to celebrate all the ordinances of religion—and to meet in the consistories of judgment, without control from man, are sacred immunities of the Christian church. But we must not confound the rights of a good conscience with the claims of an evil one. “God alone is Lord of the conscience, and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship. So that, to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands, out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience: and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also.”—Con. XX. 2.

But it is necessary, in pleading the rights of conscience and

* The word rendered *ordained*, Acts xiv. 23. signifies *chosen*, by lifting up the hand, and is so translated 2 Cor. viii. 19.

private judgment, to guard against destroying the exercise of lawful power. All delegated power is under law to Him, from whom it originates, and is to be submitted to, only as agreeable to this law. To resist lawful power in the exercise of lawful authority, is to resist God: "Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." Conscience is not without law to God, and of consequence cannot resist with impunity, the lawful exercise of divinely instituted and constituted authority. That God has delegated the parental, ecclesiastical, and magistral authorities; and that these are to be obeyed for conscience sake, cannot be denied. Eph. vi. 1; Heb. iii. 17; Rom. xiii. 5. "And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God." Con. xx. 4. To resist the lawful exercise of lawful authority, under pretence of liberty of conscience, is obviously to set the authority of God in opposition to itself. Man has no natural inherent rights of his own. All his rights are derived from God, are of course subject to his law, and are to be defined and regulated by it. A right in opposition to his own law, God does not, cannot give; nor is it competent to any power to impart and sanction such a right. It is no more the right of a man to worship an idol, or to blaspheme the name of God, than to kill or to steal, although he may judge it proper to do all of them. In such a case, the exercise of ecclesiastical authority, in excluding idolatrous and profane persons from the communion of the church, is not esteemed an infringement upon the rights of conscience. Sentiments declared in opposition to the righteous terms on which a society is formed, exclude from its privileges. And may not the same reasoning apply to the exercise of magistral authority, in restraining overt transgressions of the law of God? When civil society has, by its own consent, embodied in its constitution the laws of God in the first table, as it is under obligation to do, as well as those in the second, it is inconsistent with the

subjection of conscience to the divine law, as well as with the principles upon which society is formed, to plead for a right to violate these laws. A civil ruler cannot prosecute any offence as a scandal in the church exposing to her censures; but an open immorality, in direct violation of the law of God, as embodied with the civil constitution, he may restrain as a crime. And that not merely upon the principle of utility, because the evils restrained are prejudicial to society, but from the subjection which civil society, as such, owes to God. We are assured from the goodness and wisdom of God, that no laws are so good for the interests of society, as the laws which he has given. But this is not the primary reason of the obligation to obey them, as is well expressed in the following words: "That whatever is punishable by man, is injurious to man, is true; because all sin in some way or other is so; but to make this *the sole ground or reason* of punishment is selfish and atheistical. It is making ourselves the chief end; whereas this is what God claims to himself at the hand of every man, and body of men. In punishing man for immorality, he ought not merely to regard his own safety, nor even that of the community, but the honour of God; and, if he be a good man, he will do so. If he regard merely his own safety, punishing crimes only in so far as they endanger it, the people will soon perceive that he is a selfish tyrant, and cares not for the general good; and if he regard only the public safety, punishing crimes merely on account of their being injurious unto man, it is still a spirit of selfishness, only a little more extended, and God will disapprove of this as the people do of the other."

The authority of the civil magistrate respects chiefly external actions, and these evidently opposed to the law of heaven, and the constitutional laws of the kingdom. It is objected against all magistratical interference, in any thing connected with the first table of the law, that it is persecution. But the restraint of an open and gross immorality is not persecution. In this restraint no right is invaded. Were the magistrate to act upon his own private opinion, and by a despotic sovereignty, in violation of the law of God and the constitution, the complaint would be well-founded. But while he only exer-

cises the power committed to him, the charge alleged cannot apply to him, but to the constitution, and to the community framing and adopting it. The evil does not arise from the employment of magistratical authority ; for upon the same principle every exercise of parental or ecclesiastical authority might be called persecution. The question of persecution resolves itself into another, respecting the rights of man ; and this brings us to the law of God, the standard of these rights. And as no man has a right to violate the law of God, the restraint of an open violation invades no right, is no persecution. But it is asked, Who is judge ? This question may be answered by another : Who is judge in ecclesiastical law ? Who is judge in the case of the breaches of the second table of the law ? If there is a competence to judge and act in the one case, why not in the other ? Is the law of God that unintelligible, ambiguous, and convertible thing, that no definite meaning can be assigned to it ? The judge is, first, God himself, the Great Lawgiver ; and, secondly, it is the nation recognizing the divine law, embodying it in their constitution, and empowering their representatives to carry it into effect. It is not an individual usurping a right over society, but society, according to the ordinance of God, exercising authority over individuals, in terms of the divine law and mutual compact. To plead for liberty to violate the law, would be to give an individual a negative over the voice of society, in those things which it has judged necessary for its safety and prosperity.—Nor is this compulsion. The restraint, or punishment, of an immorality does not compel to the performance of the contrary virtues. If this were the case, there would be compulsion in the practice of honesty and veracity, because fraud and falsehood are interdicted and punished.

While jealous of the liberty of the church, and tender on the subject of liberty of conscience, we cannot acquiesce in the prevailing sentiment, that it is the common right of all men to worship God in the way they think proper. We speak here of man, not in the retirements of his chamber, where no human eye seeth him, but as a member of society, and visibly exerting an influence upon it. And in this view, few will assent to the

above sentiment, without excepting from the liberty granted, principles and practices hurtful to society, or subversive of it. We go a little farther, and except from the above liberty, principles obviously in opposition to the moral law, and subversive of the moral government of God. Principles of this kind are hurtful to society ; but this consideration, though necessarily connected with the subject, and important, is not to take the precedence of that honour which is due to God. We know that conformity to the will of God conduces to individual happiness and to the general good, in the highest degree ; but we dare not lay utility, expediency, or self-interest, at the foundation of moral obligation. This foundation lies in the perfection of the divine nature, and in the revealed will of God. And when God has, in one department of his law, extended protection around the honour, and life, and purity, and property, and character of man, it is not easy to perceive that society owes nothing to God, or to the claims he has put forth, in another part of his law, in behalf of his own character and worship. Indeed, the interests of man and the divine glory are essentially connected with one another, although the one has a necessary precedency. Civil society, as an institution of God, owes it both to God and to itself, to define the rights of man and of the community, in agreeableness to the divine law ; and to defend the rights of both from gross invasion, under whatsoever imposing pretence it may be made. This is, truly, a matter widely different from enforcing religion by civil pains, and propagating it by carnal weapons ; things which we disavow and condemn !

VIII. MAGISTRACY.—CHAP. XIII.

In some particulars, the subject of this chapter is a peculiarity in our testimony for the truth. It is a part of Scripture revelation, and that too, a considerable part. It belongs to the Christian's daily duty, and is necessary to furnish the mind

with proper principles and ends in the discharge of it—it is intimately connected with the happiness of man—it affects, very nearly, the prosperity or adversity of the church of Christ—it is connected with the honour, and with the administrations of Messiah—and there are striking indications in Scripture of the future extensive subjection of the kingdoms of the world unto Christ—it has been embraced, in some parts of its principles, by those who have been honoured in advancing reformation—it has even, in some things connected with it, been a ground of suffering, and has thus been sealed with blood. It thus extensively involves the cause of the divine glory, the good of Zion, the happiness of man, and Christian duty. And we are not to be understood as contending for any particular form according to which civil government may be modelled, but for the moral and scriptural principles upon which it should be based.

On this subject, there is a question, at present widely and keenly agitated. It is the power of the magistrate, in matters of religion. While we peremptorily disclaim that the civil ruler has power in and over the church of Christ, we cannot admit that, in his office, he has absolutely nothing to do with religion. From the evidence of Scripture, and in conformity with the sentiments of the churches of the reformation, we contend that communities, and their rulers, enjoying and professing Christianity, are under obligation to recognize and protect the kingdom of Christ; and this not only in their private and insulated, but in their official and corporate capacity. As explanatory of our views, we submit the following brief observations.

1. It is acknowledged to be difficult to define, precisely, the line and extent of the magistrate's power about religion. In every thing connected with religion, the power of the magistrate is to be exercised with great caution and prudence, and in reference to evils viewed chiefly as violations of the divine law, or immoralities. At the commencement of an age of inquiry and reformation, and in an unsettled state of things, the people cannot be supposed to have matured their views, so as to frame a constitution empowering the magistrate to act

in this matter : and acting officially on his own private views is entirely out of the question. But when religious reformation has been happily attained, and prosperity enjoyed under the blessing of God, it becomes the duty of a people to provide for its preservation and extension. And more especially in the case of attempts to subvert religious reformation, it is imperatively required of a people to enact laws for its defence.

2. It ought to be observed in all reasoning upon this question, that although the term 'magistrate's power' be used, it is not to be understood that the sword is to be employed against those who refuse to make a particular profession of religion. Exclusion from official place, where an undue influence against religion might be employed, is, ordinarily, all the length that civil power should go. Nor does this affect the life, property, common liberty or peace, of persons who are otherwise inoffensive members of society. If any find themselves aggrieved in this matter, it is not by magistratical usurpation, but by the execution of the law, which the people have put into the hands of the magistrate. Persons who, from scruples of conscience, cannot acquiesce in the constitution of the state, in things affecting religion, will not be the readiest to complain in this matter ; while it will be for the interest of society, that ambitious and ungodly aspirants after dominion and power be intercepted, in their progress to places, where their principles, administration, and example, would have a demoralizing and pernicious influence. Nor, in this matter, are we to confound the just restraint of an obstinate and contemptuous blasphemer of religion, of God, and of every thing sacred, and the exclusion of men of bad principles, from places of power, with allowing them to enjoy the protection of those rights which are common to men, while they do not, in the propagation of their principles, offend openly against the laws of God, and of society, and thus threaten the subversion of the one and the other. When such distinctions are kept out of sight, and it is assumed, without any just view of the appointment and limitation of the magistrate's power, that he is to be sole judge and umpire in matters of religion, a very unfair, a very false view is taken of the subject ; a view, however, which serves well the

purpose of declamation, which is too often substituted, on this subject, for candid and dispassionate argument. How indiscriminately have intolerance and sanguinary principles been imputed to those, who powerfully pled, and valiantly laid down their lives for those very liberties, which are abused to revile their memories!

3. It must be admitted, that the sentiment that excludes all concern with religion from the duty of the civil magistrate, is not the principle of the Westminster Confession.* Candour requires that the passages which have been objected against as Erastian, and as subjecting the church, in matters purely religious and ecclesiastical, to the civil magistrate, be explained in consistency with other parts of the Confession, and with the known sentiments of those who compiled and adopted it. For example, the power conceded to magistrates to call synods, is explained by the Act of Assembly prefixed to the Confession, as applying to an unsettled state of things, while the intrinsic power of the church to assemble her synods is asserted. And the same thing is necessary in explaining those passages which have been construed as favouring magistratical compulsion in religion.

It is true that, in the reformation from Popery, provision was made for the preservation of the Protestant religion; a thing required in itself, and specially called for, when the restless spirit of Popery was covertly putting forth all its energies to subvert the Protestant cause. Something is due to the memory of those who have done worthily in Ephratah, and been famous in Bethlehem, in the magnanimous struggle for religion and civil liberty. They were men, and had their faults, and are not to be held up as perfect, in all they said and did. In judging of the public conduct of the Scottish Reformers, it is but fair to take into the account the very trying circumstances in which they were placed, the persecutions they endured, the plots which were frequently contrived for the subversion of religion and liberty at home, and the formidable combinations established among the popish powers on the con-

* xx. 4; xxiii. 3; xxxi. 2. Cat. 108, 109.

tinent to overthrow the protestant interest throughout Europe. When these things are duly considered, it will be conceded by every candid mind, that measures might have been necessary, in their peculiar circumstances, which would be unwarrantable in a more tranquil state of society. Yet, that we may guard against all danger of being misunderstood, we deem it proper to state distinctly, that we can neither give ourselves, nor require from others, a universal or unqualified approbation of all the acts of Parliament, or of Assembly, during the reforming period.

But we cannot acquiesce in the charge which some prefer against the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, that they teach compulsory and persecuting principles in religion. If certain passages be at all liable to such unfavourable construction, candour requires that they be specified, explained by the connexion in which they stand, by other passages in the Confession, and by the avowed principles of the Church of Scotland. But all exercise of civil authority about religion is not to be condemned; just provision for the defence of the Protestant religion and liberties, must not be stigmatized as intolerance and persecution; nor are the standards to be left under a vague and indefinite injurious allegation, which every enemy may turn against them as it pleases him.

It is not, however, primarily because it was the opinion of our fathers, and is the doctrine of the standards, that we contend for the subjection of civil communities and their rulers to the Messiah, and the obligation lying upon them to respect the religion of Jesus. To scripture authority we have made our appeal, acknowledging no other supreme authority over our consciences. Isa. xlix. 23; lx. 10, 12; Psal. ii. 10, 12; Dan. vii. 14; Psal. lxxii. 11; Rev. i. 5, &c. And while we consider that legal protection ought to be given to the religion of Christ, we cannot plead the same for the mysteries of Paganism—the rites of Mohammed—or the idolatry of Antichrist. And in contending for the principle upon which we make these exceptions, we cannot think that we expose ourselves to the charge of intolerance and persecution.

IX. COVENANTING.—CHAP. XIV.

We find the principle of social covenanting illustrated in the ordinary practices of men, and of communities. We view covenanting as a moral duty, based originally on the moral law; and we find it commanded and exemplified in the scriptures. We have intimation of it in the predictions relating to the times of the New Testament. It has been exemplified in the history of the church; and especially in the churches abroad, that separated from the communion of the church of Rome, and were distinguished by the names of Protestant and Reformed. And it has been exemplified, with the most happy effects, in the public federal deeds of our own land.

Viewing covenanting as a moral duty, prescribed and exemplified in the word of God; considering that the design of the public covenants is an adherence to the Protestant Reformed religion, in opposition to Popery and Prelacy; and regarding the church, and the nation, as perpetuated in their posterity, and inheriting precious privileges, we cannot see that the obligation of these deeds has ceased with the age in which they were taken. The party sworn unto is the true God, the everlasting God, whose name and memorial are through all generations. The church and the nation, the parties that have lifted up their hands to the Lord, corporately considered, still exist. They have plighted their faith to maintain and promote the ends of these covenants in the most formal and solemn manner in which this could be done. An individual, or a community, having even less valid claims upon the nation, would be warranted to assert and pursue them. And shall God, to whom we owe all our privileges, have no claims, or overlook them? shall it be a matter of indifference to us, whether God “remember the covenant of our ancestors,” or charge us with breaking the covenant which he made with them?” Lev. xxv. 45; Jer. xi. 10.

The obligation, thus lying upon the church and the nation, has been criminally neglected and violated. At the Revolu-

tion, the covenants were overlooked, and a civil supremacy over the church, and prelacy in England and Ireland re-established, in direct opposition to the terms of these covenants. The obligation of them has been consigned to general neglect and oblivion. Many of those who contended for it, have now relinquished their testimony on this point, while not a few violently oppose their obligation altogether. In other cases the attention has been too exclusively confined to their ecclesiastical objects, and a sufficiently explicit testimony has not been lifted up against the violation of them by these nations.

Feeling ourselves still bound to testify to the permanent obligation of the Public Covenants, and to prosecute their grand object to the utmost of our power, we cast a wishful eye to all the friends of the covenanted reformation in church and state, and lift up a prayer to God that he may put it into their and our hearts, to embrace, in a solemn covenant, the entire interests of the reformation, according to our circumstances. This would secure greater unity, publicity, confidence, and strength, in the profession of the cause of Christ; it would deepen the sense of obligation on our own minds; it might arrest the attention of youth, and of a secure generation; it might serve to rally the friends of truth around one standard; and to preserve our own fidelity, and a testimony for the work of reformation, till the Lord arise to plead the cause that is his own, "Come and let us join ourselves unto the Lord in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten."

X.—TESTIMONY FOR TRUTH.—CHAP. XV.

Many, in the present age, have imbibed strong prejudices against a public written Confession and Testimony. The churches which deny the use of creeds altogether, unless they admit every applicant who acknowledges the Bible, and does not openly and grossly violate its precepts, must act upon the principle of a creed. The dispute with them does not, there-

fore, turn upon the principle itself, but upon the manner in which it is to be carried into effect.

The propriety of exhibiting a testimony for truth will appear from the following things:—1. The character of witnesses given to the church, Isa. xliii. 10, 12. Acts i. 8. Rev. xi. 3.—2. Scripture injunctions, Mat. x. 32. Heb. iv. 14. x. 23.—3. The scriptural representations of the church, Zech. viii. 3. Psal. lx. 4. Song vi. 4. Isa. lxii. 10. 1 Tim. iii. 15.—4. The Scriptures recognize a testimony, 2 Tim. i. 8. Rev. vi. 9. xii. 17. xix. 10. xx. 4.—5. The conduct of enemies. They exhibit error and oppose truth. Ought not the church, and her ministers, set for the defence of the gospel, to lift up a standard against them?

A profession, or testimony, founded upon Scripture—evangelical in its principles, and bearing on the interests of universal holiness—directed against error—sealed with the blood of faithful martyrs—embracing the particular word of Christ's patience—and all centering in Christ himself, will be eminently subservient to the glory of Christ, by uniting his friends, exhibiting truth to the world, counteracting error, and transmitting the knowledge of truth to posterity. Whether such a testimony should be left to float on tradition, or to be vaguely gathered from the writings of individuals, or should be exhibited in a written document, by the church in her collective capacity, can scarcely admit a doubt. Excepting for the preservation of the sacred Scriptures, we cannot suppose a nobler end to which the arts of writing and of printing can be devoted. The history of the Reformation illustrates how important to the interests of truth the Confessions or Testimonies of the reforming churches have been.

