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BIBLE MAGISTRACY;

OR,
CHRIST'S DOMINION OVER THE NATIONS:

WITH AN EXAMINATION

OF THE

CIVIL INSTITUTIONS

OF THE

UNITED STATES.

BY *James M. Willson*
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ADVERTISEMENT.

This little volume contains the substance of three discourses preached during the last winter, in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Cherry Street, Philadelphia. The form of a continuous discussion has been adopted, in preference to the original form in which the subject was presented from the pulpit, as affording a better opportunity for offering arguments and illustrations in an unbroken chain. Some parts have been curtailed, and some additional matter has been introduced : but no material alteration, it is believed, will be found. The writer's desire has been to condense as much as possible.

For some arguments and illustrations in the IV. Chapter, the writer is indebted to the argument on the subject of the moral character of the Government of the United States, written by Jas. R. Willson, D. D., and now in overture before the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

INTRODUCTION.

Civil and political arrangements may be viewed either in their social, or in their moral character. Considered in their social character, we are more concerned with them in their bearings upon the welfare of society, the security which they furnish for the preservation of the rights and privileges of the citizens, and, in general, their influence upon the prosperity and happiness of the body politic. Regarding them in their moral character, our thoughts are directed to subjects of investigation altogether different: the conformity or non-conformity of national institutions, to the law of God. The two are, indeed, very intimately connected: for

no political arrangements, which are not in accordance with the will of Him who is the Supreme Governor among the nations, can ultimately promote, even the temporal interests of any people. It is the "blessing of the Lord that maketh rich," and that nation alone "is blessed, whose God is Jehovah."*

It is the design of this Essay, to attempt an illustration of the subject of national organization, considered in the second point of view. To ascertain, by the light of divine revelation, what is the precise relation in which nations, having the scriptures, stand to Almighty God; and, also, to make an application of the principles of the Bible on this subject, to the existing civil institutions of the United States.

That the subject is important can hardly be doubted by any one that believes the Bible, or even acknowledges the superintending providence of a holy

* Prov. x. 22, and Ps. xxxiii. 12.

and righteous God. And the times call for a careful examination, humbly seeking the divine direction, of this whole subject, especially in its practical bearings. The history of our nation is very remarkable. God has greatly favoured this land with the common blessings of his providence. He has increased its population. Through his blessing, the earth has brought forth in plenty; wealth has accumulated; and the United States, from the condition of dependent colonies, have risen with unexampled rapidity to the first rank among the nations of the world. Literature and science have flowed, if not in a deep, certainly in a broad stream over the land. We have the Bible—the open Bible; the Sabbath; the preaching of the gospel; and the domestic altar.

All this has been. Just now, however, there are some dark shades to be mingled with the picture of national

prosperity. The hand of God has been upon us: and in anger. He has smitten the land in its business, its character, its union, and enterprize, its social and moral order. The cry of commercial distress is heard in every corner of the land. Our good name has suffered in the estimation of all Christendom, by repeated acts of dishonesty, committed not only by individuals, but by state governments. The Constitution, once regarded with idolatrous reverence, is now no longer deemed sacred. The union of the states is liable, at any moment to be sundered, and the friendship, which it was fondly hoped, was to be everlasting, is likely soon to be converted into deadly hatred. The arm of the law is, in some places, paralyzed, and, in all, its vigour is diminished. Vice of all kinds has increased to a degree that alarms every sober and thinking man. Infidelity lifts itself up unblushingly. The power of con-

science is manifestly feeble. God is forgotten; his people are cold; and mammon reigns.

Why are these things so? A few years ago, we heard, on every hand, the loud congratulations of a prosperous and happy people. Christians seemed to think the millenium just at hand. Visions of national glory, and of spiritual conquests, dazzled the eyes, and inflamed the hearts of the coldest among us. Now we see the land prostrate. Christian energy lies dormant. The present is comfortless and the future offers little encouraging, except to the eye of faith.

Under these circumstances, it becomes all, but especially the disciples of Christ, to inquire whether there be not some deep-rooted evil in the body politic, of which we are experiencing the bitter fruits. Some evil that is bringing upon us the Lord's anger; some disease that is sapping the very

foundations of the nation's strength and purity. It should be inquired whether God has been honoured and his law obeyed; or whether his authority has not been disregarded, and his law set at naught in the constituting, and administering of our present civil organization. And whether the church of Christ has done her duty in calling upon the commonwealth to give the honour and the praise to Him who rules the nations—Jesus Christ the Mediator. Unless the root of the evil is discovered, and the remedy applied there, all our efforts will be productive of no permanent effects. Expedients may give temporary relief; they cannot accomplish a radical cure.

It is the design of this Essay, to endeavour to cast some light upon this subject—to aid in these inquiries. The order of discussion will be, in the FIRST place, a series of arguments designed to prove that the Lord Jesus Christ is,

in the mediatory character, the moral governor of nations, having a right to claim their homage and obedience. In the SECOND place, the purposes for which he has been endowed with authority, will be stated and briefly illustrated. In the THIRD place, some of the most prominent national duties, incumbent upon those who have been favoured with the scriptures, will engage our attention. In the FOURTH place, the doctrines of the preceding chapters will be applied, in an examination of the moral character of the civil institutions of the United States. And, FINALLY, the Essay will be brought to a close by some inferences in reference, particularly, to the duty of Christians in regard to unscripturally constituted national organizations.

There are some important topics connected with the general subject of this Essay, the full discussion of which, as the intelligent reader will perceive, is

not embraced in this plan. The origin of the mediatory dominion; its extent; the nature of magistracy in general; the exercise of Christ's kingly authority over the church as distinguished from that over the nations; the kind, and degree of connexion which ought to subsist between the civil power, and the church; the duty of the magistrate respecting religious affairs; and the kind and extent of subjection due, generally, to civil authorities, are rather incidentally noticed, than fully discussed. The reader will find, it is hoped, the principles which ought to govern us in our conclusions respecting these matters, laid down with sufficient clearness: but not much detail need be expected on these points. Whether the evidence adduced to confirm the doctrines taught in this Essay, proves them to be Bible doctrines, it is for the reader to judge. May God bless and prosper his own truth.

BIBLE MAGISTRACY.

CHAPTER I.

The Lord Jesus Christ is, in the Mediatorial character, the moral governor of the nations.

I. His authority is expressly declared to be unlimited.—He says to his disciples, Matt. xxviii. 18, “All power (*ἐξουσία*, authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth:” and, John xvii. 2, “As thou hast given him (the Son,) power (*ἐξουσίαν*,) over all flesh.” Speaking by his inspired apostle, the Redeemer says, Eph. i. 22, “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church.” And again, Phill. ii. 9, 11, “God also hath highly exalted him—that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow—and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.” And, 1 Cor. xv.

27, "For he hath put all things under his feet."

These texts speak of his mediatorial authority, for they refer to a power that is *given* him. It cannot be said of him, that he receives authority in his essential character as God: for as God, he possesses an underived and eternal right to govern all things. They also affirm that this mediatorial authority is absolutely unbounded: that the whole creation in all its extent and magnificence is subjected to Jesus Christ as Mediator.

Nor can it be interposed as an objection, that sometimes universal terms, such as "all," and "the whole," are used in a restricted sense. Whenever such terms are restricted, it is by the context, by the nature of the subject respecting which they are used, or by other scriptures. No reason exists for making such a restriction here. Does Christ say, "All power is given unto me," it is that he may encourage his disciples whom he is about to send forth to contend against the gross idolatry, the deep-seated superstition, and the corrupt and tyrannical civil institutions of heathen nations, particularly of the Roman Empire, by the consideration that he, as their

arisen Redeemer, had been invested with authority to employ all his divine power on their behalf, not only in rendering their ministry effectual, but in controlling, restraining, and eventually putting down all opposition to his gospel. Does he say, "power is given to him over all flesh," he adds a sufficient reason, "that he may give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him." Is he highly exalted, it is, that "Every knee of things in heaven, and in earth may bow at his name." And still more emphatically, and as if for the very purpose of silencing every attempt to limit the mediatorial dominion, the apostle thus follows up the declaration that all things are put under his feet, 1 Cor. xv. 27, "But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him." If it is "manifest" that the Father is excepted, why except him by name? Why not leave it to be inferred? Plainly, that every opening for doubt or cavil might be completely and for ever shut—that no creature might dare to deny the Messiah's right to its allegiance and homage: no nation—no kingdom—no commonwealth—no ruler; for all things,

excepting only him who did put all things under him, are made subject to his unlimited mediatorial authority.

Nor can any reason be found in the nature of the case for limiting these universal terms. Is not Christ Jesus qualified to exercise authority, however ample? To him belongs "All the fulness of the Godhead." "The treasures of wisdom and knowledge" are in him.* While the work which he has undertaken—to save sinners out of a world of sin and of hostility to the divine government—requires that the Saviour should have this world, the theatre of saving mercy, placed under his sceptre.† And lastly, there are no apparently contradictory statements on this subject to be reconciled. On the contrary, all the teachings of divine revelation, combine to establish the doctrine of the Messiah's universal authority. History‡ and prophecy,§ Psalms||

* Col. ii. 3, 9.

† For a full illustration of this thought, see Symington's *Dominion of Christ*, Chap. I.

‡ He was Israel's Lord, and issued mandates to other nations, as Egypt, Nineveh, and Babylon, during the Old Testament dispensation.

§ Is. ix. 6—9, Dan. vii. 14.

|| Ps. lxxii., xcv., xcvi., cx., &c.

and didactic scriptures,* all unite to convince us that Jesus Christ has, as our Redeemer, authority that knows no created limits. Need it be added, if he is Lord of *all*, he is Lord of nations.

2. *Titles, importing dominion over nations, as such, belong to him.*—He is “The prince of the kings of the earth,” Rev. i. 5. He is “King of kings and Lord of lords,”† Rev. xvii. 14, xix. 16. The rulers of the kingdoms and commonwealths of this world, are, in these texts, designated by their distinctive titles. These titles import official dignity and power. In that character in which it is said of them, that they are “lords” and “kings,” civil magistrates are themselves the subjects of the princely government, sovereign lordship, and regal authority of the Messiah. Could any thing be more explicit? Words cannot convey more expressly the fact, that Christ Jesus reigns over kings and magistrates in their

* Besides those quoted above, see Heb. ii. 8, 9, compared with Ps. viii. Ez. i.

† In Scripture language, these titles signify magistrates and rulers, whether called kings, presidents, governors, or any other name, or exercising any kind of official power.

official character. Or, which is the same thing, that nations in their national operations, conducted through the instrumentality of legislative and executive officers, are bound to conform themselves to the will of Christ.

Moreover, these titles belong to Christ as he is the Messiah. Is he the Prince of the kings of the earth, it is in the same character in which he is "The Faithful Witness," and "The first-begotten of the dead," Rev. i. 5. It is "The Lamb," that is, "King of kings, and Lord of lords," Rev. xvii. 14. This name is "written upon his vesture, and upon his thigh," Rev. xix. 16. He has purchased it for himself, by bringing in an everlasting righteousness for his people, and it is in our nature that God hath exalted him. His titles are inscribed upon his humanity.

If, after all this, Jesus Christ be not Lord of civil rulers—if his right of dominion be limited to persons and things in their ecclesiastical character only, then might the charge be brought against the scriptures, of using language calculated to deceive even the honest inquirer. We argue against the Socinian, that the scriptures speak of Christ by divine titles, ascribe to him divine works, require

divine worship to be addressed to him, and if, withal, he be not truly God, then is their sound very uncertain, and even unintelligible. The same mode of reasoning may be applied here. Jesus Christ is said to be Lord of all, to have all things put under him, to be head over all things, to be Prince of the kings of the earth, to have all power in heaven and in earth. If, notwithstanding, he is king only in the church, then does the trumpet give, in this important matter a very confused, not to say a deceptive sound. But, no. Whatever men may imagine, whether misguided Christians, or hardened enemies, the voice of inspiration is here a distinct voice; and loudly does it proclaim the blessed truth that Jesus Christ is exalted to the right hand of the majesty in the heavens as Lord of *all* to the glory of God the Father.

3. *Civil rulers are required to render to him allegiance and service.*—The second Psalm contains a most distinct and pointed call, addressed to civil rulers, to acknowledge Jesus Christ in his kingly office. “Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed ye judges* of the earth—kiss ye the son,” Ps. ii.

* שפטים, Supreme magistrates, such as ruled in Israel

10, 12. We are not left in doubt whether this Psalm speaks of Christ: it is often applied to him in the New Testament. The verses quoted contain an address to magistrates by their official titles. They are commanded to "kiss the Son;" to express their reverence for him: and to swear allegiance to him.* Many intimations, more or less clear and explicit, of the same duty are given in the Scriptures in various forms. Sometimes, by prophetic announcements that such will be the case when the nations are brought, by the influence of divine truth and by the outpouring of the spirit, to acknowledge God's government. As Ps. lxxii. 10, 11, "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and of Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him:" and Isaiah xlix. 7, "Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall

before the time of Saul; or the inferior ranks of civil functionaries.

* See 1 Sam. x. 1. The kiss is still, in some form, employed in most countries, as a token of allegiance. It is among the forms of coronation in England.

choose thee." Sometimes similar intimations of national duty occur in the form of threatenings denounced against nations which refuse to acknowledge him: as Ps. lxxii. 9, "His enemies shall lick the dust," and Isaiah lx. 12, "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish: yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted."

Again, the duty of nations and their rulers to obey Jesus Christ in the mediatory character, is expressly affirmed by the Redeemer himself. He says, John v. 22, 23, "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." Honour in this connexion, includes obedience; "Honour thy father and thy mother." Moreover, it is such honour as is due to the Father. Jesus Christ claims obedience of all men: none are exempt; for he will judge the world.* But this passage contains more. Even now, "All judgment is committed to him;" the immediate cognizance of the wide realms of Jehovah's government belongs to him, that he may be honoured, obeyed, and served. Can it be

* Acts. xvii. 31.

denied that rulers and nations as such, are among the subjects of Christ's mediatorial authority?

4. *The Bible contains laws addressed to nations and rulers for their direction in civil things.*—The Bible is the word of Christ. The Spirit by whom the Old Testament prophets were inspired, was "the Spirit of Christ," 1 Pet. i. 11. And, from the preface to the moral law, "I am the Lord thy God," (Ex. xx. 2,) we ascertain the fact that this law came to Israel, and comes to us, out of the mouth of Christ, and is thus proclaimed anew to mankind, by his authority. The Westminster Assembly have well paraphrased the preface to the moral law, in the following words; "Because God is the Lord, and our God, and Redeemer, therefore, we are bound to keep all his commandments."* The law of the Ten Commandments is most assuredly binding upon nations.

The same Lawgiver has, in the Scriptures, enjoined many other precepts exhibiting more fully, the duties prescribed in the moral law; and in many instances these precepts are ex-

* Short Cat. Quest. 44.

pressly addressed to nations and rulers as such. The laws given to the Israelites relate, many of them, to the duties of magistrates. The historical part of the Old Testament, and many of the prophecies, are illustrative of national sins and duties: they are designed to warn the wicked, and to encourage the righteous. The New Testament is by no means destitute of instruction and direction regarding civil things. The nature of magistracy, the mutual duties of rulers and subjects, and the sanctions of law, are expressly treated of, Rom. xiii. 1—7, and 1 Pet. ii. 13—17. The Book of Revelation is chiefly designed to foretell the various steps by which, while the enemies of Messiah are destroyed, the nations will be brought to the practical acknowledgment of his authority and law.

Nor is the fact that Israel was God's peculiar people, any objection to the argument drawn from the giving of laws to that people. They were a nation; they had a civil government, distinct from the ecclesiastical.* Both were, indeed, to be administered in professed submission to Jesus Christ. And why should

* See Gillespie's Aaron's Rod Blossoming.

they not both be so still, in Christian nations? This question may be put into such forms as to render it impossible for a Christian to give any but one reply. Is a nation having the light of Divine revelation, bound to observe the Christian Sabbath? or, may such a nation, without sin, continue to observe as the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week? Was Pharaoh bound to obey the Lord Jesus Christ when he commanded him to let the people go? Unless a nation would be sinless in dishonouring the Christian Sabbath, and unless Pharaoh was sinless in his disobedience, then do all magistrates and people incur the divine wrath, who refuse to obey Jesus Christ. Let it be granted, that the Lord Jesus Christ has given *one* law which rulers and nations are bound to obey, or issued *one* command to *any* prince or potentate in his official character, and his moral right to govern the nations is put beyond question. For he exercises no usurped power, he is a righteous sovereign, who knows his own rights and prero-

* For proof that it was Jesus Christ that appeared to Moses, and gave him commission to Pharaoh, see Acts vii. That he was then acting in the mediatory character is plain. He came to *redeem* his people.

gatives, and who will neither himself transcend them, nor allow them to be trampled upon by his creatures with impunity. Not *one*, but *many* such laws he has given; the Scriptures abound with them: and, therefore, his right to rule nations and to direct the administration of national affairs, ought not to be doubted, much less denied, and resisted.

5. *Jesus Christ is, in the mediatory character, the judge of all mankind, in all relations.*—God the Father “hath committed all judgment to the Son,” John v. 23; and verse 27, it is said that, in this transaction, he is viewed as mediator; “And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, *because he is the Son of man.*”^{*} Not only the final judgment is committed to him, but he goes forth, even now, as Judge among the nations, observes their doings, visits them for their sins, and rewards their obedience.[†] The apostle John saw him as “the lion of the tribe of Juda,

^{*} “Son of man” is not, and cannot be applied to the Messiah in any other than the mediatory character.

[†] “The whole government and administration of affairs. ’Tis not to be understood of the last judgment, for then it would be a limitation of that word ‘all.’” Charnock on Providence, p. 220, Ed. 1817, Phila.

and *the root of David*," receiving the sealed book of the divine purposes regarding the church and the nations until the end of the world.* He opened the book, and rode forth as king of saints and nations, and as Lord of the kingdom of Providence, to give efficacy to his gospel, and to execute judgment upon all tyrannical, idolatrous and hostile systems, civil and ecclesiastical.† In this character he executes the judgments of the seals, the trumpets and the vials of Revelation, and brings about that happy time, when the "kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ." And at the last day, God, by him, will "judge the world."‡

To pass judgment authoritatively upon the actions of men, is one of the most important prerogatives of government; it is the application of law as the rule of action, to the conduct of the citizens, and affixing, or announcing the penalties of its violation. Christ is judge: he has in his hand the law of God as the rule of moral action; he applies it as the delegated judge; he announces the penalties of its violation. But he does more; for

* Rev. v.

† Rev. vi.

‡ Acts xvii. 31.

he also executes his own decisions. He "opened the seals." All this he does among the nations, as well as among individuals: "For the Father judgeth *no man*, all judgment has been committed to the Son." Because he is the judge, he is also the Lord and King of nations and their rulers.

6. *Unless the Lord Jesus Christ administer the divine law as it respects civil affairs, nations, and in their official character, their rulers, must be under the covenant of works.*—In innocence, all the worship and obedience of our first parents was rendered to their Creator upon the footing of the covenant of works; their obedience as members of civil society, which was constituted before the fall, as well as their personal and religious homage. Since the fall, that way of access is completely closed. The angel of justice, standing with a flaming sword—the awful penalty of the law, "dying thou shalt die"—effectually bars all approach to the throne of God, except through a mediator. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me," John xiv. 6. Every true Christian knows and appreciates the value of Christ's mediation as, notwithstanding imperfections, it opens a way of serving God

acceptably, and not under the penalty of death for every transgression. He would not, for the world, lose the comfort of knowing that the law as the rule of his personal obedience is in Christ's hand. Why should he be deprived of this source of consolation and peace in regard to duties of a public and civil nature? Why should nations and their rulers? The Christian knows that his person and his works need to be sprinkled with the atoning blood of Christ. Why should nations and their rulers be shut out from this fountain of cleansing?

If the mediatorial authority of the Redeemer does not extend to nations as such, we must admit one of three things—that nations are to render obedience upon the footing of the covenant of works; that there is some new arrangement different from both the covenant of works and of grace, established for nations alone; or that they owe no obedience to God at all. The last is atheistical, the second is both unscriptural and unreasonable; for nothing of the kind is taught in the Bible, and reason at once rejects it. The first, the only remaining supposition, is worse than Pelagian, and would bind a burden upon every

nation that would sink it into inevitable ruin; for what people can render perfect obedience? And even if they could, the covenant of works is now a broken covenant, and folly itself could not imagine such a distinction between the actions of men, as that in one department they are, (without Christ,) under the curse, while in another, God accepts them without a mediator. There is no other alternative but the doctrine, that Jesus reigns by the Father's gift, over all things, national and civil, political and social: that all acceptable national obedience is rendered through him who is "the way" to the throne of God.*

* Is there not a connexion between the denial of Christ's headship, and legal principles of religion? The persecuting Papists were Pelagians; the martyred Waldenses, the French Huguenots, the English, Scottish and Holland reformers, were Calvinists. Papists have practically set aside the headship of Christ: their victims were all strenuous advocates for Christ's sole headship. The martyrs have often suffered for this; they did so, in Scotland. The advocates of Christ's law and government in that kingdom during the reformation, and afterwards, were Calvinists. Their opponents, James VI., and Charles I., and II., with their friends and partisans, were Pelagians. True the persecution arose more directly out of opposition to Christ's headship over the church: but the claims of Christ as made known in the Bible, and the sub-

7. *If the mediatorial dominion of the Messiah does not extend to civil things, then the great body of Christians of all lands and of all times, have been guilty of rendering to him idolatrous service.*—The fact that the great majority of Christ's disciples have, in all ages, admitted this doctrine, will not probably be denied.* It must be admitted that Christianized and reformed nations have always openly and publicly acknowledged Christ's authority and law: many of them by solemn public covenant transactions. Now, let it be remembered, the Saviour of sinners is no mere candidate for office. He cannot have rights conferred upon him by men. If he has no right by the gift of the Father to rule a nation, he cannot receive such a right by the nation's act. To attempt to confer it upon him, would be to insult the majesty and incur the wrath of heaven. Can it be believed, that the godly who have, in reforming times when the light of truth shined most brightly, committed their national interests to the keeping of Christ;

mission due to him by nations, entered largely into the spirit of the controversy. Witness the burning of the Covenants.

* See Note A.

have by covenant avouched him to be their Lord, and vowed to serve him—that in all this they were acting the part of idolaters? It cannot be. They were not, indeed, infallible, but that they were left thus to dishonour Jesus Christ, is impossible. No! in this very thing they honoured him. They obeyed his and the Father's command, and the influence of their self-dedication in all things to the divine service, is still seen and felt amidst much declension and corruption. And in those lands where, at the time of the reformation, this truth was best known and most correctly applied, there has been the least declension.

This brings to a close the series of arguments proposed for the establishment of the main doctrine of this Essay. They form a series of allied, and yet independent, arguments. Like the stones in an arch, they furnish mutual support: unlike the stones of an arch, each is capable of standing and doing good service without the aid of the others.

Before proceeding to discuss the second proposition, two objections to our doctrine will be considered. It may be objected that the headship of Christ as it extends to things out of the

Church is only the right to direct natural events, to promote the ends of the covenant of grace: that so far as they are directed to natural ends, they are brought about by him as God, and not as mediator.

It would be answer enough to this, to remark, that the Bible gives no ground for such a distinction. It is a distinction that has been elaborated, for the very purpose of explaining away the express declarations of Scripture respecting Christ's universal Lordship. Moreover, it is directly opposed to the plainest declarations. He is "the head over *all things* to the church." "*All things* are made by him, to work together for good to them that love God," Rom. viii. 28. We are shortsighted, we cannot see the connexion between remote events and the welfare of the church. Our ignorance does not prevent such a connexion. We *know* that it exists.

Again, it may be objected, that while Christ's authority *as mediator* is over all things that it is not *mediatorial* to all. This is a late objection, and is either evasive or absurd. It is evasive, if the word "mediatorial" is employed, as it probably is, in the sense of *saving*; for none ever supposed

that Christ received this dominion over the nations that he might save all their inhabitants; and over the kingdom of Providence generally, that he might save irrational and inanimate creatures! He has received "power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life" to *some*; and it will be shown in the succeeding section of this chapter, that in prosecuting this design he will destroy some of those who have been put under his government. He "came to destroy the works of the devil," 1 John iii. 7.

If "mediatorial" be used in the ordinary and proper acceptation of the word, then the language of the objection is self-contradictory; and needs no refutation, for it refutes itself. How authority exercised by Jesus Christ *as mediator* can be any other than *mediatorial* authority, or exercised in any other way than *mediatorially* will certainly require more than ordinary sagacity to discover!

Yes, Jesus reigns. He has received a glorious kingdom. Angels in heaven, men on earth, and devils in hell, are made subject to Him. Birds of the air, fish of the sea, the sun, moon and stars, winds and rain, all creatures are his servants. Because "he humbled him-

self" to save sinners, hath "God highly exalted him." "Bless the Lord, all ye his people."

CHAPTER II.

The purposes of the mediatorial dominion. These are,

1. *The salvation of the elect.*—The chief end of the Saviour's mission to this province of Jehovah's empire, is to display the riches of God's grace in redeeming from sin and misery, a chosen number of fallen mankind: "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." 1. Tim. i. 15. He came "to give his life a ransom for many," Matt. xx. 28. For the accomplishment of this main design of his mission, in a manner consistent with the honour of the Godhead and the glory due to the Redeemer himself, he has been invested by

the Father with a moral right of dominion, not only over the elect as redeemed sinners, but likewise over all other creatures. "*Thou hast given Him power over all flesh; that he should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given him,*" John xvii. 2. "Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, *for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins,*" Acts v. 31. God "*gave him to be the head over all things to the church,* Eph. i. 22.

The elect must be delivered from the guilt of sin. This Christ does by dying in their room. They need to be freed from the power, and brought out of the kingdom of Satan; the law and the image of God must be reinscribed upon their hearts; they must be prepared for glory. This Christ does as King in Zion. Through the instrumentality of ordinances, rendered effectual by the Holy Spirit sent for this purpose by the Father and the Son, sinners are converted and sanctified, and thus his "*kingdom which is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost,*"* is set up in the hearts of his people. As King of nations, the

* Rom. xiv. 17.

Messiah has the right to enter the kingdoms of the world and rescue his redeemed. In the same character, he protects them from the wrath of enemies, restrains the devil, provides them with temporal support, directs and overrules the movements of the great community of nations, in their commercial, social and political interests, so as to promote the spread of his Gospel, and give strength, and establishment, and honour to his body the church. This is well and beautifully expressed by a late writer; "For the accomplishment of this glorious display—for gathering in the hosts of God's people over all the world, you see nations rise and fall; continents and islands discovered and peopled and Christianized; peace and war; agriculture and commerce; literature and science; arts and manufactures; the entire frame of human society, and all its complicated machinery running their perpetual round. All—all these are to terminate, they are all to work in the hand of God our Redeemer, to the one grand and glorious end—the display of divine mercy, to the admiration of the intelligent universe."*

* Junkin on Justification, p. 69.

2. *The bringing back of mankind to a state of allegiance in all things, to God.*—In man's primeval state of holiness, before sin had marred his relations to his Maker, every part of his constitution, physical and moral, moved according to the will of the Creator. "God made man upright."* As a man, as a husband, as the lord of this lower world, in all relations, social, domestic, and civil, Adam acknowledged and obeyed the law of his Sovereign. Had the first man retained his integrity, his posterity would have rendered obedience in all their relations to God Almighty. But sin entered, and broke up the happy state of amity subsisting between man and his God. "They are all gone aside," "Like sheep—we have turned each one to his own way."† Christ came to heal entirely the breach. He is "our peace."‡ He makes atonement, and thus reconciles to us, him whom our sins have dishonoured. Through the saving influences of his spirit he accomplishes a work in the hearts of his people, by which the whole original law of their constitution is re-written upon them. Thus, they are

* Ecc. vii. 29. † Ps. xiv. 3, Isa. li. 6. ‡ Eph. ii. 14.

brought back, even in this life, to a state of entire, although not perfect, conformity to God's law. In other words, they are restored to somewhat of their original condition of entire subordination to the divine will.

That this is to be effected by the Messiah, and that it is one of the purposes of his exaltation to accomplish it upon the largest scale is very clearly revealed. He was sent into the world, "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth," Eph. i. 10, and we pray, "thy kingdom come, thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven."* There is an allusion in these passages to the complete, and perfect submission of the holy angels, to the will of Jehovah, and an intimation that to a similar, if not to so perfect a state of obedience, this world will be ultimately brought. We are assured that Satan will be dispossessed of that power over this world, which he usurped when man fell, and which he has since been permitted, for wise purposes, to exercise. His kingdom will be

* Matt. vi. 10.

destroyed, and he will be shut up in hell.* The great, immoral empires, symbolized by the four beasts of Daniel's vision,† are to be destroyed. That is, there will come a time when civil governments of an immoral character, shall cease to exercise tyranny over the nations. Their downfall will be succeeded by the setting of kingdoms established upon holy principles, and administered by godly men, The kingdom of Christ, in other words, will then be fully established.‡

The period to which this prophecy refers, occupies a large space in the prophetic Scriptures. It is described in very glowing terms. During that period, the truth of God will be diffused very extensively. "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," Is. xi. 9. The Redeemer "shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth." The effects of these influences will be that "the mountains shall bring forth peace to the people, and the little hills by righteousness," Ps. lxxii. 3, 6, 7. That is, the higher and the inferior powers shall all move and

* Rev. xx. 1—3.

† Dan. vii.

‡ Dan. vii. 27.

act in subordination to Christ's authority, and under the influence of his spirit. Every divine institution will be set up, and administered agreeably to the gracious ordination of the Almighty. Parents, masters, and civil rulers, being "taught of God," will use their power and influence for the promotion of God's glory, and the best interests of their inferiors. "The kingdoms of this world," will then have "become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ,"* Rev. xi. 15.

To bring about this blessed change, Jesus Christ has been invested with dominion. Having made reconciliation for iniquity, by his death, he has been exalted to the highest place of power. All institutions have been put under him, that by his truth and spirit, by his grace and providence, he may ^{there} remove every corruption; enlightening what is dark, and subduing all that is perverse and rebellious. He is now engaged in this glorious

* The language of Scripture respecting the millennial period, is to be understood as descriptive of a state, not of absolute purity, but of an entire subordination of society to the will of God, revealed in the Bible, attended with a very remarkable degree of holiness. There will be sin in the world, but no open, or organized opposition to Christ.

work. He has pledged himself to accomplish it. The energies of the Godhead are his. None can resist his power. He will take to him his great power and reign. Even so Lord Jesus, come quickly.*

3. *The destruction of systems, hostile to the divine glory and the great ends of the Redeemer's mission, and to execute deserved punishment upon all his incorrigible enemies.*

—There is an intimate and necessary connexion between the salvation of the elect, and the bringing back of the world to its allegiance to God; and the ruin of all opposing systems and of all who obstinately adhere to them. That truth may spread and triumph, error must be abolished; that God may be purely worshipped, all superstition and will-

* The view of the kingdom of Christ presented in the above remarks, is altogether irreconcilable with an error respecting his reign, which has been lately revived and is now exciting some attention; namely, that it is the setting up of a mere temporal kingdom. The kingdom of Christ is spiritual—it is *divine*. It is designed to bring the world to know, acknowledge and obey God. It is not a temporal kingdom: it is in the heart. Not confined to the inner man indeed, (for it brings the whole man in all his actions into conformity to God,) but beginning there. *Christ reigns by his Spirit.*

worship must be rooted out; that the church of God may be put in possession of her promised peace, prosperity, and honour, every open enemy to her interests must be removed; that the kingdoms of the world may be brought to conform in the constitution and administration of their governments, to God's law, all civil arrangements contrary to the divine will, or opposed to the claims of the Messiah, must be subverted or reformed; that Jesus may reign, the devil must be dethroned and his kingdom cast down. For, be it remembered, the Saviour comes to a world already alienated, "without God and without Christ:"* to a world which has taken for its "god" and "prince,"† the great adversary of Jehovah. To him the kingdoms of the world have yielded themselves as subjects. He is "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," Eph. ii. 2: He has not only succeeded in subjugating individuals, but also nations. "The dragon" has given to the civil powers of the anti-Christian system, their "throne and seat, and great authority.‡

* Eph. ii. 12.

† 2 Cor. iv. 4, John xiv. 30.

‡ Rev. xiii. 2.

Hence, the necessity for the work of destruction. It must go hand in hand with the work of building up. Hence, also, one great branch of Christ's kingly office, is to subdue all opposition to his people and law: well stated by the Westminster Assembly, as "the restraining and overcoming all their (his people's) enemies—and also in taking vengeance on the rest who know not God, and obey not the gospel."* The Scriptures abound with proof that this is, indeed, a part of the work of the Messiah. He "was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil," 1 John iii. 8. It was the Lord Jesus Christ that "looked unto the host of Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels—and brought again the waters of the sea upon them."† Daniel saw "till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame;"‡ that is, till the vengeance of God was poured out upon the anti-Christian system, by the Lord Jesus Christ: for it was by him whom

* Large Cat. Quest. 45.

† Ex. xiv. 24.

‡ Dan. vii. 11.

Daniel saw in the same vision, as "one like unto the Son of man coming to the Ancient of days, and receiving dominion." When the sixth seal was opened, "the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, *and from the wrath of the Lamb*: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"* This was the great day of the wrath of Jesus Christ to the pagan Roman Empire.

John saw the Lamb engaged in war, Rev. xvii. 14. His enemies were Satan and the corrupt, tyrannical, impious and immoral powers, political and ecclesiastical, of the anti-Christian system. The Lamb overcame them. "The beast was taken. And with him the false prophet—these both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."† Other prophets and apostles call

* Rev. vi. 12—17.

† Rev. xix. 20.

upon us to contemplate Jesus Christ as he comes to inflict vengeance. David says, Ps. cx. 5, "The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath." And Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 25, "He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet:" not only, nor chiefly, those whom he wins by grace to his sceptre, but those who shall be destroyed by his power; for he immediately adds, "the last enemy that shall be *destroyed* is death."

The Messiah has ample qualifications and prerogatives for the accomplishment of this purpose of his exaltation. He is the mighty God; he is holy and just. He is omniscient; "His eyes are as a flame of fire." He has the whole kingdom of providence put under him. He can, and does employ, its abundant resources in carrying on the work of destruction, while, at the same time, he so directs the artillery of truth, through the instrumentality of gospel ordinances, as that it works effectually to the same end. "The little stone cut of the mountains without hands, smote the image, and itself became a great mountain, filling the whole earth."*

* Dan. ii. 35.

Nor does the Lord Jesus Christ appear less worthy of our admiration and love when engaged in executing this part of his royal functions. Are holiness and justice bright jewels in the diadem of Jehovah, as absolute and sovereign Lord of his creatures; they shine not less brightly in that crown which rests upon the brow of Jesus the Mediator. He is in this, as in every other part of the Mediatory character, "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person," Heb. i. 3. Should our love to him be less, because he appears not only with offers of mercy in all its plenitude, but also clad in the habiliments of a righteous king, and invested with all the glory of the law, as well as of the grace of God? He destroys none but incorrigible enemies. These, whether men or nations, refusing to "Kiss the Son," have reason to dread his wrath, and in the day of his wrath, "who can stand?" while "blessed are all they that put their trust in him."*

The purposes for which Jesus Christ has been invested with authority, embrace a complete—a perfect scheme of divine government, adapted to that state in which the world now is;

* Ps. ii. 12.

namely, under a dispensation of mercy. Jesus is a complete Saviour. He redeems, he effectually calls, he sanctifies, he glorifies his people: he is going on to subjugate the world to the law and sceptre of God Almighty. He vindicates the honour of Jehovah, and his own claims, upon all who resist his authority, harm his people, or attempt to hinder the progress of his kingdom. Such a Mediator has claims upon men and nations. His claims upon nations in their national capacity will now occupy our attention.

CHAPTER III.

The duty of Christian nations.

1. *Nations, having divine revelation, are bound to acknowledge the authority of Jesus Christ, and to submit themselves to his sceptre.**—This proposition is a direct and irresistible.

* “Nations having divine revelation.” The heathen who have never heard of Christ, and who are thus without the written law, will be judged nationally, as well as in-

tible inference from the doctrine of the universal mediatorial dominion of the Messiah. If Christ be, by the gift of the Father, King of nations, then are nations bound by the highest obligations to acknowledge him as their Lord. If nations have been given to Jesus Christ to be ruled by him, then are they bound to assent to the gift, and surrender themselves to him as voluntary subjects. To refuse, is to rebel against the express command, Ps. ii. 12, "kiss ye the Son." It dishonours both the Father and the Son. It dishonours the Father; for it is a refusal to serve him in that way in which he has commanded service to be rendered. It dishonours the Son; for it is a rejecting of his just authority. Such conduct involves in it a stubborn refusal to repent and turn from sin (for there is no "repentance toward God" without "faith toward Jesus Christ;")*) excludes a nation from any interest in the Covenant protection and favour of God; and subjects it to the infliction of the threatenings denounced against impeni-

dividually, by the law written upon their hearts. Rom. ii. 12, "For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law."

* Acts xx. 21.

tent nations.* The wrath of the Lord Jesus Christ will be kindled, and he will inevitably cause that nation to "perish from the way." He will vindicate his own righteous claims.

Nor can the threatening be evaded by an acknowledgment, however sincere, of allegiance to an absolute God. "No man," says Christ himself, "cometh to the Father but by me." Any attempt to honour the Father, while the Son is neglected, is an abomination in his sight. However lightly men may esteem the royal prerogatives of the Messiah, they are not held of little value by him "by whom actions are weighed." Nothing short of an open acknowledgment of Jesus Christ will meet his claims. This must be rendered under pain of God Almighty's sore displeasure. "The kingdoms of this world *must* become" not only "kingdoms of our Lord," but also "*of his Christ.*"†

2. Nations are bound to frame their constitutions of government; to enact their laws;

* God, by his prophets, uttered the most awful threatenings not only against the Jews for their apostacy, but against the heathen nations, Moab, Edom, Assyria, Babylon, Tyre, Egypt, &c., for their sins.

† Rev. xi. 15.

and to conduct the civil administration, in professed and real obedience to the Scriptures.—National acknowledgment of the Messiah's authority is not a bare profession. "Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but *he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven,*" Matt. vii. 21. Christ's titles are not mere honorary titles; he is really a king. Submission to his sceptre implies the reception of his law and obedience to its demands. The laws of Christ are contained in the Bible, and all the laws of the Bible are Christ's laws. Both the Old and New Testaments are his statute books.* Every moral law found there, carries with it an obligation to obedience. And it is the imperative duty of all Christ's subjects to search, each for himself, the inspired record, that he may ascertain from its pages the principles of righteousness by which his conduct ought to be governed. "Search the Scriptures;—and they are they which testify of me."† As nations are under the government of the Mediator, this obligation rests upon them as well as upon individuals.

* 1 Pet. i. 11.

† John v. 39.

And why should not nations seek light from the Bible? The remains of the moral law are very broken and imperfect in the natural man, even in regard to civil duties. Witness the national follies and crimes of the most enlightened pagan nations: to say nothing of the great majority of the inhabitants of those nations that either have not the Bible at all, or have only a closed Bible, and who have consequently sunk into the most wretched condition of moral and social debasement.* The Bible professes to be a perfect rule. It has been "given by inspiration of God, that the man of God may be perfect; thoroughly furnished unto all good works," 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. There is no exception made of civil or political "works." This gracious revelation finds man in all things wanting such light as will clearly show him the will of God. This it does. Nor are its teachings confined to the duties of personal religion and those of the domestic

* All Pagan, and all popish countries where that apostacy bears entire sway, and where no counteracting influences are at work, illustrate the truth of this statement. See Italy, Spain, the south of Ireland, Mexico, and the French population of Canada. Much, indeed, of the boasted wisdom of antiquity is traceable to the influence of the Jewish Scriptures.

and other social relations. The Scriptures abound with instruction respecting matters civil and political. The historical part of the Old Testament, the prophecies, the book of Proverbs and the Psalms, are full of the richest treasures of political wisdom; while the Pentateuch contains a system of laws devised by infinite wisdom for the chosen people of God. Indeed, civil duties occupy as large a space in the Bible as they do in the actual operations of society.

Were it even admitted, that the rule of civil duties since the fall of man and the consequent introduction of the mediatorial system, is precisely the same as in Eden, the necessity for consulting the Bible would not be obviated, although it might be somewhat diminished. Even then, to reject it "would be an obstinate drawing back to heathenism;"* for how great the folly—the wickedness—of closing the eyes to the bright shining of the Sun of righteousness to consult the dim light of natural reason. But this admission is not made. The fall of man and the subsequent exercise and revelation of mercy to sinners

* Brown of Haddington, Dict. of the Bible, on the word "Rule."

through a mediator, have introduced material changes. And would it not be strange if they had not? Previously, our first parents knew God, and served him, without the intervention of a mediator. Now, all are by nature "darkness,"* and no man cometh to God but by Jesus Christ. Here is seen, in its strongest light, the necessity of revelation. Would nations know how to come to God, they must "search the Scriptures." Would they know what principles of public policy nations should observe, let them "search the Scriptures."† Would they understand the true foundation of civil rights and duties, let them "search the Scriptures;" search them reverently and submissively. This is not only a duty: it is a privilege. A nation having the Bible and yet refusing to acknowledge it as supreme law, and thus closing its eyes upon the glory

* Eph. iv. 8.

† "The principles." The particular form of government, the distribution of powers (within certain limits,) and most of the laws, are left to be arranged by human wisdom. In this sense, civil government is "an ordinance of man," 1 Pet. iii. 13. The moral principles to be imbodyed in civil institutions are all amply revealed in the Scriptures.

of Christ, seals its covenant with death.* It is an infidel and rebellious nation.

The view just presented of national duty is confirmed by the fact that it is impossible to find any other sure and permanent standard of social and political duties. The light of nature is altogether insufficient as a guide in any thing involving moral principle. There is little certainty in its revelations. The nations before Christ came "felt after God."† And "the world by wisdom knew not God."‡ And even in the plainest matters of moral duty there is an absolute necessity for the correcting influence of Bible truth.§ Indeed, the light of nature as it has been called, is neither more nor less than the will of the people themselves. Their will, often the joint production of the gross materials of ignorance, prejudice, passion, and interest, cannot be a

* Isa. xxviii. 15.

† Acts xvii. 27.

‡ 1 Cor. i. 11.

§ In some Pagan nations, children murder their aged and infirm parents. Many nations have offered human sacrifices; parents offering their own children. We would suppose that if nature's light were a sufficient guide in any thing, it would have prevented these hideous crimes. The name of justice, can hardly be applied to the administration of law, in any but Christian countries.

sure guide even in matters of expediency, much less in the high concerns of moral conduct and national duty. Conscience is not a sufficient rule; it also is too uncertain. It has sanctioned the most opposite courses of conduct and the grossest impiety and iniquity. The disciple of Juggernaut and the bigotted papist are conscientious, while the one throws himself as a victim before the ponderous wheels of the idol, and the other inflicts brutal tortures upon the children of God.

The Bible is an *infallible* rule—the only infallible rule of faith and obedience. All others are vague and obscure, and as interpreted by men, contradictory. The nations must take the Bible. There flows, in a pure, unadulterated, limpid stream, the river of the water of life. If the nations would rest upon a sure foundation, they must take the Bible as their supreme law. Its authority must be held paramount to the authority of all other codes: its principles acknowledged as the fundamental law of the land. The kings of Israel were commanded to write out with their own hands, upon their accession to the throne, a copy of the law.* All civil magistrates should care-

* Deut. xvii. 18—20.

fully, and with prayer for light and direction, study the sacred volume. There they will find the wisest maxims and the best examples of government, they will discover in its pages the goodness of God to nations that do righteousness, and the divine severity against such as persist in courses of disobedience: lessons that the nations are slow to learn.

It is no objection to the doctrine laid down, that certain laws contained in the Bible have expired by their own limitation, as, for example, the ceremonial institutions of religious worship; and that others were designed to be merely local in their obligation, as were the laws commonly called judicial: a code belonging to the Jews alone as a people. This circumstance renders it necessary to study the Scriptures with care, so as to separate between what is moral and what is of temporary obligation. The same careful study is necessary in regard to things which are wholly ecclesiastical. And the Protestant churches have with a good measure of unanimity, made the necessary distinction. The same thing was done respecting civil and national duties, by more than one reformed nation during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Indeed, the diffi-

culty is very little, if any greater, in regard to the one class of duties than the other.* The cry so often raised on this quarter, by the enemies of God's law, and re-echoed by heedless Christians, is precisely the same in principle with the cry of the Papists against an open Bible. Say they, it is impossible to comprehend it—to settle difficulties, without a living interpreter. Papists, in this, slander the Bible and him that made it. The infidel cry against the Scriptures as if they were unintelligible,—a cry raised for the purpose of getting rid of Christ's authority in civil things, is equally untrue, and equally dishonourable to the author of the Bible. In short, apply the objection to its full extent and the scriptures would be set aside as the supreme rule in the church and even in matters of personal religion: for respecting these there are diversities of opinion.

* There is controversy regarding worship and church government. Should there be instrumental music in our churches, as there was in the temple? What instruction on the subject of church government and order, are we to derive from the Old Testament economy? These are mentioned not as furnishing any very serious difficulties to the humble and candid inquirer, but as illustrating the fact that diversities of sentiment exist in reference to these matters as well as those of a civil nature.

The truth is, no greater difficulty exists in making application of God's law to nations, than to the other subjects of God's moral government. The reformers encountered no very formidable obstacles on this quarter. An honest and humble spirit, willing to submit to whatever may be discovered to be God's will, will surmount every difficulty. Nations coming to the examination of the inspired word with such a spirit, will, by the assistance of the Holy Ghost, find him faithful to his promise recorded in Psalm xxv. 9: "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." Every veil will be lifted, every shadow will be dissipated, so far as is consistent with man's present imperfect condition: certainly, so far as is necessary to the enjoyment of the blessings promised to them "who truly seek the Lord."*

3. *The nations are bound to serve Jesus Christ by framing their governments, and directing the administration of them, so as to promote, by such means as are competent to them, the great ends of the Messiah's exaltation.—*The purposes to be accomplished by Christ's

* Psalm xxxiv. 10.

mission, consequently, by his exaltation, are, as we have attempted to show, 1. The salvation of the elect, 2. The restoring to the world of somewhat of its original order, and 3. The execution of deserved punishment upon incorrigible enemies. That they may be made to serve him in accomplishing these objects, "all things" have been put under his control. He employs the inferior tribes of animals at his pleasure, to do his will. The lice, the frogs, and the locusts of Egypt attest the fact. The rains of heaven are made subservient to his purposes of mercy and of justice. "If ye walk in my statutes—then will I give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase," Lev. xxvi. 3, 4. While "he turneth a fruitful land to barrenness for the wickedness of them that dwell therein," Ps. cvii. 34.

All creatures rational and irrational, willing or unwilling, are used as instruments in the hand of the Mediator, of executing the will of God. Irrational creatures are unconscious servants of the Messiah. Moral agents are required to be more than this: they should be *voluntary* instruments in promoting the glory of God, by doing the will of the Messiah. Fathers and mothers are bound to yield them-

selves servants to Christ by imitating Abraham's example in "commanding their children, and their household after them, to keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment,"* and by managing their domestic concerns in direct subordination to the law of Christ, and for the advancement of the interests of his kingdom. The man of business—the merchant and the tradesman, must have respect to the law of Christ, and see that so far as their authority and influence extend, his law be not violated, nor his name dishonoured with their connivance, much less sanction and example. Angels are commanded to worship him.† He employs them as his ministers in advancing the interests of his kingdom.

Are magistrates, wielding, as the nation's representatives, the national power and influence, exempted from this universal law? Is civil government, which God has ordained for his own glory, and for good to man, to be the only exception? Are civil rulers not to be called upon to "serve him" to whom angels minister? are they alone of all moral agents at liberty to refuse to promote the ends of the me-

* Gen. xviii. 19.

† Heb. i. 6.

diatorial administration? It cannot be. "All kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall *serve* him," Ps. lxxii. 11. They must "serve him," by so directing their measures, and so employing their resources, as to facilitate the spread of truth, and throw on its side the influence of the national sanction; by furnishing aid to the church in executing her righteous schemes of piety and benevolence; by removing every outward hindrance, so far as it can be done; by restraining gross violaters of the moral law of both tables; thus infusing into the whole frame and actings of the machinery of the government a spirit of opposition to error, and wrong, and impiety, and of favour to truth, and morality, and godliness. This they can never do, unless they acknowledge, and honour, and defend, and support the Christian church. The magistrate may not, indeed, interfere with the church's independence, or attempt to discharge spiritual functions, but he is to aid the church in effecting the ends of her organization, and thus promote the knowledge and service of God the Redeemer.

The subject of national education furnishes a plain and striking illustration of this branch

of national duty. It is, perhaps, universally admitted by judicious men, that the interests of education are within the province of the civil authorities: that it is the *duty* of the state to make ample provision for the instruction of its youth. The question occurs, should this be of a Christian character and tendency, or not? Ought schemes for public instruction be so framed and executed as to impress upon the tender minds of youth, a conviction of the being, and a sense of the glory and claims of Christ, or is every thing tending to this to be carefully excluded? Should the Bible be read or not? Should prayer in Christ's name accompany public instruction or not? The reply of every Christian mind and heart, not sealed by prejudice, may be anticipated: "Let us have systems of education imbued with the principles, and instinct with the spirit of the Christian religion."* Every intelligent man knows that the cultivation of the intellect, promotes neither happiness nor usefulness, unless that of the heart go along with it. And no Christian will say

* Luther said, "every institution where God's word is not diligently, studied, must become corrupt," See D'Aubigne's *History of the Reformation*, vol. ii. p. 93.

that any means to accomplish the latter can be effectual, but the doctrines of the Bible; Christ must be known. We must then deny that the care of providing for national instruction devolves upon the public authorities, assent to the monstrous proposition that national instruction may be, without sin, a *moral blank*, or admit that nations in their national character are bound "to serve the Lord Christ."*

The duty of nations to promote the glory of Christ, by sanctioning and supporting the true religion, by withholding all countenance and sanction from whatever is opposed to its interests, and by restraining open hostility to Jesus Christ and the ends of his exaltation, is established by express declarations of the divine will in the constituting of the Israelitish commonwealth, and also by scripture prophecies. That the Jewish nation and their rulers were commanded to model their policy in avowed subjection to the authority of Christ, is beyond question. That the *principles* involved in this arrangement were moral, ought not to be doubted. As well might the obligation of the ten commandments be doubted. It has never yet been shown, and it never can be shown, for it is not so, that these principles

* See Note B.

were either ceremonial or peculiar. Many of the details of their application were of a local and temporary character, but this cannot affect the standing obligation of the principles themselves.*

Prophecy speaks in the plainest terms, and manifestly expresses the divine approval of that which it foretells. "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles, shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts," Ps. lxxii. 10. "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers and their queens thy nursing mothers," Is. xlix. 23. The preceding verse fixes both the person referred to in this prophecy, and its application to New Testament times. The sixtieth chapter of Isaiah, abounds with similar prophecies. The language of the sixteenth verse is very explicit, "thou shalt also suck

* The wisdom, the mercy, the purity of the Israelitish institutions, in their details, appear to be almost unnoticed at the present day. The severe penalties, as they are generally, but erroneously, supposed to be, attached to gross violations of the *moral law*, have exerted such an influence upon an unbelieving and law despising generation, as to prevent a careful study of the laws, which God himself gave to that people. It would be well if the whole subject of government were studied by Christians, and statesmen, in the light of the laws given by Jesus Christ to Israel.

the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breasts of kings." Under these figurative expressions it is intimated, that when the nations are brought to submit to the sceptre of Christ, their allegiance will be manifested by efforts to aid the church in promoting the great designs of the Redeemer's mission. Happy, indeed, will such nations be, while "the nation and kingdom that will not serve Christ and the church shall perish."*

4. *Nations are bound to commit the administration of the government to the professed subjects and friends of Jesus Christ, and to exclude, by constitutional arrangements, his enemies.*—The truth of this proposition is easily established, provided the Scriptures are admitted to be of supreme authority in matters of civil and national duty. By the original law instituting civil society, there was no such thing as the elective franchise. The form of government was patriarchal: the father exercising both the civil and parental authority; or rather, the parental including in it the civil. This form of government did not, however, exclude the operation of the

* Versc 12.

principle that grossly wicked men are unfit to be the depositories of civil power. Cain was excluded from the patriarchate for his impiety, and for the murder of Abel. Reuben was deprived of the birthright for the crime of adultery,* and the succession was given to Joseph. This was in perfect accordance with the law respecting civil government in Eden God made man holy. Had he not fallen from his primitive integrity, Adam would have been succeeded, when the period arrived for his removal from the world, by a son equally holy. And so, down through every descending step, until we arrive at the power as exercised in the family. So that the original institution of national society, contemplated the exercise of authority over the social body, by good men, and good men only.

This principle is written in letters of light, upon the pages of inspiration. In the xviii. chap. of Exodus, and the first of Deuteronomy, we have the first intimation of a change in the mode of investing with office power. When Israel was in the wilderness, and the ecclesiastical and national organiza-

* Gen. xlix. 4.

tions were putting on that shape, which they were to have in the promised land, Moses, by the advice of Jethro, and with the divine approbation, conferred upon the people the right of electing their own rulers. "Take ye wise men, and understanding, &c.," Deut. i. 13. But with the privilege, there was announced a very important restriction. The people were to choose "able men, *such as feared God*," &c., Ex. xviii. 21. An inspired Psalmist, re-iterates the same principle, 2 Sam. xxiii. 3, "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, he that ruleth over men must be *just, ruling in the fear of God*." The same truth is plainly implied in the definition of civil government, Rom. xiii. 1—7, "The magistrate is the minister of God, a terror to evil works—a praise to the good." Can any one be all this, but a fearer of God?

If it be granted that nations should direct their affairs so as to serve Christ, the conclusion that good men alone should be eligible to office, is irresistible. For will Christ's enemies voluntarily direct their administrative acts to the furtherance of the ends of the Messiah's exaltation? Will they not, on the con-

trary, take every opportunity to exercise their power, in such a manner as to thwart the interests of religion?*

Again, the influence of the personal character and example of the great and powerful, is almost overwhelming. As the rulers, so will be, in most instances, the people. There is no more certain and not often a more speedy way to relax the obligations of law and morality upon the mass of the community, than the elevation of the profane and impious, to places of power and trust. "The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted," Ps. xii. 8. If men in office are profane swearers, Sabbath-breakers, gamblers, rioters, or otherwise grossly immoral,

* That ungodly rulers do not always employ their civil and political influence, publicly and avowedly, against pure religion, is owing to the fact that it is often, in the providence of the Mediator, not their interest to do so. They are frequently under moral restraints likewise, which prevent the free development of their character. Thus it is, that in the United States, and in Protestant countries generally, *all* the evils which might have been anticipated from the possession of power by the wicked, have not yet resulted. Their influence is insidious, and spreads silently, but not less dangerously. Remove all restraints, and what then?

society will be polluted through their influence.*

The elevation of irreligious men will have the same result in regard to religion, that the elevation of immoral men has in regard to morals. To put into office, Infidels, Deists, despisers of the Bible and of Christ, has a decided tendency to bring the Christian religion into disrepute. It is a kind of premium given to Infidelity. It makes God's enemies respectable and influential in society. How absurd is the conduct of that man, who while he is exerting himself as a father to preserve his children from the contamination of evil example, and as a member of the church of Christ to restrain error and vice, yet labours and gives his vote to put into an office where his evil example will corrupt thousands, some profane Sabbath-breaker, or Infidel, because he is of his party ! It is a strange infatuation which brings intelligent men to this.

Good men should be sought for to occupy places of power. A true Christian in a high place becomes, indeed, a burning and shining

* Witness the effect that the broils and riots in the Congress of the United States, and in the State legislatures, have had upon the interests of social order in this country.

light. How did a Joseph in Egypt, and a Daniel in Babylon, recommend the religion of the Bible? How vast the purifying influence of such monarchs as David, Hezekiah, and Josiah; of a Frederic of Saxony, or an Edward VI., of England. The influence of such rulers is seen and felt, often, to remote ages.

If we look at this subject in its bearings upon the national interests, the same conclusion presses upon us. There can be no effectual barrier against mal-administration and the perversion of authority, where the official functionaries are not personally honest men: not honest merely through interest, but through the fear of God. "As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear, so is a wicked ruler over the poor people," and "when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn."* The Ruler of men has been demonstrating this truth by the history of nations. He has given them up to misrule, to tyranny, or to anarchy, whenever they have forsaken him. Checks and balances have been adjusted in vain. What can frail man do, if God withholds his spirit from the

* Prov. xxviii. 15, xxix. 2.

machinery of government? His wisdom will be seen to be but folly. The present age sees this demonstrated. In many countries there is a fearful state of disorganization. The pressure of the hand of power is becoming intolerable in some; while in others, liberty has run into licentiousness. Even in the most free and enlightened nations, there is a growing want of confidence in their rulers, and in constitutional provisions to prevent the abuse of power. For this disorder of the social fabric there is no remedy but its re-construction. The nations must repent and turn to God; acknowledge Christ; honour and obey his law; and commit power into the hands of the friends of the Redeemer. Then, and not till then, will their national policy and prosperity be settled upon a sure foundation.*

* It has been asked, in reference to the doctrine of the last particular, how the fearers of God can be selected—that as we do not know the heart, it is impossible. Who ever thinks of difficulty in this quarter, in choosing church rulers? And yet they are to be Christ's disciples. We must take the consistent profession of candidates, both in church and state. There is no more difficulty in the one than in the other: none, in fact, in either. See note C.

CHAPTER IV.

The principles contained in the preceding chapters, applied in an examination of the moral character of the civil and political arrangements of the United States.

“Prove all things: hold fast that which is good,” is a divine injunction.* Christians are required to examine the moral character and bearings of every thing with which they have any connexion or concern. National institutions are not an exception. The law of God reaches them; and the Christian must go as far, both as to the subject and manner of examination, as he has the moral law of God as his rule and guide. Besides, the influence of political arrangements upon the interests of religion, and of the divine glory, is too direct and powerful, and the questions that may arise in connexion with them respecting personal duty, too important, to allow

* 1 Thess. v. 21.

the supposition that the disciple of Christ is not to examine whether they are moral or immoral in their principles and tendency.—The rule to be applied is, in all cases, “the law and the testimony.” Whatever cannot bear the application of this rule, has “no light in it.”*

To aid in applying this rule to the civil institutions of this land, is the design of the remarks which follow, regarding the moral character of these institutions. That, however excellent in some respects,† they do not possess that moral character which should be impressed upon all national institutions set up in Christian countries, will be shown:

I. By presenting for consideration some general facts respecting their character and influence in a moral point of view: And

II. By an examination of the constitution of the United States.

This chapter will then be brought to a close by an investigation of some objections to the views offered.

I. There are at least three circumstances

* Is. viii. 20.

† That very important principles have been at least partially recognised in these institutions is most cheerfully granted.

in reference to the civil institutions of this country, which it is difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile with the idea that they are Christian, or even moral in their character.

1. *Ungodly men are entirely satisfied with them in this respect.*—The fact will not, probably, be disputed. Fault has sometimes been found by wicked men, with portions of these arrangements; and propositions have been made for their alteration, but in all cases for reasons having no relation to their moral character.* No Infidel, Deist, Socinian, Sabbath-breaker, profane swearer, whore-monger, or even Atheist, has ever alleged that the constitutional arrangements of the United States impose upon him any undue restrictions. No such person has ever objected to giving his support to these arrangements as in any way inconsistent with his principles and practices.† Nor has any one ever thought of charging Infidels and grossly wicked men, with any thing like perjury when

* Anti-slavery efforts are made by a different class of people.

† The fact that the Infidels who were in the convention that framed the constitution, and there were many of them, gave their assent to it, shows how absurd any such objection would be.

they have taken the oaths or given the affirmation required in becoming a naturalized citizen or in assuming office. And who would think of attempting to exclude a president, or a judge, or a legislator from office, because he was an Atheist, a Jew, or even a Mahommedan, a profane swearer, liar, gambler or adulterer? If all such characters are excluded by any constitutional principles from 'holding office under the United States' Government, the country has yet to learn the fact. Indeed, it is the boast of the nation that such characters are as eligible, if they can find supporters enough, as the best Christian, and this is called a due regard to the rights of conscience!

Now, would it not be strange if that which satisfies an atheist should please God? or even an intelligent Christian? And if the moral law of God, to say nothing at present of the peculiar principles of Christianity, be recognised as the supreme rule in civil things in this land, how can such facts as those just mentioned be accounted for? On this supposition they cannot be. There is no other account of facts so notorious, and yet so painful to every Christian mind, but that Christian people have

allowed themselves to join with all sorts of men, and men of all characters, in framing a political system, which could not be objected to even by the worst among them—from which every thing should be excluded that would be deemed offensive by the Socinian, the Infidel, the despiser of Christ, and the open violator of the moral law of God. At all events, these facts furnish exceedingly strong presumptive evidence that no peculiar doctrine of the Christian religion, and not even the moral law, has been incorporated in the Constitution of the United States.

2. *The administration has been in the hands, generally of irreligious, and often of immoral men.*—The tendency of pure institutions is to repel the irreligious and the profane. Where they are attracted, it is most probable that purity is wanting. We would expect to find Christians and moral men, or at least a majority composed of them, administering Christian and moral institutions. That the majority of the office-holders under this government have not been Christians even by profession, is beyond dispute. It is notorious that they have generally been of an entirely different class. Multitudes of them

have been openly immoral men: It is not intimated that all have been of this description. Among the occupants of the halls of legislation, the benches of justice, and the executive chairs, there might be found "upon search" nearly every variety of character. Exact statistics in a matter of this kind, it is impossible to reach. The series of presidents from 1789 to the present time will furnish perhaps the most favourable example of the operations of the Constitution, in the aspect in which we are now considering them.

There have been elected *nine* presidents. Of these there have been but *three* for whom it has been even claimed that they were professing Christians while they were in power: and there are great doubts respecting the claims set up for *two* out of the three. Of the remaining six, *three*, and perhaps *four*, were Infidels: *one* has made a profession of religion since he left the chair of state: and another intended to make a profession had he lived: at least, so he said upon his death-bed. Among the chief magistrates of this nation, there have been men eminent for the possession of the common gifts of the Holy Ghost; men of intellect, and experience and pa-

triotism ; but, alas ! of few of them can it be said that they were Christians. Had the system been imbued as deeply with religious as with irreligious principles, the account would have been different.

Would the moral statistics of the legislators, state and national, be more favourable to the moral and Christian character of these institutions ? Is not the complaint nearly universal that the legislators particularly, are in many instances openly profane and wicked men ? Is it not a notorious fact, that the state capitals are polluted by the presence of the legislatures. The national capital is distinguished for its immorality. Thus, the very places which should be centres and examples of religion and virtue, are the strong holds of impurity and vice. This fact is, of itself, almost evidence enough that the institutions of the country do not possess such a character as the Christian can approve.

3. *The practical workings of the civil institutions of the United States, have been adverse to the interests of morality.*—That there has been a downward progress in morality, during the last half century, in the United States, is, like the preceding observation, too

notorious to require proof. Of late, the descent has been greatly accelerated. The want of confidence between man and man, and between the people and their rulers, which is just now so much complained of, bears testimony to the general decay of morality. *Men cannot trust each other.* And notwithstanding the repeated tokens of the wrath of God with which the land has been visited, it is painfully manifest that the fear of God is diminishing.

Why is all this? It is a land of Bibles, and of Gospel ordinances. Vast moral associations,—Bible, missionary, tract, sabbath, and temperance societies—have been exerting every nerve to stem the tide of immorality. Yet it has gone on, increasing and spreading. Whatever other malign influences are at work producing these results, much of the evil is undoubtedly due to the irreligious complexion and workings of the civil arrangements of the country. To say the least, they are not openly on Christ's side. And we know that "they who are not with Christ, are against him."* There are two points, how-

* Matt. xii. 30.

ever, where we cannot fail to see the cause of their adverse operation to the interests of moral order. The example of ungodly office holders,* and the violation of the sabbath by law in transporting, on that day, the United States Mail.

The last of these directly attacks the very foundations of morals in the land. Individuals might do as much, and do it as publicly on the Lord's day, and comparatively few evils result. Sabbath violation by the constituted authorities weakens the sense of its sanctity, and of the obligation of the law of God enjoining its observance. It appears to place man's law above God's. It thus weakens the sense of obligation to do the will of God. For if one express commandment may be set aside by the act of a human legislature, *all* may. There is no resting place left for the sole of the foot. The standard of right and wrong has fallen, or it fluctuates as men change.

If the transporting of the mail on that day

* Such scenes as are constantly taking place in the legislative halls are enough to ruin a country, to destroy all respect for law and good order, and, of course, for religion, and morality.

did no more than give a national sanction to Sabbath violation, almost every evil might be expected to follow in its train. Take away the Sabbath, and the ordinances of divine worship depart with it. When they are gone, religion and pure morals cease likewise. To assail the Sabbath is, therefore, to attempt the overthrow of every barrier to vice and impiety. This the authorities of this land have done, and the nation as such is, in this way, chargeable with opening the flood-gates to that torrent of wickedness that sweeps over the length and the breadth of the land.*

* These remarks are well illustrated by the history of the changes that have taken place with regard to travelling on the Sabbath, between the city of Philadelphia, and the neighbouring cities, New York and Baltimore. A few years ago, no transit of passengers took place on the Lord's day; but the *United States Mail was carried*. Before Col. Johnson's report on the Sabbath mail was adopted by Congress, and while the mode of conveyance was not so well adapted for passengers, the malign influence of this national desecration of the Sabbath, was hindered in its operation. But rail-roads were made. The mail was carried by steam. The car could accommodate some passengers, and extra cars could be attached without additional expense. What has been the result. In 1838-39-40 one line—an evening line, ran regularly between Philadelphia and New York. It was the "mail line."

These circumstances, taken singly, are hard to reconcile with the opinion that the Government of the United States is a moral or a Christian government. Taken together they compel, with nearly irresistible force, to an opposite conclusion. That a system of government whose principles with regard to morality and religion, satisfy the most erroneous and vicious; which brings into the administration a large proportion of wicked men; and which in its practical workings is found to be against religion, and morality—

The number of passengers increased. Additional cars were put on. And, last year, *a new line*—a morning line—was added. The whole season *two* daily lines of passenger cars ran between these two great cities in this Christian country! The same effects have resulted on the Baltimore route.

The state governments have followed in the wake of the general government: the larger states particularly, which have made great internal improvements. The canals and rail-roads of New York and Pennsylvania, are nearly all in full operation every Sabbath. Efforts have been made to bring about a change. Hitherto, these efforts have been ineffectual. It is reported, indeed, that New York is about to set a better example, at least, upon a portion of her improvements; as yet it has not been done. The tendency of all this to increase vice is seen to a lamentable degree in the actual results. Vice is spreading. Much of the blame lies upon the governments, and of course, upon the people whose these are.

that such a government is Christian, is very hard indeed to believe.

II, *Let us examine the Constitution itself.*
And,

FIRST, This instrument violates, in at least two respects, the law of nature.*

1. *God Almighty is not acknowledged as the God of this land.*—That the rational creature should, in all things, acknowledge the Creator, as supreme and absolute Lord, and as the Author and Giver of all blessings, is an elementary—a self-evident principle. Nations are bound to make this acknowledgment in a public manner; for in this way alone can it be a *national* acknowledgment. Nothing of the kind is found in the national Constitution. This is the more remarkable, as in the Articles of Confederation which were set aside when the present Constitution was adopted, there was an acknowledgment of the being and providence of God.

It may be supposed, that an *express* mention of the name of God, and profession of submission to his authority, is unnecessary: that the requisite acknowledgment may be

* By "the law of nature," as used here, is meant the original rule of civil government, such as it was before the fall of man and the interposition of a Mediator.

made in other ways. It has, in fact, been argued that the being and providence of God, are, by implication, acknowledged in Art. VI. Sec. 3, of the Constitution, in the following words; "the senators and representatives shall be bound by oath *or affirmation*,* to support this constitution." The argument is, that as an oath is an appeal to God, therefore, this nation recognises the true God. To say nothing of its being a mere implication, does the conclusion follow? For suppose it were granted that this article does recognise the being of God and his providence also, *so far as individuals are concerned*, does it follow that the nation has, in its national capacity, acknowledged God to be *its God*? Not at all. A protestant magistrate swears a papist upon the sign of the cross. Does he consider this sign to be of any real importance in the transaction? He does not. He merely employs (whether properly or not, is not now in question) the superstition of the papist as the means of getting at the truth. This nation makes the same use of the faith of its citizens in God. It employs the solemnities of an oath to

* The attention of the reader is particularly called to the words in *Italics*.

secure their allegiance and fidelity, but that is something very different indeed from *putting itself under God's government*. This it never has done.

Let us look at this Article in another point of view. "*Oath or affirmation.*" Does this clause exclude an Atheist? No. He may affirm, or in other words, instead of the Constitution always requiring an oath, it might be all that it is, were there not an office-holder, or even voter, who acknowledged a God! For what is an "affirmation?" It is nothing more than a positive declaration to tell truth, &c., &c. It had its origin in a desire to avoid entirely an invocation of the Divine Being.*

Let us suppose a case. An Atheist is elected president; the oath of office is tendered to him. "No," he says, "I acknowledge no God. I will affirm." Does the Constitution exclude him? Could any law be made under the existing Constitution, to exclude him? No. An avowed Atheist might for twelve years occupy the highest office in the

* Quakers do not swear, they affirm. They do so, as all know, because they believe it to be wrong to invoke the name of God under any circumstances; and not because they do not acknowledge the being of God.

nation's gift. He might have an avowedly atheistical cabinet; and with them there might be an atheistical legislature, yet no principle or provision of the Constitution would be infringed.

A national acknowledgment of God has been inferred from the prayers at the opening of Congress; from occasional proclamations of fasts and thanksgivings; from the cessation of the public works on the Lord's day;* and from the mention of the name and providence of God, in President's messages. The principle on which this inference is made, is, in certain circumstances, sound and important. In a nation like Great Britain, for example, which has not a written constitution,† we must examine the state of things—the laws, the character of public men, the mode of investing with office, the administration, &c., before we pronounce upon the principles of the constitution. Not so in the United States. It is the boast of this country that it has an explicit national creed—a written constitution. Whatever is there, is a constitutional provi-

* This will be noticed again.

† Properly speaking, the constitution of Great Britain is partly a written one.

sion. What is not there, is no part of the Constitution. *Whatever is not expressly, or by implication, authorized by the Constitution is unconstitutional.* Any thing beside the Constitution is as much unconstitutional as that which is directly *against* it.

The public prayers, &c., are not authorized by the Constitution. No one pretends they are. And a late president* understood that instrument when he refused, because not warranted by the Constitution, to proclaim a day of fasting at a time when the land was trembling before the pestilence. Prayers, &c., are a concession to the Christian feeling of the country; an unconstitutional concession. *They might be omitted without violating the Constitution, which they could not be, if that instrument acknowledged God as the object of worship.*

The fact that there are so many churches, and Bibles, and Christians, in the United States, adds to the national guilt in refusing to conduct its civil and political affairs in acknowledged subjection to the divine authority.

* General Jackson, who refused to proclaim a fast in 1832.

They furnish no argument that it has actually done so.

2. *The Constitution sanctions oppression:* the oppression of that very part of the inhabitants for whose welfare especially, civil government was ordained: the poor, the stranger, and the defenceless. Slaves are held by millions under constitutional sanctions. There are four provisions of the Constitution referring to slavery; Art. I. sec. 3, 9, and Art. IV. sec. 2, 3. *The first* of these prescribes the ratio of representation, and direct taxation—making five slaves equal to three freemen. This provision it is impossible to explain in any other way than as a premium for slavery, or an intentional oppression of the slave. *The second* forbids the prohibition of the importation of slaves until 1808, a period of twenty years from the adoption of the constitution. An article sanctioning and protecting *piracy* for twenty years, needs no comment. *The fourth* requires the states to protect one another against “domestic violence;” a provision manifestly referring chiefly to the slaves, whom the free states are pledged to put down by force, should they attempt to recover their liberty by the same

means which the states themselves employed when they fought for independence. Under all the circumstances, this is a most infamous provision.

The third is as follows: "No person* held to service or labour in one state, *under the laws thereof*, escaping into another, shall, *in consequence of any law or provision therein*, be discharged from such service or labour, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labour may be due." This specification pledges all the states *and all their citizens* to uphold slavery: and not only this, but to *re-enslave freemen*.† And under it, thousands of poor, panting fugitives from the slave states, have been dragged back to a bondage, embittered even beyond that from which they had escaped. It is this constitu-

* The word "slave," does not occur in the Constitution, they are called "persons;" but every body knows that slaves are meant. This only adds meanness, to wickedness.

† Slave laws are *local*. The law of nations does not recognise slavery. Consequently, as soon as a slave escapes beyond the jurisdiction of the *local laws* which bind him, he is free. To return him is kidnapping, and of a worse sort than that committed on the coast of Africa.

tional provision that causes the heart of the poor stranger to faint within him, while hiding by day and journeying by night, with the pole-star as his only guide, he seeks that liberty in the realms of a monarch, which is denied him in his native land. He knows he is not safe from the grasp of the oppressor while he is under the wings of the American Eagle.

It is no justification of this inhuman article, that it would require no alteration were every slave emancipated. True. *But while their oppressors choose to drive them, the Constitution holds them, and if they escape, it catches them.* Is that system of government established to promote the ends of God's beneficent ordinance of magistracy, which thus spreads its ægis over the most execrable oppression that the world has ever witnessed? which lays hold of the self-emancipated captive and drags him back to his chains? which incorporates oppression among its elementary principles, and makes it part and parcel of the national arrangements? So wanton an assault upon the inalienable rights of man has rarely, if ever, been committed with so many aggravating circumstances. True, the subjects, of oppression in the United States, are mostly of

the African race: "the sun hath looked upon them, and they are black."* But, need it be said, God's law, and the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the moral government of the Almighty, know no distinctions of colour. To oppress a *black* man is as high a crime in God's sight as to oppress a *white* man. He is "no respecter of persons."

The plea of necessity has been set up as an apology. It has been said, that a compromise was absolutely necessary to the national safety; that the combined strength of the whole people was required at the time, for defence against the enemies of the country. Not so. Not a word of this is true. There can be no excuse for compromising with wrong. Besides, the northern states were not compelled to enter into this arrangement by any necessity. The country was at peace. Its independence had been acknowledged.† The North was strong enough of itself, and

* "Mostly." Some are descendants of Indians, and some have far more French, Spanish, and English blood in their veins than African. Many slaves are as white as their masters.

† The constitution was formed in 1787, when the United States were at peace with all the world.

was rapidly increasing. On the other hand, the South was compelled to form a union, if possible. The North had then an opportunity to make stipulations in favour of liberty, which would have secured the emancipation, at no very remote period, of the whole slave population. If the South had refused to stipulate then, the experience of a few years would have compelled them to do it.* Such an opportunity the free states will never, perhaps, have again. The day has gone by. They have made the sin of slavery a national sin,—they are reaping the consequences, and have reason to dread, in common with the South, still more dreadful calamities.†

In the SECOND place, the Constitution is not conformed to the Scriptures.

1. *It makes no acknowledgment of the being or dominion of Jesus Christ.*—Without this, no moral person can be said to possess a

* What would the South do at the present time without the North? and would such a union be *now formed* by the North?

† There are signs in the political horizon, portending evil. Slavery is the chief cause. The commercial difficulties of the country are mostly traceable to the same source.

Christian or Scriptural character. And unless the United States have made that acknowledgment in their Constitution, they have not made it at all, and are not, nationally, a Christian people. Now there is no reference to the Messiah in the Constitution. Neither in the phraseology of that instrument, nor in any of its provisions, would any alteration be required, were there no such person as the Saviour of sinners. The only allusion to Christ, is in the date appended to it; it is dated "in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the twelfth." If this be a profession of subjection to the Messiah, or even an acknowledgment of his being, then will it be exceedingly difficult to find man or woman in all western Europe, or in the greater part of this western world, who is not a disciple of Jesus Christ, not in profession only, but in reality, for all date their deeds, their correspondence, their ages, &c., in the same form. Then would Socinians, Infidels, and even Atheists, be every day of their lives, and every time they write "Anno Domini," acknowledging that the Saviour of sinners is their Lord and Saviour! The truth

is, that the prevalence of the Christian religion in Europe has introduced there, and among the descendants of Europeans, the custom of reckoning the lapse of time, and of marking its intervals, from the incarnation of Christ. It is utterly absurd to suppose that the use of this era makes all who do so, Christians.

To return to our argument. Did any one ever think of charging an Infidel with inconsistency in swearing to support the Constitution? Could such a person be rejected if offering to swear the oath? Could an officer be impeached for blaspheming the Saviour? None of all these were ever thought of. Indeed, those very persons who endeavour, on the one hand, to make us believe that the United States as a nation acknowledge Christ, are as clamorous, on the other, against any arrangement which would exclude from office Socinians, Infidels, &c. "The legs of the lame are not equal." Would Infidels, be eligible to office, provided this nation had made in its constitutional arrangements an acknowledgment of Christ? Decidedly not. The conclusion is manifest. The nation has made no such acknowledgment.

2. *There is no allusion to the Scriptures in*

the Constitution, and, of course, no acknowledgment of their obligation.—If the obligation of the Scriptures be recognised any where in the instrument we are considering, it must be by very indirect implication; for no mention is made of the Bible, nor any reference even to its existence. And, let it be again remembered, the Constitution contains all the principles believed by this nation to be essential to a national federative government. What is not there, is not to be taken into the account in forming an estimate of the moral character of the national institutions.

But, it may be said, are there not Bible principles imbodyed in the Constitution? * Were the fact admitted, (and to a certain extent we are not disposed to deny it,) the conclusion that the authority of God's law was acknowledged in adopting them, by no means follows. *Were they introduced because they are revealed in the sacred volume as God's will?* Many other reasons may have existed

* So far as the writer knows there is but one Bible principle in this instrument; namely, that the consent of the governed, is necessary to legitimate a government. A very important principle, it is true: but corrupted here by other doctrines found in the document under review.

for their introduction. Perhaps, we are indebted for them to the fact that they are upon the side of popular rights as between man and man! Had there been any better reason, we might have expected to find some allusion to the principles which so regulate the exercise of these rights as not to forget or neglect the claims of the Almighty. We hear only the words, "we the people of the United States, do ordain, &c." No allusion to a Bible or a God.

It may be supposed that the use of the word *Sunday*, implies an acknowledgment of the Bible and even of the Christian religion. This word occurs in Art. I. Sec. 7. "If any bill shall not be returned by the president within ten days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him, &c." In this provision it is merely taken for granted that, as Christianity in some form prevails in the country, it may happen that the president may be a Christian; and, if so, the nation will not *compel* him to attend to its business upon the Sabbath. But does the Constitution recognise the heavenly origin and binding obligation of the Sabbath *as of God*? Or does it not merely, *out of respect to the president's*

conscience, release him from duty on this day? Is it unconstitutional for the public functionaries to attend to their duties upon the Sabbath? Should both houses of Congress sit regularly upon the Lord's day: should the judges of the Supreme and Circuit Courts occupy the benches of justice: should the executive departments be in the full bustle of business on the Sabbath: should the business of the navy-yards, custom-houses, and the posts of the army be attended to as usual—would all this be unconstitutional? What article of the Constitution would be violated? Now, need it be observed, that, provided the law of the Sabbath were imbodyed in the Constitution, Sabbath violation by the government officers in doing official business, would be as unconstitutional, as the setting up of a monarchy in any of the states would be. The church of Christ recognises the law of the Sabbath. To attend to secular business on that day is, therefore, in the church, unconstitutional. Every Christian family recognises the Sabbath. To attend to secular employments on that day, is contrary to the constitution of a Christian family. It is as directly opposed to the constitution of a Christian state.

That the United States does not compel all* its functionaries to attend to its business upon the Lord's day, is so much concession, for which we ought to be thankful, to the power of the Christian religion; but it is no acknowledgment of any thing more than its existence as a powerful interest in the country. *It is no acknowledgment of either its divinity or value.*

Indeed the only wonder is, that in a land peopled by the descendants of a Christian ancestry; a land where there are so many Christians; where the influence of the Bible must be widely felt:—that in such a land a Constitution should have been framed without any express mention, to say the least, of Jesus Christ, the Christian religion, or the Bible! The fact painfully illustrates the power of infidelity in this country at the close of the last century.

In the **THIRD** place, at least three of the provisions of the Constitution are directly at variance with the Bible.

1. *The article respecting the surrender of fugitive slaves is expressly opposed to God's law.*

* Some of them, as post-masters, clerks, carriers, &c., are *required* to labour on the Sabbath. There is the same authority to compel all.

God's law is as follows: "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee: he shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him," Deut. xxiii. 15, 16. The iv. Art. 3d. sec. of the Constitution says, "He shall be given up on claim" of his master. Could there be a more express contradiction? A slave escapes. Shall he be delivered up? God Almighty says, No. The Constitution says, Yes. And no man can swear the oaths to the government, hold an office, or become a naturalized citizen, or vote to put men into offices where oaths are required, without swearing to maintain inviolate this compact with tyranny. All who incorporate with the civil institutions of the country are pledged not to throw any obstacle in the way of the recovery of fugitives from oppression. And more: according to the *spirit* of the compact, they do bind themselves to furnish no aid to the fugitive, and to "give him up" to bondage. In other words, they swear not to do what God's law requires them to do, and to do what it forbids. Were there no other objection to

the civil arrangements of the United States, this provision is enough to forbid the servant of God incorporating with them.

2. *By the Constitution, God's enemies are as eligible to office as his friends.* So it expressly declares, Art. vi. sec. 3. "But no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." The law of God, (Ex. xviii. 21,) defining the qualifications of office-bearers in a Christian country, has already been quoted and explained. The principle that magistrates should be good men is plainly implied in Rom. xiii. 3, "The magistrate is the minister of God." And should not the servant *profess*, at least, to reverence his Lord? "If I be a master, where is my fear?" Mal. i. 6. "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil." Can this be looked for, unless in a very restricted sense, where rulers are open enemies of God and religion? The unerring Spirit has told us, that "the wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted." Ps. xii. 8.

Nor is it likely that this anti-scriptural constitutional principle will be corrected or its influence neutralized in practice, by the peo-

ple choosing men of fair moral or Christian character. The history of the past shows that this is not to be looked for. Indeed the application of a "religious test" by the voter, or, in other words, the casting of his vote upon moral or religious considerations, would be a violation of the *spirit* of the compact. It has sometimes been said that the Constitution, while it guards against certain evils, leaves the citizens at liberty to put good men into office. No, not in the sense of this objection. True, the voter votes for whom he pleases; there is no *physical* restraint upon him. But has he not bound himself up from voting upon certain principles? has he not pledged himself to the doctrine that to be an open enemy of God and of his Christ, shall be no bar in the way of candidates for office? that he will not apply any "religious test?" Is it consistent with the pledge which the Christian thus gives to the infidel and the profane man, to turn immediately round, and cast his vote upon Christian and moral principles? Certainly not.

Were a society to be formed in which Englishmen, Frenchmen, Hollanders, Irish-

men, and Americans, had the same privileges. Were it one of the fundamental principles of the constitution that no "national test" should ever be required as a qualification to office: that, in this respect, all should be deemed and held to be on the same footing. Would it be consistent with the *spirit*, or even with the *letter* of this mutual engagement, to cast their votes for officers *upon national considerations*? Would it not be in direct violation of the terms upon which they had mutually agreed? Unquestionably it would.

On the same principle, the protestant in the United States, who refuses to vote for a papist, *because he is a popish idolater*, breaks his compact with the papists. The man of virtue and morality who votes against the profane swearer, the gambler, or the adulterer, *because he is any of these*, acts contrary to the spirit of his compact with these characters, made when he swore to the provisions of the Constitution. For it is absurd to say that a "test" which it would be unconstitutional for the nation collectively to apply *after* the man is chosen, may be applied by the same people as a bar to his being chosen. This article

is in direct opposition to God's law; which says that "he who ruleth over men should be just ruling in the fear of God."*

3. *The first amendment to the Constitution directly opposes the Scriptures.* It is as follows: "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion." The phraseology of this article, as of the preceding, is very artfully contrived for the purpose of most effectually tying up the hands of Congress from passing any act favourable to religion, and, at the same time, of rendering odious any opposition to this anti-Christian provision. The language is designed to direct the mind to the corrupting and oppressive test acts and religious establishments of European, particularly, Popish countries. The disguise is, however, easily penetrated, and we discern under it a spirit of deep aversion to Christianity. The command of Christ to nations is, to "serve him" and to "serve the church;" and his promise is, that in New Testament times the honour and the glory of the nations shall be brought into his church,

* Abolitionists who vote upon anti-slavery principles act contrary in this to their compact with slave-holders.

(Ps. lxxii. Is. lx. Rev. xxi.) The United States, publicly, deliberately, and solemnly affirm, that nothing of the kind shall ever be done by the magistrates and rulers of this land: that no national homage shall be rendered to Jesus Christ; there shall be ^{no} acknowledgment and support of the principles which he came to teach, and which he ratified by his blood. For to do any of these would be to enact a "law respecting the establishment of religion." This provision is as broadly and expressly opposed to the will of God Almighty as words can make it.

In these three particulars, at least, is the national Constitution anti-Scriptural, and anti-Christian. A *fourth* might have been added. *It refers the ordinance of civil government to no other author than the people themselves.* It makes no acknowledgment, as a nation, of the beneficence of the Creator manifested in instituting civil society, nor of the obligation of nations to ascertain the divine will and conform to it in public matters. The principle of the popular will being the *supreme* authority in civil things, which is the fundamental principle of the institutions of this country, amounts to an express rejection

of the paramount authority of God Almighty. But passing from this, we proceed.

III. *To notice some facts supposed to conflict with the results arrived at in our examination. And*

1. It is said, that the constitution may be *defective* in many things, and yet be, upon the whole, deserving of active support. That defects to some extent, in civil institutions, do not render them immoral, is unquestionably true. But what place has this principle here, unless, indeed, its operation be extended so far as to cover defects however monstrous. This cannot be allowed. "Sin is any *want of conformity* unto the law of God." "All *unrighteousness* is sin," 1 John v. 17. "Who-soever doeth not righteousness, is not of God," 1 John iii. 10. Provided, indeed, *there is no rule of civil duty, but the will of the people*—if it has its origin and character wholly from the people—if God Almighty has no concern in the matter at all; then, true enough, "where there is no law, there is no transgression." A Christian people cannot go this length: they will believe that defects so monstrous as leaving out of the Constitution all allusion to the Great Lawgiver, is not a mere peccadillo

—not a mere “defect in high and ultimate attainments.” It is a defect—a fundamental defect, that corrupts the whole superstructure. A building well founded and constructed may answer the purpose very well without the cope-stones; but if it have only a sandy foundation it ought not to be trusted.

But of what use is this *defective* principle, in the case before us? There are positive immoralities in the civil arrangements of this country. And these are not mere incidents, and easily lopped off. They enter into the very spirit and essence of the system. He who swears to the Constitution, swears to it *as a whole*: he can make no exceptions.

2. It is said, that the government of the United States is not a true national government: that it is merely a league, and, of course, is not to be tried by principles applicable to governments of sovereign and independent communities. Suppose all this were true, would it be any apology for framing a Constitution containing no allusion to the Governor of nations, and embodying principles so repugnant to the Divine law? But the objection is not true. The convention which framed the Constitution resolved, after much

debate, to throw aside entirely the Articles of Confederation, and to form a national government. They did form a "Constitution of government." In this government, there is a legislative, (Art. I. sec. 1,) a judicial, (Art. III. sec. 1, 2,) and an executive department, (Art. II. sec. 3.) It has, therefore, the faculties requisite for the discharge of all the functions belonging to a real government. Laws are made directing the conduct of individuals, and not States. Leagues act in a manner directly the opposite of this. The United States is a *nation*. Pennsylvania, New York, &c., are *states*, not *nations*. The national Government possesses all the attributes, as well as the faculties of a sovereign power. It makes war and peace—coins money—lays taxes—tries criminals, and inflicts punishment even to death—it has a national symbol, arms, and flag, and negotiates with foreign nations. No State can declare war, coin money, or negotiate with other nations. Foreign nations know nothing of the existence of Virginia, Ohio, Maine, &c., as *commonwealths*.

As to the reserved power of the States, it is nearly certain that the tribes of Israel retained more of the attributes of sovereignty

than the States have done—certainly, as many. In all communities, much local legislation remains with the smaller portions of which it is composed. And, again, how absurd to suppose that the Constitutions of all the states are to be examined, to select what is good, and thus to patch up a system! If we take a part, we must take the whole—the evil as well as good. And even were there a state whose internal arrangements were agreeable to the divine law, it would not obviate our objections to the system as a whole: for

(1.) “The constitution, and the laws made in pursuance thereof, and all treaties, shall be the *supreme law* of the land; any thing in the constitution or laws of any state to the contrary, notwithstanding,” (Art. VI. sec. 2.) Even the Bible must yield to this overshadowing power.

(2.) Citizenship in the United States, and the oaths to the Constitution, are inseparably connected with the exercise of political rights in the States. No man can become an officeholder in Pennsylvania, for example, without swearing to the Constitution of the United States. Of course, he binds himself to the immoral principles imbodyed in it.

(3.) Granting that the government of any particular state, is Christian and Scriptural,* how heinous the sin which the people of that State commit in becoming so intimately incorporated with the oppressor, the Infidel, &c. so intimate as actually to give away most of their own prerogatives as States, and amalgamate in one mass with them. What is being yoked unequally with unbelievers,"† if this is not?

3. It is said, that as this government recognises popular rights—as it is no tyranny—it should receive the approbation and active support of the citizens. That this government is not tyrannical is only in part true. The exclusion of a large part of the population—the slaves—from the benefits of the free principles of these institutions, and the sanction of slave-holding, are exceptions to the boasted liberty and equality of the land, which ought never to be forgotten; God does not and will not forget them. As to the rights of white men, it is cheerfully admitted that numerous important guards have been thrown around them: and that the principle that government

* This is not granted respecting any of the twenty-six states composing the union.

† 2 Cor. vi. 14.

is *for* the people, and not the people *for* the government, has been rendered in a remarkable degree prominent before the nations of the world in the institutions of this country, is not denied. But this important principle has been set forth in a most unscriptural and licentious manner: in such a manner as not only to exclude the usurping of power by man, but if it were possible, the exercise of authority even by Jehovah himself. The law of God, *the true rule of liberty*, has been rudely thrown aside to make room for the uncontrolled license of the popular will. This nation has indeed appropriated the privilege of choosing its own rulers, but it has deliberately treated with scorn the restriction annexed by infinite wisdom, that "the rulers of the nations, should be fearers of God—just men, ruling in the fear of God."

The mere fact that a government has been set up by the voice of the people, or exists with their consent, is not enough. The ten tribes of Israel established a government. God says, "they set up kings *but not by me*.; they have made princes *and I knew it not*," Hos. viii. 4. The Spartan constitution was made by the Spartans, but was that unnatural, op-

pressive,* and military government, moral? The revolutionary government of France was a popular government. Something more is necessary to render a government moral, than that it has been made by the nation itself. Unless it has been *rightly* made, it is immoral notwithstanding.

Other objections have been noticed, and as we believe, answered in the preceding sections. The result of our examination of the moral character of the civil institutions of the United States, may be briefly stated. However excellent some of their provisions are, there are found in them so many gross defects and positive immoralities, that we are obliged to withhold from them our approbation as pure, and as Christian institutions.

* The largest part of the population, the Helots, were slaves.

CHAPTER V.

Practical Inferences.

1. *If the doctrines of this essay be sound, we can be at no loss to know the source of the disorders and distresses of the nation.* They are the consequences of our national rebellion, and are tokens of God's indignation. The Lamb has been provoked to wrath by the sins of which we have been guilty. The blasphemy, profanity, infidelity, idolatry, and impenitence; the covetousness, dishonesty, Sabbath-violation, and oppression of the nation, have risen up before him "as a cloud." These are actual sins. They have their root, not only in the natural depravity of fallen man, but in the national rejection of God, his Christ, and his law: in the impious attempt of this nation to manage its national affairs as if there were no Christ, no Bible, no religion, no church of God. Such dishonour done to the Eternal Son of God will not

be permitted to pass unpunished. The history of nations, especially of ancient Israel, is full of instruction and of warning to this effect. They were idolatrous, sensual, proud, and rebellious. Judgment after judgment administered correction. They refused to repent, and Assyria, Babylon, Tyre, Edom, Moab, and other great nations of antiquity, have been for ages blotted out of the list of kingdoms, and their places, and chief cities made an utter ruin, while Israel has been scattered to the four winds of heaven. The nations cannot prosper without God. And where the Bible is, they must honour Christ or perish, (Is. lx. 12.)

2. *It is the duty of the Lord's people to refrain from taking any part in administering unscriptural institutions of government.* Christ's people are "called and chosen and faithful," (Rev. xvii. 14.) He calls them to come out of the world, 2 Cor. vi. 17, "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." They are not literally to leave the busy world, and betake themselves, as fanatics have often foolishly imagined, to bleak and uninhabited

deserts. They are in the world, and they are kept in it; for they are "the salt of the earth:" they preserve society from entire moral putrefaction. Christians are "the lights of the world:" they make known by their testimony and example, the way of salvation and the will of God. They are not even at liberty to abandon their post, and for the sake of their own ease, or supposed higher sanctification, to cease to have so much intercourse with the world as is requisite for the execution of their high and holy functions. But they must beware of accommodating their doctrines or their conduct, to the evil maxims, and sinful practices of the world, whether these are imbodyed in the habits of society, in its business, or in its amusements, or incorporated with the national civil arrangements. "If the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing," (Matt. v. 13.)

There is no diversity of opinion regarding the Christian's duty carefully to avoid identifying himself with the common private and social immoralities of the times. But to say that Christians ought not to identify themselves with the public and national immora-

lities, by swearing the statute oaths, by holding office, by exercising the elective franchise, or by sitting as jury-men in courts of law, or by doing any other act whereby a citizen becomes *one* with the nation—to say this, seems to many to be fanatical in the extreme. But why not apply the same rule of action to immoral civil systems which the apostle prescribes, in the passage quoted above, to the early Christians as the rule of their conduct in a heathen state of society? especially, as it is admitted to be a rule of duty, and acted upon by all consistent Christians in reference to immoralities of every other description. Are there two codes of Christian morals? Does that, which in an individual is sinful, become sanctified when adopted and carried into effect by a nation? No. God is one. And wherever immorality is found, let it not receive the countenance of the Christian. Whether it be private vice, or public; whether it be personal rebellion against Jesus Christ, or a national rejecting of Him and his law; whether it be private dishonesty, or public oppression, let it meet the firm and decided rebuke of the servant of Christ. Christ his Master allows sin

no where, it matters not by whom or under what circumstances committed.

And let it not be said, how shall the evil be remedied? This much we know assuredly—that “the damnation of them is just, who do evil that good may come,” Rom. iii. 8. But is there no power in truth? Has the Spirit of God no energy? Is God’s arm shortened that it cannot save? We are told that the Redeemer “will destroy that wicked one with the spirit of his mouth, and with the brightness of his coming,” 2 Thess. ii. 8. The witnesses shall “overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony,” Rev. xii. 11. It is not by squabbling at political meetings, by ballot-boxes, and by holding a ticklish balance between contending factions, that God’s people are to demolish the systems of civil misrule that plague the nations. “The little stone,” smites the image, and it crumbles into dust.

Let Christians come out of all unholy political organizations, lest instead of benefiting themselves or the nations, they “become partakers of their sins, and thus become partakers of their plagues.” When God’s people

do their duty in this matter, "the end" will soon come.

3. *The disciples of Christ should endeavour to accomplish a reformation.*—Their weapons are few, but they are mighty; the sword of the Spirit, and the prayer of faith. We would not have the children of God to be either silent or idle, while the clouds of the divine anger are settling down upon the land. It is then a time to be up and active. Let the word of their testimony be boldly, yet meekly uttered: not in anger, but with solemnity. Let them lift up the voice and cry. It ought not to be disguised that the voice of Christ's ministers does not utter upon the nations, calls loud and frequent, in proportion to their sin and danger. There is not faith enough. The religion of the age is cowardly. Fear of the infidel and senseless cry of "church and state," closes the lips against the utterance of the most solemn truths. The remedy must begin to operate here first. Christ's disciples must be better taught, more enlightened, and more uncompromising. Then the conflict will begin in earnest, and once begun, it will soon terminate. The truth that, by the blessing of God, Christianized the Roman

empire in less than three centuries, will rapidly overcome the enemies of these last days.

4. *The Lord's people, while endeavouring to bring about a general reformation upon Christian principles, should, in the mean time, deport themselves with meekness.*—We would have none act the part of disturbers of the peace of society, or become, in any way, wanton violaters of the good order of social life. “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal,” 1 Cor. x. 4. The intelligent Christian entertains too high a regard for the interests of social order, to disturb it unnecessarily. His is not the character that delights in scenes of tumult—in confusion and riot. He likes better the closet of prayer. True, he may become the *occasion* of strife. Imitating the example of Paul, and of a greater by far than Paul, Jesus Christ himself, the faithful witness may awaken the opposition of violent adversaries. The word of God is “a sharp two-edged sword,” it is “quick and powerful, and pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart,” Heb. iv. 12. When it pierces the hearts of sinners, unless they yield to its power, they often ~~dash~~ *dash* with their teeth

and run upon the messenger who bears it. For these things the advocate of truth is not responsible. He has done his duty, let none of these things move him. Living a life of faith and holiness; keeping himself unspotted from the world and of blameless conversation, he may trust Jesus Christ for ultimate deliverance and for the success of his testimony. For the Messiah must reign "till all his enemies are made his footstool."

APPENDIX.

Note A. p. 28.

The following quotations show with how much unanimity the doctrine of Christ's universal Lordship has been received and taught by eminent divines of different denominations.

CALVIN.—“We see the end of this session; it is, that *all creatures*, both celestial and terrestrial, may admire his majesty, be governed by his hand, obey his will, and be subject to his power. And the only design of the Apostles in their frequent mention of it, is to teach us that *all things are committed to his government.*” Institutes, Book II. Chapter. xvi. ¶ 15.

TURRETIN.—“The session of Christ at the right hand of the Father imports.—2. The most extensive dominion which he powerfully exercises over *all creatures.*” Loc. xiii. Ques. 19.

CHARNOCK.—“All power of government is given to Christ—not that the Father lays aside all care of things, but as the Father discovers himself only in him, *so he governs only by him.* All this power was committed to him upon his interposition after the fall of man: he was made Lord and Christ, that is, anointed by God to the government of the world.” On Providence, p. 220.

FLAVEL.—“Christ's sitting at the right hand of God implies.—4. The sovereignty and supremacy of Christ over all. He is *also Lord of the providential Kingdom, the whole world*, Ps. cx. 2.” Fountain of Life, Ser. xli.

HENRY.—“Entrusted him (Jesus Christ) with the administration of the Kingdom of providence, in conjunction

with, and subserviency to, the Kingdom of grace. *All the creatures are put under his feet.*" On Ps. viii.

SCOTT.—"He was 'crowned with glory and honour,' and in human nature exercises universal dominion, even an authority infinitely more extensive and absolute, than ever the first Adam possessed, or could possibly have administered." On Ps. viii.

GOYSE.—"Thou (the Father) didst advance him like a King to his throne, and solemnly inaugurate him—in all mediatorial dignity and authority, and didst constitute him the absolute and universal Lord and Sovereign of all creation." On Heb. ii. 7.

BOSTON.—"He has an economical or mediatory Kingdom. *He is invested with authority over all the creatures.*" Body of Divinity, Vol. II. p. 50.

E. ERSKINE.—"Upon which undertaking the Judge is so well pleased, that in order to the accomplishment of the Son's undertaking, 'all power in heaven and earth is given him : ' *all government is committed to the Son*, angels, men and devils, and all creatures are put into his hand. This general mediatory kingdom extends itself over heaven, earth and hell. *All persons, kingdoms, and revolutions of affairs in the world, are ordered and managed by our mediator and Redeemer, Jesus Christ.* He sets up kings and pulls them down, &c." Sermon entitled, "The Sovereignty of Zion's King."

JONATHAN EDWARDS.—"In the person of Christ are conjoined an exceeding spirit of obedience, *with supreme dominion over heaven and earth.* Christ is the Lord of all—as God-man and Mediator : and thus his dominion is appointed, and given him of the Father. Having it by delegation from God, he is as it were the Father's vicegerent." Ser. v. on the Excellency of Christ.

Note B, p. 61.

"I regard the New Testament as a suitable book in all respects to be daily read in common schools. Education consists of more than mere instruction. It is the training and discipline of the faculties of the mind, which shall systematically and harmoniously develop the future man for happiness in sustaining the various relations of life. What is commenced in the hallowed sanctuary of the domestic circle, and periodically *inculcated at the altar*, must be *daily and hourly recognised* in the Common Schools." *Letter of Samuel Young, superintendent of the Common Schools of the State of New York.*

It is encouraging to find these principles acknowledged in so influential a quarter. We would have been much better pleased, however, had he said, "the Old and New Testaments," and referred to preparation for another world as one end of education. The schools are training *immortal beings*.

The following extract from "The Presbyterian" of April 2, 1842, contains some judicious hints. "It (referring to the breaking up of the present school system in New York City by the Roman Catholic bill) it will prove a happy event that the other system has been exploded, which in its liberality to persons of all sects, *attempts to educate the youth of the country without religion*. For our part, we should like to see every denomination of Christians taking active measures to establish schools on denominational principles."

These hints contain the germ, at least, of important principles. It would be much more desirable, however, to Christianize the government, so that instead of being agents in diffusing "indifferentism" and error, the civil

institutions of the country might become active instruments in promoting the interests of vital religion.

Note C, p. 69.

We quote with pleasure the following sentiments.

"None should be elected to office, but those who acknowledge the truth of religion and respect the ordinances of God." Biblical Repertory, Oct., 1832, p. 520.

"But let both the candidates for their support be such men, that either, if elected to office, will be a public blessing, sagacious, good, industrious, an example to the people, *fearing God* and hating covetousness, a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well." Sermon by Rev. J. M. Krebs, New York, on the National Fast, May 14, 1841.

Note D.

The following brief remark speaks volumes, considering the quarter from which it comes.

"It is probably the regret of all pious men, that the Constitution of the United States never recognises the being or providence of God." Biblical Repertory, Oct., 1832, p. 519.

ERRATA.

p. 31, line 8, for "section of this chapter," read "chapter of this essay."

p. 38, line 18, for "receive," read "remove."

p. 102, line 6, after "be," read "no."