

tival was celebrated by the pagan Saxons in the month of April.*

The word *Easter* has been most unwarrantably inserted in our authorized English translation of the New Testament, by the influence of king James, in Acts xii. 4, where the original Greek word is *pascha*, the passover. Wickliffe's translation gives *paske*; the Geneva Bible translates it the *passover*; and in the French versions it is *la fête de Pâque*, the feast of the passover.

T.

(To be continued.)

A. B.

ON NATIONAL JUDGEMENTS VIEWED WITH REFERENCE TO THE PRESENT CRISIS.

That the happiness of intelligent beings is one great end of their creation, is an inference deducible from the benevolence of God. But seeing this happiness is inseparable from obedience to his laws, it is best promoted when obedience to this law is secured by the most powerful sanctions—by the assigning of rewards to those by whom it is obeyed, and of punishment to those by whom it is violated. Hence, though the misery of any of his creatures cannot of itself be pleasing to the Creator, yet a regard to the interests of the universe in general required that wherever sin or a transgression of his law appeared, it should be visited with punishment, that thus the progress of that moral disorder might be arrested, which, if suffered in any case to pass with impunity, might soon spread misery throughout the whole of God's intelligent universe. This established connection between sin and its penal consequences, so essential to the honour and observance of God's law throughout the universe in general, will operate no less beneficially in every distinct portion of it. And hence we find that vice and ungodliness, whether in individuals or communities, seldom pass with impunity. In both cases the misery attendant upon sin naturally leads to moral improvement. Man is well aware, however little the thought may habitually trouble him, that he has transgressed the laws, provoked the displeasure of that great Being to whom he owes his existence, and knowing that the evils which afflict him happen through His providential appointment, he infers

that they are sent as a punishment of his transgressions; and well may he think so, for God being infinitely just could inflict on him no evil which he deserved not. Hence we find that even heathens, notwithstanding the obscurity of their religious notions, ascribe their signal calamities to the vengeance of heaven, and, by way of appeasing it, have recourse to the most absurd and cruel expiations. Much less wonderful is it that such as have more clear ideas of duty and responsibility, by the external light of revelation, should have compunctious visitings, on the infliction of peculiar suffering, and thus reason with themselves, "verily we are guilty, and therefore has this distress come upon us." From regarding their present troubles as the punishment of their sins, they are naturally led to the apprehension that if not repented of, they may incur still more disastrous consequences in a future state. This consideration naturally makes them desirous of obtaining peace with their Maker, whom they have offended, and whose resources of vengeance are infinite; and aware that they cannot effect this while they persist in the course which so offends Him, they see the necessity, in order to reconciliation with Him, of breaking it off by repentance and amendment; and, therefore, they are led to resist their evil inclinations, to avoid gross sin, and keep out of the way of temptation. As the moral effects produced on individuals are, when experienced generally, just the moral effects produced on communities or bodies of individuals, public or national calamities are designed to have the same effect in leading to general reformation as the affliction of individuals in reforming them. Hence we find that with the view of producing this salutary effect, it has been God's procedure in every age to visit the sins of nations as well as of individuals with punishment, and more constantly we apprehend those of the former than those of the latter, for nations or communities as such, that is men in their collective or aggregate capacity, have only a temporary existence, and therefore if they are not punished in that capacity in the present state they cannot be punished at all; whereas though men, as individuals, may escape punishment here, retributive justice can overtake them in a future world. Hence, while we often find vicious individuals flourish and prosper, we believe it will be found that prosperity is never long enjoyed by wicked communities. This has been evident from the earliest history. Thus, when all the nations of the earth had, without any exception, corrupted themselves, they were swept from the face of the earth by a universal destruction. The cities of the plain for their atrocious wickedness were consumed by the flames of heaven. The Egyptians for their hardness of heart, were visited

* See Back's Theological Dictionary on "Easter," and Clarke's Commentary on Acts vii. 11.