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No. II.

THE SABBATH.—ITS NATURE AND SANCTIFICATION.

1. *The Sabbath is designed as a day of rest.*

This is a primary element in the sabbatical institution. It is a cessation from ordinary employment. The language of the command is, "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work." The command not only forbids us to labor, but it enjoins the duty of resting.—Labor is commanded during six days; and rest on the seventh. And they are equally obligatory by the Divine precept. The rest of the Sabbath is an entire abstinence from all secular employments of every kind; except such as may be included in the "works of necessity and mercy." Besides cessation from overt acts of secular employment, it includes also the duty of abstaining from thinking and speaking about such employment. To speak or think of such things as the command enjoins us to rest from, is as truly a violation of the Divine law, as to do those things with our hands.—Every householder is bound by the law of the Sabbath to see that the rest of the Sabbath is kept by every one under his roof, or under his authority; not even excepting the stranger who may have turned aside to tarry with him for the night; and in the fourth commandment God gives him authority to enforce upon all under his paternal power or guardianship cessation from secular business. On the other hand, the rest of the Sabbath is extended as a privileged right to all the members of a family; the fourth commandment is their charter to this privilege. The head of a family interferes with Divine authority, and robs those who are under his control of

serious refutation. They are generally such as most men would not think sufficient to sustain them in the neglect of their secular business: yet they furnish to easy minded professors, a ready apology for neglecting one of the most important duties of the Christian life. If the consciences of these practical despisers of the Sabbath are not altogether seared, it might not be an unprofitable employment to test the validity of their excuses by a personal inquiry. Let such an one, at the close of the Lord's day, who instead of sanctifying it by attendance on public ordinances, has been loitering at home, or otherwise misspending its sacred hours, examine his conduct, and try it by an application of the Divine law: let him do this, as in the presence of the searcher of hearts, and in view of that account which he must give to the Judge of all, for the privileges which he has enjoyed. If the examination does not result in self-condemnation, we have no hesitation in saying that he is only a nominal christian; and that if he does not repent of his unsanctified Sabbaths, he may, nay, he *shall* be condemned at a bar more dreadful than that of conscience; a tribunal from whose judgment there is no appeal, and from whose decision there is no escape.

TESTIMONY AGAINST THE MORAL EVILS IN THE CIVIL INSTITUTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES.

(*Published in "Overture" by order of Synod.*)

God has instituted civil government for the advancement of his own glory and for the good of men. "The powers that be are ordained of God." "He is the minister of God to thee for good." Rom. xiii. 1, 4. It was instituted before the fall of man; and so originated in the law of nature, binding the moral subject of God's government to obey his Creator. Its author is a holy God, the law by which it is regulated is holy, and it is designed to promote the glory of God and the holiness and happiness of man. As every intelligent creature is under law to God in his individual capacity, so all associations of moral agents are under obligation to be subject to the law of their natures. Adam and Eve, in their social relations, were as much bound in all things to obey the laws of their Creator, as in the duties which they owed to him indi-

vidually. God instituted the marriage relation, and prescribed its mutual obligations. All the subjects of Jehovah's moral government, in their relations to each other, are bound to act according to the will of God. In the first four of the Ten Commandments, or in the first table of the law, God has ordained what duties men shall perform to himself; and in the other six, or second table, those which they shall perform to one another. The social, as well as the personal actings of men are equally to be regulated by the law of God. The rectitude or the sinfulness of every individual and of every social act, is determined by its conformity or disconformity to the will of the supreme lawgiver. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous." 1 John iii. 7. "Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John iii. 4. The actions of civil rulers and of subjects are good, when they accord with the law of God, and evil, when they violate its provisions. This maxim is agreeable to the common conscience of men in all nations, that know and acknowledge the being of a God. Were it not so, conscience would impose no restraint on the evil propensities of magistrates or subjects; conscience could neither accuse nor excuse them as to their civil actions; for that faculty exercises the office of a judge in applying the law of God. Hence all legitimate civil rule is from God, as Creator, and in its constitution and administration must be conformed to the will of its Author. To maintain that it was instituted of God, and then left entirely to the will of the creature, is no better than the doctrine of Epicurus, that God having created the universe, at once and forever abandoned all care of it as to its sustentation or government. Indeed, many of the popular maxims of civil government are neither more nor less than a partial revival of that Epicurean tenet. "They say unto God, depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve him?" Job xxi. 14, 15. All such notions are essentially atheistical, offering the highest indignity to the Lawgiver, and doing violence to the natural conscience.

God has placed our world under an economy of mercy, and subjected it to the Lord Jesus Christ as Mediator, who has interposed for the salvation of sinners. All right to the enjoyment of any good in the material world and in the moral institutions of the Creator, was forfeited by man when he violated the covenant of works and fell in Adam. He had no

right, after his fall, to any of the blessings flowing from civil government. Having forfeited life, no title could remain to any of the enjoyments resulting from his social relations.—Had man not fallen, Adam would have been the patriarchal civil ruler of all his posterity as long as he continued on earth. God made him to have dominion over the works of his hands, and put all things under his feet: “all sheep and oxen, yea and the beasts of the field; the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea, and *whatsoever* passeth through the paths of the seas.” Ps. viii. 6—8. This dominion man lost by the violation of the old covenant. Christ Jesus, the second man, the Lord from heaven, has committed to him the dominion which passed by sin from the hands of the first man. “We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor.” Heb. ii. 9. “The government is laid on his shoulders; he sits on the throne of David to order and to establish it forever.” “He is the Prince of the kings of the earth.” “Thrones, principalities, powers and dominions are made subject to him.”—Princes and judges of the earth, and all nations are commanded to do homage to him. He has given by his Spirit the written Word to men, as the law of his government in this colony of his empire. “All kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord, when they hear the words of thy mouth.” Ps. cxxxviii. 4. He has commanded the nations to provide out of all the people, “able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them.” Ex. xviii. 21. By his high and holy authority, he has enjoined that all who are detained in unrighteous bondage shall be immediately emancipated. “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?” Isa. lviii. 6.

All these injunctions of the God of heaven, have been disregarded by the people of the United States, in the organization and administration of their civil government.

I. In the United States Constitution there is no recognition of the Holy Scriptures, as extending their authority over the nation or over any individual citizen. The Preamble to that instrument is as follows:—“We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings

of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution, for the United States of America.”— Among the objects here enumerated, there is not mentioned the observation of the laws of God, either as they are revealed by the light of nature, or in the Holy Scriptures. There is no mention of any rule as paramount to the will of the people, who ordain this fundamental law of the commonwealth.— Examine the document through all its articles and sections, and there will not be found any reference to the law of God, either directly or by implication. Were any State in the Union to frame a constitution without referring to that of the United States, it would be deemed a rejection of the Federal government, and it would be so in fact. The United States is a colony in the Mediatorial dominion of the Lord Jesus Christ; for “every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Phil. ii. 11. As there is no such confession, nor any allusion to his law in the Federal constitution, it is plainly a rejection of the written Word, as the rule by which they profess to be governed.— There are, indeed, societies of various character formed in every nation, without any formal recognition of the governing power, and yet they are not considered as chargeable with its rejection. But they are not governmental associations; the objects which they propose to attain are not those of civil government; or if they are in part, the means by which they are to be attained are different. God, the supreme Ruler, has enacted laws for the government of commonwealths, and commanded all to obey them. The nation that refuses to recognize them is chargeable with a formal disregard of God’s authority. It could not be the intention of the framers of the constitution, to acknowledge the Holy Scriptures as the supreme law of the land; otherwise deists would have been excluded from all those offices where an oath of office is required upon entering on its administration. That they are so excluded, has never been held by the most zealous advocates of the Christianity of the constitution. It is well known, also, that there were many infidels in the convention by whom it was formed, and who signed it without dissent from any of its provisions. They certainly understood it; and they would never have solemnly assented and pledged themselves to it, in the face of all those who knew their infidelity, had it embraced a recognition of the Christian religion. Farther, were the empires of Turkey and China to be revolutionized, and

adopt a republican form of government, they might, continuing in Mahometanism and Paganism, adopt the whole United States' constitution, except the name, without inconsistency. There is nothing, in the instrument, adverse to Mahometanism, or Brahmanism. A Mahometan, or a Hindoo Brahman, might be elected a member of Congress, or President of the United States, take the oath of office, and administer it, without renouncing any of his dogmas. But what is substantially the same thing, both Jews and Deists have sworn to support the constitution, without being deemed guilty of an act inconsistent with their rejection of the Bible, in whole or in part. How could they be so charged? What provision of the document could be plead against them? None.

In reply to all this, it has been urged that Sunday is mentioned in the constitution. True, it is so. But in what connection? "If any bill shall not be returned by the President within ten days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him, the same shall be a law." [Art. I. Sec. vii. specification 2.] Is it a violation of the tenets of a Jew; Deist, Mahometan, or Hindoo, to retain a bill, in some cases, eleven or twelve days, instead of ten? Does he thereby acknowledge the Sabbath to be a divine institution? Were two merchants to enter into partnership, on condition that their store should not be opened on Sabbath, a deistical partner would not violate the contract by spending the whole of that day in some other secular employment—as many Presidents have done, their oath of office notwithstanding. The mention of the Sabbath, and by its pagan name too, is no more a recognition of that day as set apart by God in his word for devotion, than the naming of Thursday for any transaction by christians, is a recognition of the worship of the pagan idol Thor, to whom, among the heathen, that day was sacred.— Besides, it was not the intention of those who framed the constitution, to exclude christians from the office of President. They intended to put all on an equal footing. Had they not excepted the Sabbath, an advantage would have been given to an infidel President, over a christian, who might entertain conscientious scruples as to the examining of bills on the Lord's day. After all, were there, as there is not, a recognition of one precept of the law of God, would that be an acknowledgment of the whole law? It might as well be plead that the punishment of theft, by the government of China, is a recognition of the Christian religion, and proves that gov-

ernment to be Christian, because one commandment of the Bible is—"Thou shalt not steal." By this argument, all the governments of the world might be proved to recognize christianity, and to acknowledge Messiah as their prince! The advocates of the christianity of the United States' government must be hard pressed in the field of argument, when they are compelled to rear the superstructure of their advocacy on so narrow a basis.

II. Christ's Lordship over the United States is not acknowledged by the people in the constitution of their government. How could it be, when many of those who framed, and who have administered it, have held him to be an impostor, and his Bible a cunningly devised fable? All the arguments under the preceding article, go to establish this charge. In truth, so little has the word of God been read and studied in this land, that a great majority of the citizens remain to this day in wilful ignorance of the truth, that Christ as Mediator "is the prince of the kings of the earth:" Rev. i. 5. How could they acknowledge his lordship over them, while they are ignorant of his claims? A vast majority of the people make no profession of his religion in their own persons, as members of his church. Is it reasonable to suppose that this irreligious majority would recognize his claims to lordship over the commonwealth? Let any religious man survey his own neighborhood, and reflect on the character of all his acquaintances, and then ask himself, is it probable that such a people would frame a government to do homage to the Lord Jesus Christ, "as having all power given to him in heaven and earth?" Mat. xxviii. 18. Were the members of the convention better informed on these subjects, or more religious than the mass of the people? Far otherwise, indeed. The number of religious men, occupying the civil offices of the commonwealth, have been very few, in proportion to that of the christian professors in the several Protestant churches. It was so in the convention. There was even less probability that they would acknowledge Christ, than that a majority of the whole people would have done so, had they all been assembled in order to form a constitution. But we are not left to this *a priore* reasoning; we have the demonstration of fact. There is no allusion to the Author of the Christian religion; no hint that such a personage ever appeared in the world. There could not have been less had the constitution been framed in China, Turkey or Hindoostan. Would any

man, if he had no other means of information, suspect from the perusal of the constitution, that the Son of God had ever appeared in our world as the Saviour of sinners—that he died, rose again, and is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high? Never. And are we, after all this, to be told that he is acknowledged, his religion recognized, and his law honored, in an instrument from which even the being of such a person could not possibly be known? In a christian commonwealth, where there had been Bibles, churches, ministers of the gospel, and an extensive and stated ministration of gospel ordinances, from the first settlement of the colonies, without interruption, to the meeting of the convention, such a contemptuous neglect to do any honor to Jesus Christ, the Lord of the whole earth, is an act of rebellion against the authority of Jehovah, a national sin of deep aggravation, over which every good man is called to mourn. It is a sin which God will visit, “when he cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.” *Isa. xxvi. 25.*

In reply to this it is argued, that until a nation recognizes the authority of Christ, it is no sin not to acknowledge him—as there is no breach of engagement, no violation of vow. We reply, that there can be no act of voluntary obedience approved of God, where there is no legitimate authority. If the authority is lawful, and the claim to obedience just, it is a sin to refuse to obey, whether it be promised or not. The claim of Christ to dominion is founded in the donation of the kingdom to him by God the Father. “I will make him my first born, higher than the kings of the earth.” *Ps. lxxxix. 27.* “Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.” *Ps. lxxii. 11.* “Be wise now therefore, O ye kings, be instructed ye judges of the earth—kiss ye the Son, lest he be angry and ye perish from the way.” *Ps. ii. 10, 12.* His right to rule is absolute, and not suspended on the will of the nations. In the day of his wrath he will prostrate kings who refuse to do him homage, as well as those who have promised to obey him and have violated their oath of allegiance. If the objection be valid, then all the nations of the world, from the organization of the first commonwealth to the end of the world, might have refused to acknowledge the lordship of Christ, and yet no guilt have rested on them. How preposterous! God the Father bestows on his Son the right to reign, and commands all to obey; all refuse, or at least neglect to do him homage according to the decree of the

Father, and yet they commit no sin! They expressly reject the authority of him "who has a right to reign," and yet are guiltless! If this is the best plea for the disregard of Christ's authority, by the United States, that conscience which will be quieted by it, must be easily appeased.

III. There is not in the constitution any acknowledgment of God. The same remark applies as in the preceding topic—No one could know, by reading the constitution, that there is a God. There would be nothing absurd in an Atheist giving his affirmation for its support. What article, provision or sentiment might be plead against him? None. The constitution forbids any religious test. "No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office." [Art. vi. Sec. 3.] Were the existence of God recognized, it would require a test, excluding atheists; as the oath of office would be a solemn declaration of belief in the being of God. Hence it was manifestly the intention neither to profess a national belief of the being of Jehovah, nor any subjection to him.—The will of the people, and not the law of God, was thought, by the framers of that document, to be the ultimate fountain of civil government. Were it true that in a christian nation, the civil authority might be the ordinance of God, without any recognition of the Mediatorial dominion, because it is founded in the law of nature, the refusal of the nation to acknowledge the God of nature, sets aside the claim of the United States' government to be his institution. It is a proclamation that the commonwealth holds itself to be independent of "all that is called God." Unless there is a God, there can be no law of nature. A profession of subjection to the law of nature is a recognition of the being of God, and of his authority. It cannot be inferred from any provision in the constitution, that there are any eternal and unalterable principles of national right or wrong, unless it be, that the majority of the nation can do no wrong. The United States, as a nation, have not acknowledged any God as their God. If any thing can constitute national atheism, this sin may, without overstraining, be charged on the United States, in framing their federal constitution. According to the Westminster Divines, (Larger Catechism, Question 105,)—"The sins forbidden in the first commandment are, atheism, in denying or not having a God—the not having and avouching him for God and our God," &c. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." Ps. xiv. 5. Should any one ask a citizen of this

commonwealth, Has your nation any God? would it not be very natural to reply, Read the federal constitution; that is the only expression of our national faith? We as a nation, believe every thing which that document embraces, and we cannot be said to believe any principle which it does not contain. The inquirer reads the document, and does not find the name of God, nor any allusion to his being or government: will he not safely infer that this commonwealth has no God? The Westminster Divines say, that the not having a God is atheism. If any one still affirms that the nation claims to have a God, how will he prove it? Clearly, not by the constitution. The atheism, with which we charge that instrument, is, that in it the nation does not recognize the being of God, "nor avouch him to be their God." All this is so repugnant to the love and fear of God, that many attempts have been made to diminish the odium of such dishonor to Him; to apologise for this most unholy feature of the constitution, and to make it acceptable to the christian people.

1. It is said to be a great honor to God not to mention his name in the constitution, as it takes his being and authority for granted! If this is true, the church could not better fulfil her duty, than to omit all mention of the name of God in her creeds and confessions! The magistracy and the ministry are both ordinances of God; and if the former may be constituted without referring to his authority or name, and honor him by the omission, why not the latter?

2. It is plead that the name of God is not in the book of Esther, yet we admit it into the canon of divine revelation; and that therefore the government of the United States may be acknowledged to be the ordinance of God, though his name is not found in its constitution. Such attempts to defend a sinful nation in the dishonor which it does to God the Creator, would be unworthy of mention or refutation, were it not that they beguile unstable souls, and that those who are inclined to flatter the ungodly great, satisfy their consciences with the most transparent sophisms. This sophism we expose by the following remarks:

1. The name of God is in the Bible, of which the book of Esther forms a part; whereas his name is found in *no part* of the United States constitution.

2. The *name* of God is engraven on the whole of that portion of his word; for, as a historical document, it displays his wisdom, power, and goodness, exercised in the preserva-

tion of his people. Who can find the name of Jehovah, so impressed on the federal constitution?

3. The book of Esther was *designed* to make known the God of Israel. This will not be questioned by any one but an infidel. It reveals the Excellency of Jehovah, not only as the God of providence, but as the God of grace. "Now in Shushan the palace, there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Kish, a Benjamite, which had been carried away with Jechoniah, king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away." Esth. ii. 5, 6. This specification is designed to show that Mordecai and Esther, and their people—the Jews, were the covenant people of God. It directs the mind of the devout reader to the church of God, as directly as if it had been named; and is the key to the whole narrative. The book of Esther contains a historical illustration of the truth, that the kingdom of providence is administered by the Prince of the kings of the earth, in subserviency to the interests of his church. Is the *name* of God not in all this? Now it may be asked of every candid man, whether he believes the *design* of the United States' constitution is to make known and honor God, either as the God of providence, or as the God of the church?

4. The name of Jehovah is in the book of Esther, however often the contrary has been ignorantly asserted. The name Judah signifies a praiser of Jehovah. The name translated Jews, signifies praisers of Jehovah. This name of God is put on his people. "And they shall put my name on the children of Israel." Num. vi. 27. God changed the name of Jacob to that of Israel, which signifies, prince of God; which name the whole church bears, to remind all her members of their relation to the God of Jacob, and to encourage them in prayer to him. This shows that the name Jews, or praisers of God, was not fortuitous. Jacob refers in the blessing of Judah, to the import of his name. "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise." Gen. xlix. 8. While he praised Jehovah, his brethren should praise him. The name of Jehovah is put on his people; for under the New Testament dispensation, the saints are called Jews. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; in those days, *it shall come to pass* that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

Zec. viii. 23. "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly—but he is a Jew which is one inwardly." Rom. ii. 28, 29. The name Jew is designed of God to signify, that he to whom it belongs in its true sense, is a worshipper of Jehovah, the God of Israel. The tracing of the ancestry of Mordecai to Benjamin, and the record of his having been a citizen of Jerusalem, at the time of the carrying away to Babylon, for the purpose of showing that he was a member of the church, is evidence that we do not lay too much stress on the name, "Praisers of God." In the forty-seven times that this name occurs in the book of Esther, it signifies in every instance, in the original, a praiser, or praisers of God; so that his name, named upon his people, is mentioned in the book of Esther forty-seven times. If the futile objection which we have refuted, does not merit all the argument bestowed on it, some profit may accrue in reminding all that the members of the church of Christ are bound to worship Jehovah, Israel's God; and not to do homage to his enemies, who refuse to obey him. They are encouraged not to fear the modern Hamans, though they bow not to them, for the God of the Jews will defend them.

(*To be continued.*)

DR. CLARKE'S LETTER ON PSALMODY.

The author of the following letter, DR. THOMAS CLARKE, was among the first Seceder ministers that emigrated to America. He was remarkable for his plain and pointed manner of preaching, and the letter is a faithful exhibition of truth against the use of human compositions in the praises of God. It is entitled—"Plain reasons why neither Dr. Watts' Imitations of the Psalms, nor his other poems, nor any other human compositions, ought to be used in the praises of the great God our Saviour—But that a metre version of the Book of Psalms—ought to be used." Though written many years ago, and in a style, in some respects, rather antiquated, it will be acceptable to our readers as a plain and faithful document, on an all-important subject.

ED.

Christian Reader,—If thou art really a christian by sweet experience, as Saul of Tarsus was made, then thou surely standest in awe of the divine law, revealed in the holy scriptures, the only rule of faith and practice, by which all men shall be finally judged. Thou hast been made like him in

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(Continued from page 50.)

III. It is plead that all these charges against the U. States' Constitution are mere defects, that no human instrument is perfect, and though there may be much wanting, yet those who swear to support the constitution do not bind themselves to any thing positively evil. This plea for the United States' constitution, as it is older, so it is more plausible than either of the preceding. We trust however, we shall soon demonstrate that it has no more weight than those that we have refuted.

1. It will be admitted that there may be so great defects in a constitution of either a church or a state, as to vitiate the whole instrument. Try it in the church. Did any body of men associate for the purpose of worshipping God, without any acknowledgment of Christ, no christian will plead that any one could connect himself with such an association, and be guiltless. Yet he would bind himself to no positive evil, it might be plead, with as great plausibility. Were there, again; in a constitution of civil government no guarantee of any security in the enjoyment of personal right for the body of the citizens, and strong guards of the power and possessions of rulers, none would plead that there would be no sin in adopting such an instrument as our own by swearing to its support. Now are the rights of God and the claims of his

law, of less high and holy import than the rights of men?—The acknowledgment of God lies at the basis of every superstructure of civil or magisterial authority. If there can be any fundamental defect, it is the refusal to recognize the authority of the supreme Lawgiver.

2. It is a positive immorality to maintain, as is done in the United States' constitution, that the people are the ultimate source of all civil power. It is true, this is not directly asserted in express words; but it is not the less, on that account, the doctrine of the constitution. There is no hint of a derivation of power to rule from any other quarter, than the will of a majority of the people. That all law, all right, and all authority, proceed from God the Creator and moral governor of the world, is not admitted. This is, in the worst sense of the phrase, to forget God. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Ps. ix. 17. "The nation and kingdom that will not serve him shall perish; yea, those nations shall utterly perish." Isa. lx. 12. God does not cause to perish, utterly waste, and turn into hell, those who commit no sin. The forgetting of God—the neglect to serve him, are in these texts denounced as damning sins. God will not admit as an apology, that their not serving him was a mere negation, an omission only, and no positive evil.

3. It was not by a mere oversight, or want of thought, that God's authority was not acknowledged. The nation did acknowledge him in the old articles of Confederation, which were superseded by the present Constitution. [See last article.] The subject was debated in the Convention, and it was deliberately resolved that there should not be a recognition of the Christian religion or of God. Were any State in the United States to call a convention for the purpose of forming a constitution, and should that body debate the question, and resolve that they would not recognize the federal government, would the resolution be regarded as a mere sinless omission. The national government did not so treat the nullifiers of South Carolina, in their threatening not to obey the national law.

4. Sin consists in a want of conformity to the law of God. The fourth and fifth commandments are the only precepts of the decalogue in the positive form. He who neglects to sanctify the Sabbath, and to honor his father and mother, breaks these precepts directly; though he may plead that he is defec-

tive only. If the plea availed, it would set aside all the claims of these precepts. All the commandments are violated, and very grossly too, by sins of omission, which are as worthy of condemnation, as positive transgressions of the law.

5. If this plea avail for a nation, it will also for an individual. He who never received by faith the Saviour offered in the gospel, who never worships God, and who never makes any profession of obedience to him, may plead with equal plausibility, that all are imperfect, that these are mere defects, that he is guilty of no positive immorality, and that in approving of his whole character, there is no approbation of what is wrong. Would any one for a moment give place to such reasoning? What notions have they of the law of God, who fabricate such apologies for those nations who set it at nought and trample under foot its holy authority?

IV. It is contended that God is acknowledged, as "all executive and judicial officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by an oath or affirmation, to support this constitution." (Art. vi. Sec. 3.) The reply to this is easy. 1. This clause proceeds on the principle, that as many citizens think the sanction of an oath important, and feel themselves bound by it, they therefore shall be bound by what they hold to be an obligation. Papists are sometimes sworn by the cross, when those who administer the oath do not approve of the cross as a proper object by which to swear; because an oath in that form lays hold on the superstitious conscience of the Roman Catholic.

2. The clause does not define who or what shall be invoked in the oath; whether Jupiter, Mahomet, Juggernaut, the cross, or God the Creator. No one could possibly divine from that clause, whether the article was framed by a christian, a Jew, a Mahometan, a Pagan, or an atheist who believes as many French infidels did, that the material universe is the only God.

3. Bands of pirates and robbers bind those who enter into their conspiracies against God and human society, by oaths in the most solemn forms. But who ever reasoned from this fact, that they intend to acknowledge God, and put their banditti under his authority? We do not introduce this illustration for the purpose of comparing the confederation of the States to these outlaws of society, but only to show that the bare use of the oath does not prove that they acknowledge God, as the moral governor of the land.

4. The obligation may be by an affirmation, in which there is no appeal to any God. Were all the officers of the general and state governments to affirm, and refer in the affirmation to no God, they would fulfil all the requisitions of the constitution. Now, when all that the constitution requires may be fulfilled without any recognition of God, he cannot be said to be acknowledged in that instrument.

5. It is immediately added—"But no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." Were it intended that the requisition of an affirmation, or an oath, should be a recognition of the being of God, it would be, to all intents and purposes, a religious test which would exclude atheists and pagans, who do not acknowledge the God of the christian. So cautious are they to guard against the misapprehension that they acknowledge the being or authority of God.

V. We are told that there are many provisions in the constitution agreeable to the law of God, and well calculated to secure in many respects the rights of men and the good order of society. All this is freely admitted. The principle, that the consent of the majority is essential to all lawful authority in the State, the doctrine of representative government, and many of its details, are wise, wholesome, and praiseworthy. But these principles and provisions are not introduced because they are stamped with the divine authority, but because they are the will of the people, and thought to be for the promotion of the public weal. Had they believed that there is no God, and no law enacted by him, these enactments would have been all that they are. Had contrary principles been supposed to be profitable, and according to the will of the people, however adverse to the law of God, they would have been embodied in the constitution. There is not a shadow of evidence that they would not. There never was a society of men, however nefarious, in which some of the internal regulations were not good. No association of men could exist for an hour without this. Let it be understood, that no member of a society shall speak truth, and that no faith can be had in the declaration or promise of any one, and the society would dissolve in a moment. The adoption of some of the laws of God does not imply subjection to his government. When the United States became a nation independent of Great Britain, the great body of English law was transferred to the jurisprudence of this commonwealth,

without owning any allegiance to the British crown. How can the mere fact that the same government has enacted many laws found in the Bible, be plead as an argument that it recognizes the authority of the divine Lawgiver, any more than that of adopting the British laws, to prove subjection to a foreign power? Infidels perform, as to the letter, numerous duties enjoined in the Holy Scriptures, without being thought, by so doing, to recognize the Word of God as their rule of duty.

VI. It is argued that the government is Christian, because Congress and the Supreme Court of the United States do not sit on the Sabbath. But why do they not? It is not because the constitution forbids them to transact business on that day. Besides, they often continue their sessions fur into the Sabbath morning,* which they would not do if they thought it unconstitutional. The late war with Great Britain was declared on the morning of the Sabbath; and Congress lately imposed a fine on some of its members, for absence from their seats on the Sabbath. And though they do not usually sit on the Sabbath, it is because some members are supposed to have conscientious scruples, as to the propriety of transacting congressional business on that day. For the same reason, the United States' courts adjourn over Sabbath, that the consciences of parties doing business in them, may have no violence done them. Even that, it is plain would be disregarded, were there much pecuniary advantage to be gained by Sabbath day sessions. The Sabbath mails, by public authority, desecrate the Lord's day more grossly, more extensively, and more offensively, than the courts would do, were they to continue in session. Thus, the government carries on a public and habitual warfare against one of the most prominent and important provisions of the law of God. Added to all this, the manner in which the members of Congress, the heads of executive departments, and the judges of the court, spend the Sabbath, demonstrates that a great majority of them do not decline to hold sessions or cabinets on that day out of any respect for its holiness. Many of them on the Sabbath, do deeds that would profane a week day.—Withal, we have reason of thankfulness that christianity imposes some degree of restraint on the ungodly, so that infidels

*At the close of their late session, they spent FIFTEEN HOURS of the Sabbath in legislation.—ED.

close their shops generally, and Congress their halls on the Lord's day; though it is no proof that either the infidel or the constitution recognizes its holiness.

VII. In justification of the disregard of the law of God, in the constitution, it is said to be a treaty of confederation, among independent state sovereignties, and not a national, magistral government. It is farther plead, that what may seem to be defective in its provisions, is supplied in the constitutions of the several States; and that several of these recognize the being of God, and some of them, the holy scriptures. This apology is of late invention, is more subtle, and more skilfully devised to mislead, than any of the other pleas that we have refuted above. But when it is analyzed, it is found equally defective.

1. While it is admitted that the national constitution is a federal compact, it claims to be a magistral power, and is so, in fact, however unholy. It provides for the organization of the three departments of government—the legislative, the judiciary, and the executive. The powers conferred on congress are called legislative, or law making. “The legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a congress.” (Art. I. sec. 1.) They are such as belong to civil power only. The exposition and application of the laws are styled judicial, and the officers of this department are called judges.—“The judicial power of the United States—the judges of the supreme and inferior courts.” And their powers are co-extensive with the laws of the United States. “The judicial power shall extend to all cases in law and equity, arising under this constitution.” (Art. III. sec. 1, 2.) The judges are empowered to try crimes, and the punishment of death is inflicted by the decisions of the United States' courts. The President is invested with executive power. “He shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed.” (Art. II. sec. 3.) Legislation, judicial trials, and the execution of punishment, even to death, are functions of the United States' government, according to the constitution. The convention that framed it was called to form a national government, that might supersede the old Articles of Confederation. The President is by the consent of all, styled the chief magistrate, and it is called the government of the United States, by all except those who defend it with a zeal extending even to its annihilation. Either the United States is not a nation, or it is a nation without a government, if the federal constitution does

not erect a national magistracy. But if it were a mere treaty, why should there be no mention of God in a compact so solemn, involving the interests of numerous, young and flourishing commonwealths? Treaties between christian nations, in affairs of incomparably less interest, are usually ratified by a recognition of God's authority. So, after all, as it claims the powers of true and proper magistral authority, this apology will not avail to acquit it of the sin of dishonoring God. It is evident that a plea of this kind never would have been made, were it not so evidently preposterous to constitute an ordinance of God for the government of men, without any recognition of his authority.

2. It is admitted, that in a confederacy like that of the United States, some of the details of legislation may be left to the subordinate, local, or state authorities; while those more comprehensive and general, may be committed to the federal government. Indeed, from the nature of things, it must be so, in all such cases. This occurs in the several states, in which many minor details are committed to the incorporated cities, villages and townships. But how does that excuse the power which extends its jurisdiction over the whole people, from the acknowledgment of God and his law? Much local detail, in civil things, was vested in the heads of the houses of the fathers, in the several tribes of Israel; but the government extending over all the tribes did not, on that account, hold itself freed from obligation to act in professed obedience to the God of Israel.

3. It is true that God and his word are acknowledged in some of the state constitutions; and the federal constitution provides that "Full faith and credit shall be given, in each state, to the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings of every other state: and that the congress may, by penal laws, prescribe the manner in which such acts, records and proceedings shall be proved, and the effect thereof." (Art. iv. Sec. 1.) But does this bind him who swears to support the federal constitution, to believe in the being of God, and in the truth of the holy scriptures, because they are recognized in some states? Not at all. For that would be to introduce a religious test. All that he must believe is, that these are acts and proceedings of the states, embodied in their constitutions. If necessary, congress is bound to aid in carrying them into effect; not because they are true in themselves, but because they have been decreed by the majority of the people in some

state, in the institution of their state government. This is evident; for had the state constitution ordained the very reverse—that no God should be acknowledged, and that the Bible is a cunningly devised fable—he would be equally pledged by the constitution to give full faith and credit to these impious enactments. All this is based on the principle, that the will of the people is absolutely supreme, and that, as they can do no wrong, whatever they determine must be carried into effect. We shall see presently, that on this principle, congress and the federal government are pledged in fact to sustain acts and proceedings, directly contrary to each other. If there is any immorality in the constitution or constitutional laws of any state, “full faith and credit” must be given, and congress may aid in rendering them effectual.

Having demonstrated the futility of all the pleas set up in justification of the constitution on the ground of its not recognizing the being or authority of God, we proceed to specify another immoral feature in that instrument.

IV. It positively prohibits the government from showing any favor to the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. “Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion.” (Amendment I.) The promise of God to the church is—“Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers.” Isa. xlix. 23. “Because of thy temple at Jerusalem, shall kings bring presents unto thee.” Ps. lxxviii. 29. “And the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it—and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.” Rev. xxi. 24, 26. The article referred to above, forbids that any of all these things shall ever be done in the United States. If civil rulers act the part of nursing fathers to the church, if they bring presents to Christ for the temple at Jerusalem, if they bring their glory and honor into it, or if they bring the glory and honor of the nations into it, the effect will be to give greater stability to religion. God has promised it, and all that he promises is good. They in substance affirm, that what God has promised to his church, would not be for the interests of the United States, and that it shall never take effect here. The least degree of countenance given to the true religion by government, tends to its promotion and firmer establishment. Were the constitution to acknowledge the law of God contained in the holy scriptures, as binding on the nation, it would be a law respecting the establishment of religion. This article for ever for-

bids any national recognition of the worship of God. The government shall never make any law to honor God; for that law would respect the establishment of religion. And this absolute prohibition to promote the worship of the living God, is enacted in a Protestant and christian nation! To show the enormity of the wickedness of this unholy provision, we refer to the article published by Synod, on the magistrates' power *circa sacra*.

Under this head, we refer again to the article—"No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." The declaration of God is, "He that ruleth over men *must be just*, ruling in the fear of God." 2 Sam. xxiii. 3. "*It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness.*" Prov. xvi. 12. The constitution says, there is no need that a ruler should be just. No atheist, deist, blasphemer, gross idolator, gambler, Sabbath-breaker, or whore-monger, can ever be excluded by law from any office or trust under the United States. To exclude him would be to apply a religious test. To commit any or all of this wickedness is abominable in a ruler, according to the law of God. But by the constitution, these sins are no disqualification for office. It is no abomination for officers to commit wickedness; they may delight and revel in it, without any impeachment, or disqualification for rule. And indeed the character of very many of the officers, even the chief functionaries of the federal government, furnishes an ample and deplorable commentary on this provision, shows that it is not a dead letter, and demonstrates that it is a delight and not an abomination to them to commit wickedness. The qualifications prescribed of God, for those who administer his ordinance of civil government are, they shall be "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness." Exod. xix. 21.—The constitution declares that the qualifications of fearing God, and holding the truth, shall never be required. This provision is directly and positively opposed to God's ordination. God requires those who rule over men, in the administration of his ordinance, to be his friends: the constitution says his enemies shall not be excluded. This licentious provision is in full keeping with the whole spirit and complexion of the document. It is worthy of remark that the professors who undertake the advocacy of the government as a holy and heavenly institution, seem not to have invented any plea in

vindication of this clause. It would, indeed, be a most ungracious business, for a minister of the gospel, or other professor, to plead for the admission of the openly profane enemies of God to office. It would be even more gross, if possible, than to gravely argue, that the holy scriptures sanction the holding of millions of unoffending men in bondage, though it is confessed to be a most foul sin.

V. The United States' constitution sanctions negro slavery. It is truly painful to see how eager thousands are to free the government from this charge; while as many thousands lay out all their strength to justify the iniquity by the word of God. It is demonstrated that the national constitution is chargeable with this sin, by the following arguments.

1. Slavery existed in many of the states when that instrument was framed; and they were admitted into the union, without any power vested in Congress to emancipate the slaves, and with the understanding that it had no right to set them free. The theory of the federal government is, that all power not granted to it by the constitution, is residuary in the state sovereignties. The power to abolish slavery is confessedly not granted to congress; for had it been, the slaveholding states would not have entered into the confederacy. Government is instituted for the security of personal liberty and rights, and to protect the weak against the violence of the strong. In this one great and essential attribute of legitimate government, the constitution fails. No provision is made for securing to hundreds of thousands of the African race their liberty, or any personal right. They are deliberately and purposely left altogether at the mercy of their masters, who hold them as property, and claim a right to their persons, and all the proceeds of their labor. If a man harbors a thief, knowing him to be in possession of stolen property, the law holds him guilty of participation in the theft; much more if he makes the thief a member of his family, and derives profit from the use of the stolen property. All this and more, as we shall soon see, was done in the adoption of the federal constitution.

2. New states, not only holding slaves, but embodying slavery in their constitutions, as Missouri, and Arkansas, have been admitted into the Union, by congress, after protracted and earnest argument. The constitution makes provision for this. "New states may be admitted by congress." (Art. iv. Sec. 3.) It is not indeed, specified on what terms the ad-

mission shall take place. But it is fair to infer, that the terms shall not be different from those on which others were admitted. Others were at first introduced with all their slave institutions and practices. If congress accepted of new states as members of the Union, it certainly was not empowered to prescribe new terms.

3. Provision was made for the protection of the slave trade for more than twenty years, from the adoption of the constitution. "The migration or importation of such persons as any of the states now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by congress, prior to the year 1808." (Art. I. sec. 9.) The word slave was abhorrent to the ears of men who had, but a few years before, been emancipated from subjection to foreign dominion. No wonder the men who framed the constitution, blushed to use it; but still they gave their solemn and formal permission to continue the accursed traffic in slaves. It was certainly implied that the persons so imported, in slavery, should be guaranteed to the importer~~s~~ as their property, after they compelled them to migrate in bondage. All the slaves who have been imported under this license, and their descendants now in the United States, are held by a tenure derived from that grant.

4. Slavery is one of the pillars of the government. "Representation and direct taxes shall be apportioned—by adding to the whole number of free persons—three-fifths of all other persons." (Art. I. sec. 3.) By this provision, a slaveholder who possesses five slaves is entitled to what is equivalent to four votes. So the constitution rewards him for his sin of enslaving the innocent, with the right of three additional votes. The slaveholding states are rewarded with the privilege of sending about twenty-five more members to congress, than they would be entitled to, did they not commit the sin of enslaving more than two millions of unoffending men.

5. They pay taxes for their slaves. (See the article quoted above.) The constitution admits that the slaves are *persons*, and yet taxes them as *property*. No man can be taxed for property, in the possession of which he is not secured. Of course, the constitution secures the right of property in slaves.

6. The states are bound to deliver up fugitive slaves.—"No person held to labor or service in one state, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such ser-

vice or labor; but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such labor or service may be due." (Art. iv. sec. ii. spec. 3.) The government of the United States, by the constitution, makes it imperative on the free states to deliver up all the slaves that escape from their masters, as soon as they are claimed. Every one who swears to the constitution, pledges himself to aid, if necessary, in such delivery.

7. Should the slaves rise to assert their right to liberty, the constitution pledges the power of the Union to suppress the attempt. "The United States shall—protect each of them [the states]—against domestic violence." (Art. iv. sec. iii.) This article has been acted upon by the federal government, employing its troops to suppress slave insurrection.—It is impossible to conceive a stronger sanction of slavery.

8. Congress has legislated on the subject of the delivery of fugitive slaves, and all the free states have acted on it in the execution of the laws. There are many other congressional acts of legislation on the subject of slavery, whose constitutionality has never been questioned.

9. Full faith and credit shall be given to all the constitutional doings of the states. Many of these embody slavery very specifically in their constitutions. By that of South Carolina, no one can be a member of the house of Assembly, unless he is possessed of ten slaves. In that of Arkansas, the legislature is restrained from freeing any slave without the consent of the holder. The constitution empowers congress to aid in giving effect to these provisions. Other states, as Pennsylvania and New-York, have emancipated their slaves. The constitution sanctions these contradictory acts. This illustrates the evil of taking the will of the people, irrespective of the Divine will, as the basis of all human law.—Were any state to enslave the one-half of its while inhabitants, full faith and credit must be given to it, and congress is empowered to aid in giving it effect. Were one state to establish the Christian religion, as was done in Scotland in 1580, and another state to abolish all religion, decree that every christian should be put to death, and that all the people should profess atheism, full faith and credit must be given to these deeds, and congress is empowered to aid in carrying them into effect.

10. There is a very extensive slave traffic carried on among the different states. The northern slaveholding states supply those to the south and south-west with many thousands

of slaves every year. The horrors of this nefarious traffic are nearly equal to that of the piratical African slave trade. Congress alone has power to regulate this internal commerce in human souls, sinews, flesh, and blood. "Congress shall have power to regulate commerce among the several states." (Art. I. sec. viii. spec. 3.) It may be asked, why, as congress has abolished the African slave trade, and declared it piracy, does it not put a stop to this inter-state traffic—the more odious, and infamous, as it is driven on in the very centre of a christian republic, and before the face of millions of christian professors, and under the eyes of a free people?—The answer is at hand. The federal constitution legitimates, taxes, and guarantees that kind of property in which this most execrable trade prosecutes its business.

11. There are from 6000 to 8000 slaves in the District of Columbia, over which congress exercises "exclusive legislation." (Art. III. sec. ii. spec. 17.) It is plead, indeed on good ground, that congress has power to abolish slavery in the District. But no one doubts, that the constitution vests them also with the power to continue its existence there. Who has ever doubted the constitutionality of the congressional slave laws enacted for the District of Columbia? If there is sin in perpetuating the slavery of the District, all those are partakers in this sin, who give, by oath or suffrage, their adhesion to the federal constitution by which it is authorized. It is perfectly impossible to evade the force of this argument.

12. The slaves in the territory of Florida, are held under laws emanating from congress, according to the constitution. God has been avenging himself on the nation, for their cruelty in the enslaving of the African race, by a most disastrous war waged for the professed object of expelling from that territory a few thousand miserable Indians, but in reality to cut off a place of refuge from fugitive slaves. This ruinous war of three and a half years' continuance, has cost the nation more than twenty millions of dollars, and Florida has been made the grave of about ten thousand Americans.

The corrupting influence of these pro-slavery provisions in the constitutions of the land, is seen in the debased state of morals at the seat of the general government, and in the slave states generally—in the mobs, riots, arsons and murders that have disturbed the repose of the nation, and alarmed of late all wise men—in the public pleadings of ministers of the gospel, on behalf of slavery, as if it were sanctioned by the word

of God—in the proceedings of ecclesiastical judicatories, and of Congress, in attempting to suppress all discussion of the rights of millions of men—in the supineness and total apathy of the great body of professors, in relation to the national dishonor done to God in the civil institutions of the country, and in relation to the sufferings of bleeding humanity,—and finally, in the alarming and rapidly increasing degeneracy of morals among men of all ranks. These are the bitter fruits of the seed sown by the nation in the formation of a constitution, by which the rights both of God and man have been trampled under foot.

It needs but little argument surely, with all intelligent christians, who love our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and are zealous for his honor and glory, to persuade them not to make themselves partakers in these sins. Enough has surely been urged, to convince all the friends of human liberty, that they ought not to plight their faith to the upholding of a system which arms with scourges the merciless oppressors of unoffending millions, and rivets the chains of bondage on the helpless victims of oppression. “Arise, O Lord, and plead thine own cause, for the tumult of them that hate thee groweth ever.” “Arise, O Lord, break the arm of the oppressor, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.” “Take the nations for thine inheritance, and deliver them for whom there is no helper.”

DR. CLARKE'S LETTER ON PSALMODY.

(Continued from page 59.)

That we ought to use God's own Book of Psalms, in praising his name, is clear from these reasons.

1. *Because God commands us to praise his name with the words of David and Asaph.* 2. Chron. xxix. 30. We have two instances of persons inspired to make and sing a song, on two special occasions, viz. Moses and Deborah, but after the eternal Spirit spoke all the words of the Book of Psalms, by his holy chosen penman, it appears that he did it for this special purpose, that we should serve him in solemn praises, with those most suitable words, devised by his unerring wisdom. In Psalm cii. 18, God declares that “This shall be written