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CHRISTIANITY AND THE COMMONWEALTH.*

MY YOUNG FRIENDS—Our meeting this evening, in comfortable circumstances, through the kindness of a beneficent Providence, affords occasion for congratulation and thanksgiving. A reunion, after a temporary separation, of those who have had fellowship in giving and receiving instruction, is a source of real pleasure. The relation between professors and students is one that takes hold of the social principles of our nature, and constitutes a tie that often lasts through life. It is proper, then, that I should congratulate those of you, who have already been in the Seminary, on the resumption of our pleasing yet important labors, and welcome those of you who are now beginning your theological course, to the enjoyment and advantages afforded by our Institution. And let us not forget to acknowledge the goodness of our covenant God, in preserving all alive and in health, and in granting us the opportunity of prosecuting our work without danger or hindrance.

The times are indeed troublous. A cloud, becoming daily denser and darker, is hanging over our country. The rebellion in the slaveholding States has assumed immense proportions, and is putting forth gigantic strength. The political earthquake is widening, and the very foundations of the government are disturbed and shaken. The adaptation of democratic institutions to man's social and political state is undergoing a severe trial, and there is just reason to fear an unfavorable result. The Old World is looking on, not so much with indifference, as with ill-concealed satisfaction. Well may it be said in the words of the prophet: "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a

* Introductory Lecture, by Professor Sproull, delivered at the Opening of the Reformed Presbyterian Seminary, in Allegheny, November 4, 1862.

day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers." Zeph. 1 : 14-16.

Of the various subjects, interesting in themselves, and of special moment on account of transpiring events, I have selected one that seems to me to be of paramount importance. The sad condition of our country stirs up the deepest emotions of every patriotic heart. To discover the cause of the Lord's controversy with our land, that it may be removed, and that he may return to us and bless us, should be the desire, and demands the efforts of the friends of truth and righteousness. In settling the great questions now demanding solution, the church must take an active part. Without her speedy intervention the bark of state, driven by a violent storm over a surging sea, will be hopelessly wrecked and lost. As the light-house gives warning to the mariner, of rocks and shoals, that by avoiding them he may prosecute his voyage in safety, so the church is to shed her light athwart the darkness of this political tempest, if haply, by sudden tacking, the vessel with its costly cargo may escape the threatened destruction.

It is a truth requiring no proof, that the religion which the Bible reveals is the antidote provided by Infinite Wisdom and Goodness for all the ills brought on the world by sin. Just in proportion to the extent to which that divine agency enters into man's relations, personal and social, in forming and controlling them, will be his physical, intellectual and moral elevation. And when our race shall have been raised to the highest point of excellence attainable in this life, it will then be seen and acknowledged to the glory of God, that the means appointed for that end were adapted with infinite skill.

You perceive that my subject is the Christian religion as the desideratum and only hope of our country. I design to show that every nation that enjoys the word of God is bound by its duty to God and its obligations to men, to recognize Christianity as an existing system, and to provide for its welfare, both by constitutional guarantees and administrative acts. And if this point be established, it will follow by necessary consequence, that in the nation that fails to do this, there is an omission fatal to its welfare. "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." Isaiah 60 : 12.

The following theses present the substance and form of the argument:

I. THE ENTIRE DISSOCIATION OF RELIGION FROM THE STATE IS IMPRACTICABLE.

II. WHERE CHRISTIANITY IS NOT, THERE ANTICHRISTIANITY IS THE NATIONAL RELIGION.

III. AN IMPROPER CONNECTION BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND THE STATE IS INJURIOUS.

IV. CHRISTIANITY ELEVATED TO ITS PROPER PLACE IN A NATION, WILL BE AN ELEMENT OF STRENGTH, PROSPERITY AND PERMANENCE.

I. *The entire dissociation of Religion from the State is impracticable.*

I use the term religion, here, in its widest acceptation, as express-

ive of the convictions and belief of men in relation to a Supreme Being, and their obligations to him. In this sense it includes Atheism as well as Theism. If men deny the existence of a Supreme Being, that denial is their belief on the subject of religion! The infidel no less than the Christian has a religion. His religion is infidelity. According to this definition, the thesis asserts that no nation can utterly ignore some system of religious belief and practice.

The argument from facts, though not conclusive in this case, is strongly presumptive. I admit that the necessity of a connexion between religious and civil things does not follow from the fact that such a connexion has been generally found to exist. If, however, it is so, that nations in conditions widely different and agreeing in scarcely any thing else, harmonize in the one point of giving countenance and support to some prevailing religion, the inference is fair that this is the outworking of some universal principle or law of man's nature. Now so far as the facts have been brought to light, no nation has yet been discovered where this has not been done. And if this be ascribed to the traditionary remains of the true religion first instituted by God, it does not weaken the argument. For the tradition that could so long survive amidst the effacing effects of time, must have something in the human heart with which it is in harmony. And our induction is sustained by the best authority. "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." Rom. 1: 20.

Man is a religious being. This is true of him, as well since as before the fall. That event effected, indeed, a sad moral and spiritual change on man, but it did not destroy his mental constitution, or take away any of the faculties of his soul. He has still an understanding to perceive truths and a reason to draw conclusions from them. Dimmed as is his intellectual eye, he can still see, though darkly, in the visible creation, the evidence of a First Cause of all things, who is entitled to his service and homage.

It is well known how deeply the religious element enters into human character and influences human conduct. At the bidding of conscience, what labor will the superstitious zealot not perform? What sacrifices will he not make? Let the hecatombs of victims offered to idols—the cruel orgies of Juggernaut, and the inhuman rites of the Suttee—the long pilgrimages to the tomb of a false prophet, and the severe penances endured at the command of a deified priesthood—let these and countless other cases of self-denial bear witness to the power of the religious element in the human heart.

And now, it may be asked, is it reasonable that a principle of action so strong and effective in all other cases, will at once become inactive when the constitution of civil society and the enactment of laws for its government, require attention? What men prize most they are at the greatest pains to secure. We have seen at what rate they value the exercise of their religion, and we may be

sure they will not fail to put forth their combined strength in their social organization, to give prominence to a system on which their highest hopes are founded.

It may be considered a satisfactory answer to this reasoning, that our argument has been drawn from the instances of the ignorant and superstitious, and it is therefore fallacious when applied to the enlightened and civilized. To sustain the objection, it will be necessary to show that civilization and refinement have a tendency to destroy the religious element in man, and to blot out the consciousness that he owes homage to Him who made and who preserves him. We apprehend there are few who will undertake this task. That the case is in some respects different, where the people enjoy the advantages of civilization is readily admitted, but the difference in no way affects our argument. It is very common for men, when they break away from the thralldom of ignorance and superstition, to claim for themselves the widest liberty in religious matters. And what they claim they will exert themselves to secure. If their emancipation has been effected by the silent but powerful operation of Christianity, they will recognize its claims to consideration in their civil capacity. If the liberty is merely outward and not that with which Christ makes free, then the claims of Christianity will be ignored, and its recognition by the nation refused. But the nation will still have a religion. To demonstrate this point is the design of the second thesis.

II. *Where Christianity is not, there Antichristianity is the national religion.* The line between the religion of Christ and all other religious systems must be drawn. The terms Christianity and antichristianity are sufficiently explicit and expressive. Whatever systems of belief in regard to religion there be, that are not Christian, are antichristian. However they may differ among themselves, and be included under the respective classes of false religion, infidelity or atheism, they agree in their opposition to the true religion. They constitute one great system of antichristianity or irreligion. Now our position is, that one or other of these antagonistic systems must be the object of national favor. To withhold this from the religion of Christ is to discriminate in favor of the religion of the world.

The truth asserted by our Lord, "He that is not with me is against me," applies to men in their social as well as in their individual character. The nation that is not with Christ is against him. The church is the body of Christ. We speak of the Christian church, including all that hold the Head, and that receive and dispense, according to his appointment, the ordinances instituted by him. It is not necessary to our argument to draw the line sharply, and we omit to do it. The Christian church is indeed marred and weakened by divisions that affect her outward unity, but she is really one, and these divisions will ere long cease, and then she will be visibly one. It is of the church thus defined, the embodiment of Christianity, that we speak, when we say that a refusal by a nation to make Christianity the national religion, is to

adopt in its stead whatever exists that is comprehended in the term antichristianity. The nation that is not with the body of Christ—the church, by a distinct recognition, is with her enemies. Neutrality is impossible. Meroz and its inhabitants were cursed because they came not up to the help of the Lord. Judg. 5 : 23.

Such is the difference between the two conflicting systems of which we treat, in their very nature, that the same national policy toward them both does not leave them in the same relative position to the nation. It will scarcely be denied that it is the duty of a nation to countenance and favor what is right, and to discountenance and discourage what is wrong. If a nation does neither the one nor the other, right and wrong are not left on a level, so far as the nation is concerned. By omitting to favor the right, the nation discourages it; by omitting to discountenance the wrong, the nation shows it favor. A father is not acting with impartiality who treats his son and his servant exactly alike. He is discriminating in favor of his servant and against his son. And the case would be still stronger and more nearly parallel, if, in place of a servant, we would say, the son's deadliest enemy.

Christianity is a tender exotic, of slow growth in the unkindly soil of the world. It requires not only culture, but protection from the withering blasts of this inhospitable clime. On the contrary, all false systems are indigenous to the soil. They grow without culture, and they flourish without protection. Like weeds, useless and noxious, to let them alone is to take care of them. The skillful farmer understands this. He labors to prevent the intruders from springing up in his ground, and when they show themselves he roots them out and destroys them. Solomon gives us the result of his observation on this subject: "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof." Such is precisely the moral aspect of the case when men, in their civil regulations, adopt the rule to leave Christianity and its opposites equally to shift for themselves. It is, in fact, a refusal to Christianity of the care needed for its growth; and giving to irreligion all that it wants to make it flourish. It is a practical discrimination in favor of antichristianity.

In the working of such an arrangement, this discrimination will be still more evident. Tolerance of error in theory is sure to be followed by a preference of error in practice. Against any legislation in favor of Christianity there will be the most jealous watchfulness, while laws that inure to the advantage of infidelity will be passed and none to find fault. To go to the Bible for authorities to support judicial decisions will not be suffered, but codes of human laws will be searched, and their dictum received as the utterance of an oracle. All this, while the design seems to be to make the scales hang even, is, in fact, to give irreligion a manifest preponderance over the religion of Christ.

And the effects of the system will be not less visible in the character of the men on whom the nation will confer its honors, and

into whose hands it will intrust power. Claim for a man fitness for office, because he is a Christian, and cries of bigotry and persecution will resound from all sides. Object to another that he is infidel, and the same cry will be raised. And under the paralyzing influence of this professed national indifference to religion, the Christian community yield themselves to the dictation of the irreligious, who manage the affairs of the nation in their own way and for their own interests. This is no ideal description. Facts in abundance show the correctness of our *a priori* conclusions. And our point is, we think, made out, that a nation that does not recognize Christianity and discriminate in its favor, does, in fact, give national countenance and support to whatever other systems of religious belief and practice prevail within its limits.

III. *An improper connection between Christianity and the State is injurious.* The effect of a connection between the church and the civil power, depends entirely on the terms on which it is formed. Such is the perfection of the constitution which the church has received from her Head, that her relation to human organizations must be adjusted with the utmost exactness, if she be a blessing to them and they a benefit to her. Like the moon to which she is compared in Scripture, she has her orbit in which to move, and it is perilous to her welfare to be drawn or driven from it.

While the church is in a state of obscurity, her danger from either the seductions or the attacks of the world is comparatively small. In proportion, however, as she increases in numbers and extends her boundaries, she attracts its attention. Too conspicuous to be overlooked, and too important to be despised, she presents to the nations of the earth for their solution the question, How shall they treat her? What shall they do with her? Were they to consult their inclinations, uninfluenced by considerations of policy, they would not be long in determining their course. That course is expressed in language long since uttered: "Come and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance." The same spirit toward the church has ever animated the kingdoms of this world. "They say in their hearts, Let us destroy them altogether; they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land."

Composed of those who are not wholly sanctified, and of some who are wholly unsanctified, the church has never been proof against the seductive influences which the world knows so well how to employ. Here is the quarter on which she is in the greatest danger, and here it is that she has suffered most. The men of the world are very willing to enter into terms with the church, providing the agreement inure to their advantage. It can never be gain to the church, but will be always to her unspeakable detriment, to accede to conditions proposed to her by the world.

There are two relations which the church has sustained to the world—two unnatural positions in which she has allowed herself to be placed, with regard to the civil power, from which she has sorely suffered, and by which she has been sadly degraded. By

the progress of the Christian religion in the first three centuries of its existence, it became a power in the Roman empire to be courted, not despised. By an imperial decree it became the religion of the empire, on terms not proposed by the church, but to which she was too willing to accede. This was the era of her glory in the eyes of those who look at things according to the outward appearance, but to those who see objects in their true light, it was the beginning of a rapid and ruinous decline. The church vaulted into a position for which she was not designed nor fitted, and it is not strange that, giddy from her elevation and dazzled with the showy honors heaped on her, she lost sight of her true relation to her Head, to her members and to the world. Ambitious ecclesiastics aspired after greater honor and wider influence, and, in the providence of God, their aspirations and efforts were but too successful. Not satisfied with ruling over the flock, the church, by her highest functionary, sought to rule over nations. History sets before us the strange spectacle of the church, by her acknowledged head on earth, setting up kings and putting them down at pleasure, partitioning countries and distributing them to his favorites.

And of this abnormal position of the church and the danger resulting from it, prophecy had given distinct warning. The apostle John, in the vision recorded Rev. 17, was invited by a heavenly messenger to see the judgment of the great whore that sits on many waters. In the close of the vision he is told that this is the great city that reigneth over the kings of the earth. This woman, seen by the apostle riding on a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, is the impersonation of what had been the church of Christ, but having allowed herself to be seduced by the kings of the earth, had become a degraded adulteress. Her position as a rider on the beast with seven heads and ten horns, is a symbolical representation of the power with which the kingdoms of Europe rewarded her, for yielding to their seductions and breaking her pledged faith with her Husband and Head. From being the true vine she became the degenerate plant of a strange vine—from being the bride, the Lamb's wife, she became "the great whore." And branded on her shameless forehead is her name, the ineffaceable mark of her infamy: "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." Prophecy and history stand as two beacons, to warn the church in all succeeding ages against any connexion with the civil power that will compromise her purity, dishonor her Lord, and ultimately result in her utter and hopeless ruin.

The other relation to the civil power to which I have referred, as also disastrous to the church, is that of a subject and vassal. If the world shows the church favor, or confers power on her, it is not from any love to her or desire for her welfare. Selfishness is the inspiring motive, and policy is the governing principle. The world would much rather see the church degraded below her true position, than elevated above it, if its own interests can be promoted

by it. A reference to history will exemplify these remarks and evince their truth.

The Reformation of the sixteenth century was the greatest event that took place from the time of Christ's ascension, whether we consider its immediate effects, or remote results. The heavens and the earth were shaken by it. Civil and ecclesiastical organizations were broken up, and their entire aspect changed. Those who were enlightened to see the corruptions of which the church behoved to be purged, saw as a main cause of them all, the temporal power which she had seized and had so long wielded with no gentle sway. Not more intent were those eminent instruments of God in condemning the errors that relate to the way of the sinner's acceptance with Him, than in contending against the temporal power which the church had arrogated to herself. In Britain especially this was done, and with entire success. There, at an early period in the Reformation, the temporal authority of the Pope was rejected and his power defied.

It is true, indeed, that Henry VIII. did not cast off the authority of the Pope from any regard for the church's safety or honor. His breast was not susceptible of such a feeling. He had personal resentment to gratify, and he had selfish interests to promote. But had not the leavening influence of Christianity pervaded the length and breadth of the nation, preparing it for such a measure, he never would have attempted it, or if he had he must have failed in it. The transition was sudden, and, as might be expected, it was violent and extreme. The power refused to the bishop of Rome was claimed by the king of England, with this marked difference: the Pope claimed to be king of kings, because he was the head of the church; Henry claimed to be the head of the church, because he was the king of England. The Pope made the civil power an adjunct of the ecclesiastical; the King made the ecclesiastical an adjunct of the civil.

The relation of the church to the civil power, as thus constituted, was what is generally expressed by the term Erastian. She was subordinate to it. This condition, if not more dangerous, was at least more humbling than that from which she had been released. Out of her true position, she was covered with a cloud and stripped of her glory. Paralyzed and degraded, she lay at the feet of the civil power, unable to put forth any effort without its permission, and helpless to resist any encroachment that might be made on the remnant of liberty still left to her. Too late to correct the error, she realized the legitimate results of concessions to the throne wholly inconsistent with that independence secured to her by her divine charter.

It is by looking at the church in these forced and unnatural relations to the civil power, that the prejudice has arisen against any connection between ecclesiastical and civil institutions. Because, on the one hand, the church, when placed above the state, became corrupted and hopelessly apostate; and, on the other hand, when made dependent on the civil power, she suffered a decay of her

spirituality, was crippled in her energies, and sunk into a state of slothful inactivity, superficial thinkers leap to the conclusion that Christianity and the State should be entirely separated. If, from the abuse of a thing, there would be a legitimate argument against its use, then the logic would be faultless and the conclusion irresistible. But the fallacy of this mode of reasoning is, on all hands, admitted, and yet, most strange! it is the only kind of argument that is used to justify the let-alone policy of the state toward the church. In opposition to such a view, we affirm that there is a connection between the Christian religion and the state that is dutiful, safe and advantageous. This point we propose to discuss under our fourth thesis.

IV. *Christianity, elevated to its proper place in a nation, will be an element of strength, prosperity and permanence.* As an abstract proposition, we presume, no one will deny the truth of this thesis, who believes in the divine origin of Christianity. In its proper place, it cannot but be a beneficent agency. But where, with regard to a nation, is that proper place? is the question. Is Christianity properly adjusted with regard to the nation, when it is refused recognition, treated with indifference, and left on a level with irreligion? Or is it so, when the church, which is its embodiment, is either placed over the civil power, or subjected to it? We maintain that neither of these is the right adjustment, but that Christianity must be recognized and encouraged by a nation, in opposition to all counter systems, in order that the nation may receive the advantages which it is suited and designed to confer. I submit the following considerations on this point.

1. The nation should recognize and receive the Bible as the supreme law. That any person should object to this, who believes that "the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule to direct us how to glorify and enjoy God," is one of those strange inconsistencies that excite our wonder. Were we attempting to convince an infidel, we might endeavor to demonstrate the truth of the proposition which we have presented in the words of the Catechism; but to it all Christians have given their assent substantially, if not in form. The comprehensive terms in which the proposition is enunciated leave no chance to escape, by the allegation that it does not apply to nations. If men, constituted into a nation and in the performance of national acts, are under no obligation to make the glorifying and enjoying of God the end of their being; or, if the way to do this is to be learned from some other rule than the Holy Scriptures, then there should be some ground for the allegation. But as neither of these positions will be maintained by Bible believers, they should, for consistency's sake, if for no better reason, discard the premises of which they are the logical results.

That nations, enjoying the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, should declare that the laws therein revealed are above, and should be the rule and standard of all human laws, is a proposition so evidently true, that its opposite involves the greatest absurdity and

falsehood. That infidelity should invent such a shameless imposition as this, is not strange; but it is beyond measure strange that it could succeed in imposing its impious fabrication on a Christian community. It is just in this way that the church has been despoiled of her rights. And this outrage will continue, to the irreparable loss of civil communities, until they base their governments on the immutable and beneficent law of Him who is the one Law-giver. When that is done an important step will have been taken toward the elevation of the church to her true position.

What we contend for was, by divine authority, enjoined on the Israelitish nation. "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: and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law, and these statutes, to do them." Deut. 17: 18. 19. "Think not," says our Lord, "that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Matt. 5: 17. This recognition of the law includes a recognition of God as the source of all authority, and of Messiah, by the appointment of the Father, the Governor among the nations.

2. The nation should see that laws according to the supreme standard be enacted and executed. This follows from the point just established. A supreme law demands that all subordinate legislation be in harmony with it, and adapted to give it effect. And it requires also that those to whom the administration of the government is committed, be men who in their lives are conformed to the law. None but men who fear God are, according to the divine standard, entitled to rule over a Christian people. And the laws enacted must conform to the moral law in its whole extent—to the precepts of the first, as well as to those of the second table—enforcing duty to God, as well as duty to man. A nation that fails to prohibit by law, idolatry, blasphemy and Sabbath breaking, is faithless to its duty to God and men; while a nation, on the other hand, that forbids the commission of these sins against God, is giving efficient aid to the church, by strengthening her hands in the great work of reforming and blessing the world. And this shall be done when, as foretold in prophecy, "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." Dan. 7: 18.

3. The nation should recognize and support the church in the dispensation of the ordinances committed to her. I assert here merely a general principle, aware that, in the present condition of things, the details would be attended with difficulty. I maintain, however, the principle, that the nation is bound, by the authority of God, to furnish to the church assistance in accomplishing the end of her institution. Though the church is a spiritual organization, her work is to be done by material means and instrumentalities. Though she is not of the world, she is in the world. To her is assigned the duty of evangelizing the world, and this she does

by sending forth ministers to dispense the word and ordinances. It is foreign to the constitution of the church, as a spiritual association, to engage in financiering. This is work proper to the nation. And it is bound to provide means that the church may go on effectually with her work.

I adduce, in proof of this point, promises showing what shall be the conduct of nations toward the church, in those times of civil and religious happiness for which we are looking with earnest expectation: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers." Isa. 49 : 22, 23. "Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee." Ps. 68 : 29. "The kings of the earth do bring their honor and glory into it." Rev. 21 : 24.

4. The nation should consult the church in emergencies and difficulties, in order to know its duty. The high-priest, under the law, was consulted by pious rulers, who ascertained by Urim and Thummim the mind of God. Though there is no high-priest now, nor responding oracle, yet still the people are "to seek the law at the mouth" (Mal. 2 : 7) of the divinely-appointed ministry. It is their duty to declare the whole counsel of God to rulers, as well as to the people. Herod acted with judgment, when he inquired of the chief priests and scribes where Christ should be born. Matt. 2 : 4. It was sound policy in the English parliament to summon the Assembly of Divines "to confer and treat among themselves of such matters and things as should be proposed to them by either of the houses of parliament." Of the labors of that Assembly not only the whole Presbyterian church, but both Britain and America, in a civil point of view, have reaped the benefit. And it would be wisdom in our rulers, were they now to adopt a similar mode of action, to ascertain how the country is to be delivered from its present condition of difficulty and danger. And we are assured nations will look to the church for light, when she manifests that she is the light of the world. To this high honor she is called by her exalted Head. "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." Isa. 60 : 1, 3. And God has promised to elevate his church to this position of dignity and influence. "In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Micah 4 : 1, 2.

If such be the position which the church should occupy with regard to the nations, then it is plain that she has all along, in all

lands, been greatly wronged. It was wrong to elevate her above the civil power, and no less so to subordinate her to it. It was a great wrong to treat her with indifference, and it added to the injury to allow to her enemies the privileges that were exclusively hers. In this respect the church has cause to complain of the unkind treatment she has received from this nation. Much of what this country is that is really good, it has received through her instrumentality. It was not only unkind, but ungrateful, to make no return. This nation has denied to the church that fostering care that it was bound to give her, and thereby it has deprived itself of the still greater advantages she would have conferred.

And in this we may see one of the causes, and not the least, of the Lord's controversy with this land. The church is dear to Him who ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. He is the head over all things to the church, which is his body. Any indignity offered to her He will take account of and resent. "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye." This nation, at the beginning, ignored the church, and God has given it up to be distracted by the counsels of the wicked. It separated what God designed should be joined together, duty to God and duty to man, and God has rent it in twain. It claimed to be able to govern without the aid of Christianity, and God has judicially left it to reap the fruit of its folly and sin. "They know not, neither do they understand; they walk on in darkness. All the foundations of the earth are out of course."

The ministry are required to urge the claims of the church to be received into her proper place in respect of the nation. For this duty you, who are looking forward to that office, should prepare with all diligence. If others are silent, you who claim as your ancestry the confessors and martyrs, who suffered rather than yield any part of the blood-bought heritage of the church, must cry aloud and not spare. Every consideration, both of the glory of God, the honor of religion, and the welfare of the nation, demands of you to testify with all earnestness against the dishonor done to the bride, the Lamb's wife, by placing her on a level with "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." Let the zeal of the Lord's house eat you up, when you see the rights and immunities of the church withheld from her and given to her enemies. And let true patriotism inspire you with faithfulness and firmness to declare to the nation, that its only hope is to take the church of Christ into its counsels and treat her as a friend.

And this shall ultimately be done. The daughter of Zion shall not be always "a cottage in a vineyard, a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, a besieged city." There is an appointed time for her favor, when the Lord shall arise and have mercy on her. He calls her and she shall respond to his call. "Shake thyself from the dust, arise and sit down, O Jerusalem! loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion." She that looked forth in the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, shall be terrible as an army with banners. The seventh trumpet shall proclaim the era of this

wondrous change. When the voices in heaven shall announce that the "kingdoms of this world have become our Lord's and his Christ's," the four and twenty elders, the church organs, shall respond in acclamations of praise: "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, who art, and wast, and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned." Then shall be realized what John saw and heard in vision: "I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

"How fair the daughter of Jerusalem then!
How gloriously from Zion hill she look'd!
Clothed with the sun, and in her train the moon,
And on her head a coronet of stars,
And girding round her waist, with heavenly grace,
The bow of mercy bright; and in her hand
Immanuel's cross, her sceptre and her hope."

"The city shall be flourishing, her citizens abound
In number shall, like to the grass that grows upon the ground.
His name for ever shall endure; last like the sun it shall:
Men shall be bless'd in him, and bless'd all nations shall him call.
Now blessed be the Lord our God, the God of Israel,
For he alone doth wondrous works, in glory that excel.
And blessed be his glorious name to all eternity:
The whole earth let his glory fill. Amen, so let it be."

SELECTIONS.

THE CHURCH AND THE POOR.

IN fine, we are persuaded that all other measures of reform must fail to reach the cause of this evil, and fail to restore the scriptural relation of the church to the poor, whilst the expenses of our congregations continue to be provided for exclusively by the system of renting the pews. It appears to us that there is no conceivable way in which this method can be prevented from exerting an irresistible influence to alienate and exclude the poor from the church. For, as we have seen, it offers the gospel to them upon no other terms than the payment of a sum of money, which multitudes are not able to pay; and it says, by a course of action, more significant and expressive than any words could be, to the "man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, . . . Sit thou here in a good place;" and to the "poor man, in vile raiment, . . . Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool." We have seen, also, that the respectable poor will not occupy, except in rare cases, free pews set apart for them in a church where this system prevails. For reasons similar to those which influence them in this case, they cannot be gathered in any large numbers into churches built and sustained by the purest benevolence of the wealthy for their exclusive accommodation. Hence the failure of those enterprises which have been undertaken for this object, in some of our large cities. And if they could be gathered into separate churches by themselves, that would be to subvert the