

THE
COVENANTER.

OCTOBER, 1850.

THE UNITY OF THE HUMAN RACES.

THE UNITY OF THE HUMAN RACES proved to be the Doctrine of Scripture, Reason, and Science: With a Review of the Present Position and Theory of Professor Agassiz. By the Rev. Thomas Smyth, D.D., Member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. "Man is surely of all things in the Creation most interesting to man." New York: George P. Putnam, 155 Broadway. 1850. Pp. 404.

Has God made of one blood the whole human race? An interesting and important inquiry, which the Scriptures settle definitely in the affirmative,—a few men of science holding, groundlessly and presumptuously, the negative: another example of the arrogance and impiety of a certain class of labourers in the field of scientific investigation. We are not aware that this question is of any very great moment as it regards the determination of the rights of any portion of mankind. For even were it so that the family of man could be arranged under different species—descended from different pairs of first parents, it would by no means follow that these might lawfully oppress and enslave one another—that no law but the law of the strongest would regulate their mutual relations. Angels are not men. They belong to a different species of rational beings. It does not follow that they might, if circumstances permitted, rob and oppress mankind. On the contrary, the relations of these two great families of moral beings are regulated by the same moral principles that define and determine their intercourse within the limits of their own kind. Still, it is well to deprive the oppressor of even that measure of pretence which the theory of different races might be conceived to furnish as a justification of his wrong—to show that men are not only possessed of the same intellectual and moral nature, but that they are of one *family*; brothers in blood, descended of the same parents, and, of course, possessed of all the same original rights,—as they are all under obligations to obey the same moral law—that law which has love to God as its first great principle, love to man as its second.

The Scriptures, as we have said, settle this question in the affirmative, and that so plainly that he who runs may read. Adam is the first father—Eve the mother "of all living." The tenth chapter of Genesis gives us, in substance, the history of the peopling of the earth after the flood. All mankind are every where, in the inspired record, treated as belonging to the same family, involved in the same guilt, for the same reasons—and as in the same sense, and to the same extent, needing the same salvation. And finally, we have the explicit declaration of Paul

dom of righteousness and peace extraordinary over all the earth, and there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain. Does any one believe that there will be any slavery in the millenium? "For He shall deliver the needy, when He crieth, the poor, also, and him that hath no helper," Ps. lxxii. "Thy kingdom come."

[For the Covenanter.]

SEASONS OF COVENANTING.

BY JAMES R. WILLSON, D. D.

The Church of Christ is a society in covenant with God. All her endowments are secured for her in the charter of the new covenant. On this basis is the doctrine of public covenanting established. Like all gospel ordinances it is by our Redeeming Head, for strengthening our faith in the great and precious promises. It is not, like the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, a duty to be performed at stated times. Christ indicates the seasons, and he calls us to engage in this duty by special providential emergencies. The saints, by wisely discerning the signs of the times, hear his voice, and obey his call. He calls on us to renew our covenant with him:—

1. *When any important public work is to be performed.* Preparatory to the organization of church and commonwealth, the people entered into a public vow and covenant at Horeb. "And Moses came, and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said we will do." "And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that the Lord hath said, we will do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." Exod. xxiv. 3, 7, 8. This most solemn transaction did not supersede the Abrahamic covenant, as some appear to have thought in Galatia. "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. And this I say, That the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." Gal. iii. 15, 17. The transaction at Horeb was a renovation and development of the covenant made with Abraham. It prepared them for receiving the blessings, and performing the personal and social part of the covenant of their father.

Our own times are analogous. All good and intelligent men believe, and the signs of the times cannot be mistaken, that the kingdom is in the agonies of its death-struggle, and must soon die. The spasmodic and convulsive throes of our own republic demonstrate that a crisis of vast magnitude is near at hand. The saints of the Most High will soon take the kingdom. The church is about to enter on the performance of duties like those of Israel in the wilderness. The commonwealth must be organized on Christian principles and mutual relations of church and state, and all the rights of man secured on a scriptural covenanted basis, as at Horeb. The call is loud and imperative.

2. *When there is an alarming declension in religion.* For seven years, in the reign of Athaliah, an impious and cruel queen, the whole

kingdom of Judah became debased by idolatry and gross immorality, except Jehoiada the priest, and a few others. In order to effect a reformation, the pious priest brought chosen officers into the temple of the Lord, "and made a covenant with them." 2 Kings xi. 4. At the coronation of Josiah by the reformers, they renewed their covenant. "And Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord's people; and between the king also and the people." V. 17. All this was done to secure the blessing of Christ on his own ordinance, by increasing their faith, by promoting mutual confidence, and harmonious co-operation in the hallowed work of reforming the church and nation. The temple of the Lord was repaired, the administration of the nation restored in purity, and so a whole generation of peace and prosperity in the church and nation, and hundreds of thousands of souls prepared for heavenly mansions. Such are the blessed fruits of covenanting: Christ has always smiled most propitiously on this ordinance.

The whole kingdom of Scotland, and all Britain and Ireland, were sunk almost into the lowest depths of Popish ignorance, superstition, idolatry and corruption, when John Knox commenced the reformation. Following the example of Jehoiada, he and a few others entered into a covenant with God and one another. Perhaps never, except after the day of Pentecost, did the Spirit of Christ accompany the preaching of the word with greater power. The word of the Lord ran and was glorified. And though opposed by all the hosts of darkness and the ungodly on earth, yet, even to this day, it holds on its glorious march. The day of that first Scottish covenant was the dawn of Britain's glory.

That our own times are exceedingly corrupt, and declining rapidly, no intelligent observer can possibly doubt. The grossest corruptions, under the name of religion, as Mormonism, increase fast, and are regarded with favour by the ignorant multitude, and by public functionaries. The Protestant churches are all rent into fragments. All their efforts to heal divisions have only proved utterly abortive, and have even aggravated the evil which they seek to remove. It deserves grave inquiry, whether these disastrous schisms are not the legitimate fruits of disregarding covenant obligations, and the sinful omission of covenant renovation.

The spirit of vital piety and holy walking with God in tenderness of conscience, is, by the acknowledgment of all, every where on the decline. The continued heresy and immorality of public functionaries in the commonwealth, with the furious strifes of imbibited factions, bear fearful testimony to the gross corruptions of the times. We profess to be set for the defence of the gospel, and our mission is to employ, in God's great and holy name, divinely appointed means for effecting a reformation both in church and state. Our object is to recall men to the good old way, and induce them to walk in the ancient paths, that God may be glorified, and sinners saved. Was ever such a reformation effected without public covenanting? Where? When? Never. No where. God calls. Let us answer speedily.

3. *When the church is exposed to danger from the combined assaults of her enemies.* After the return of the captives from Babylon, Sanballat, Geshem, the Arabian, and Tobiah, the Ammonite, chief men in the great neighbouring nations, and types of their kingdoms, confederated together for the ruin of the church. The captive exiles who had

returned, were few, poor, and their farms desolate. They confess their sins, as we should do, without delay, and renew the covenants of their fathers. They say: "Behold, we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers, to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it. And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle at their pleasure, and we are in great distress. And because of all this we make a sure *covenant*, and write *it*; and our princes, Levites, (deacons,) and priests, seal *unto it*." Neh. ix. 36—38.

Our fathers were exposed to great peril, when they entered into covenant with God, 1643, London, in that immortal bond, known as the Solemn League and Covenant. The Pope, Urban VIII., had engaged all the Roman Catholic powers of Continental Europe in an impious confederacy against the Protestant church, and the cause of liberty in Britain. God blessed the Solemn League and Covenant to defeat their plans.

Our own times are fraught with danger to the church. The complexion, animating spirit, and administration of every civil government in the world is adverse to the government of Messiah, the Prince of the kings of the earth. "The Devil has come down, having great wrath, for he knoweth he hath but a short time." All the organized systems of worship, as systems which are confederated with these bad thrones, give their power to the beast, in the war which the dragon wages with the Lamb. Messiah calls on all his followers to *unite* in solemn covenanting for the city of our God.

4. *When the church needs means to secure what she has gained.* After Israel had been seventeen years in Canaan, shortly before the death of Joshua, the church and nation renewed their covenant in the valley of Shechem. "So Joshua made a covenant with the people, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem." Josh. xxiv. 25.

We have gained much territory in this land, and made great progress "in binding up the testimony, and sealing the law." We must enter into covenant "to strengthen the stakes." Any one of these emergencies imperatively calls to the duty—much more when they all unite their voice, as they now do. Right-hearted men will hear and obey. May the Spirit "incline our hearts unto the Lord God of Israel." Amen.

[For the Covenanter.]

PREJUDICE AGAINST COLOUR.

Prejudice against colour is that sentiment or notion that leads men and women to look with contempt upon the descendants of the Africans of whatever shade—which makes those who entertain this prejudice feel demeaned when found in the company of its objects, upon terms of apparent equality, as they are regarded as an inferior race, and fit for the commission of any and every crime. It regards them as incorrigibly ignorant and degraded, so long as they remain in a community where the whites predominate. All this, in reference to those who are of that race which is now enslaved in *our* southern states, and in popish Brazil. This sentiment is maintained against the evidence of history, against experience and observation, against the light of science and the precepts of the Bible. I have said that it is a sentiment or feeling which respects the descendants of the Africans, no matter how slight the shade of colour