

For the Colonial Churchman.

THE PSALMS.—NO. II.

With reference to the spiritual adaptation of the Psalms to Christ and the times and circumstances of the Gospel, Bishop Horne observes—

‘In such of them as were written by David, and treat of his affairs, that extraordinary person is considered as an illustrious representative of Messiah, who is more than once foretold under the name of David, and to whom are applied, in the New Testament, Psalms which do undoubtedly in the letter of them, relate to David, and were composed on occasion of particular occurrences which befell him; a circumstance in theology, to be accounted for upon no other principle.

‘When therefore he describeth himself as one hated and persecuted without a cause; as one accused of crimes which he never committed, and suffering for sins, the very thoughts of which he abhorred; as one whose life was embittered by affliction, and his soul overwhelmed with sorrows; yet, withal, as one whom no troubles could induce to renounce his trust and confidence in the promises of God concerning him, when he repeateth his resolutions of adhering to the divine law, setting forth its various excellencies, and the comforts which it afforded him in the days of adversity; when he complaineth of that implacable malice, and unrelenting fury, with which he was pursued by Saul and his attendants, by Doeg the Edomite, by rebellious Absalom, traitorous Ahitophel, &c. and when contrary to all appearances, he predicteth their destruction, with his own final exaltation;—let the reader’s thoughts turn to parallel circumstances, which present themselves in the history, of the true David; his sorrows and sufferings; his resignation under them all; his obedience to the will of his Father; the temper and behaviour of his betrayers and murderers; the prophecies of judgments to be inflicted upon them, and of glory to be conferred upon him. As the Psalter was the liturgy of the Jewish church, of which our Lord was a member, and to which he therefore entirely conformed, during his abode and humiliation upon earth, he might pour forth his complaints and offer up his prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, in the very words which his progenitor David had before used under his own troubles, but which were given by inspiration, with a view to the case of that blessed person, whom, in those troubles, he had the honour to prefigure.’

There are many expressions in different Psalms, which perhaps the christian reader may shrink from uttering, lest he should be found praying for curses on others. Such of these as relate to the enemies of David, may safely be applied by us to the enemies of our souls, whose destruction we should earnestly implore. But the following remarks will yet more completely remove all ground of objection to the use of such passages in the Church of Christ:—

‘The offence taken at the supposed uncharitable and vindictive spirit of the imprecations which occur in some of the Psalms, ceases immediately, if we change the imperative for the future, and read, not ‘LET THEM BE CONFOUNDED,’ &c. but, ‘THEY SHALL BE CONFOUNDED,’ &c. of which the Hebrew is equally capable. Such passages will then have no more difficulty in them, than the other frequent predictions of divine vengeance in the writings of prophets, or denunciations of it in the gospels, intended to warn, to alarm, and to lead sinners to repentance, that they may fly from the wrath to come. This is Dr. Hammond’s observation; who very properly remarks, at the same time, that in many places of this sort, as particularly in Psalm cix. (and the same may be said of Psalm lxi.) it is reasonable to resolve, that Christ himself speaketh in the prophet; as being the person there principally concerned, and the completion most signal in many circumstances there mentioned; the succession, especially of Matthias, to the apostleship of Judas. If the imprecatory form be still contended for, all that can be meant by it, whether uttered by the prophet, by Messiah, or by ourselves, must be a solemn ratification of the just judgments of the Almighty against his impenitent enemies, like what we find ascribed to the blessed

spirits in heaven, when such judgments were executed, Rev. xi. 17, 18. xvi. 5, 6, 7. But by the future rendering of the verbs, every possible objection is precluded at once.’

MARTYRDOM IN MADAGASCAR.

It appears that a furious persecution against the converts to christianity has for three years existed in this island, on the part of the Queen’s government, which is still heathen. Their property has been all confiscated, and themselves, their wives, and children, to the number of more than 100, sold into slavery. In the case of one female of distinction, however, (Rafaravavy by name) death has been the penalty for believing in Jesus. The missionaries of the London Missionary Society give an interesting account of her exemplary patience and triumphant death, shewing the power of the Gospel to be the same now as in the days of St. Paul, who counted not his life dear unto himself, so that he might finish his course with joy. We copy the following particulars from the Dublin Record—*Ed. C. C.*

Rafaravavy has the honor of being the first martyr of Madagascar. It was near her residence that the prohibited books—the Scriptures, with other publications issued from the missionary press—were found. On her the vengeance of the Sovereign has been inflicted, and she has fallen under the spear of the public executioner; but her spirit has joined the company of the redeemed in glory, who have come out of great tribulation. Her last moments are thus described in a letter from Mr. Johns:—

‘On the books being found near her house, her entire property was given up to plunder, her person secured, and her hands and feet loaded with heavy iron rings. She was menaced in vain during a period of from eight to ten days, to induce her to impenitently her companions. She remained firm, and perfectly composed; and was put to death by spearing, on the 14th of August, 1837. She had said repeatedly by letter to her friend, Mrs. Johns, ‘Do not fear on my account. I am ready and prepared to die for Jesus, if such be the will of God.’ She was most wonderfully supported to the last moment of her life. Her age at the time of her death was thirty-eight years. Many, even of the old people, remarked they had never seen any one ‘so stubborn’ as Rafaravavy, for although the Queen forbade her to pray, she did pray even when in irons, and continued to preach Christ to the officers and to the crowd, that followed her for nearly three quarters of a mile, from the place of public condemnation to the place of common execution. Here she continued to pray and to exhort all around her to believe in Jesus Christ, even till the executioner’s spear, thrust through her body, deprived her of the power of utterance.’

In relation to her death, Mr. Baker justly remarks:—‘Never in the annals of the church did a Christian martyr suffer from motives more pure, simple, and unmixed with earthly alloy. She had never heard of any after-glory of martyrdom on earth. No external splendour had been cast around the subject in her mind, by reading any lives of martyrs. All was to her obloquy and contempt. Her own father and relatives to the very last accused her of *stubbornness*. The people generally regarded her as *stubborn*, and worthy of punishment even on that account. She had no earthly friends to support and cheer her. She was not poor in outward circumstances, and by recantation, and by humbling herself to beg pardon of the Queen, she might very probably have saved her life. But her whole heart, as her letters signify, was filled with the love of Jesus. She endured as seeing Him who is invisible. Her letters are composed principally of passages from the gospels and epistles, and these, doubtless under the influence of the Holy Spirit, were the entire support of her mind in the last hour of trial. If ‘the blood of the martyrs, is the seed of the church,’ we may trust that Rafaravavy will not have died in vain. She died directly and exclusively in defence of the Gospel.’

The following very proper letter of the Marquis of Westmeath, is in reply to an extraordinary application by a Romish Priest in his neighbourhood, for aid in build-

ing a chapel. In this province we are not without instances of begging from Protestants for similar purposes. We would not check liberality in the right channels after churchmen have answered the claims of their own household, but perhaps it would be well to stipulate in the case to which we allude, for a conformity to the doctrines of the Reformation in the worship to be performed in houses aided by the money of Protestants.

CASTLETOWN-DELVIN, Jan. 1, 1838.

‘Sir,—I have received both your letters, and you shall judge for yourself whether it can reasonably be expected of me to contribute towards the repair of a Roman Catholic chapel. I assisted those of your creed to their emancipation, out of a sense of justice towards that class of my countrymen, and indeed I may say affection, my ancestors having been of the religion, and, as is well known, suffered in the cause of it. By so doing I brought upon myself—first the loathsome praise, and since, the vulgar abuse of the unprincipled person whom your body has chosen for their mouthpiece and leader, and who is sustained in his present position of a nuisance to society by collections openly made at your altars, that he may be enabled to live without industry whilst trampling upon the laws which other men are compelled to respect. For the re-establishment of one of these altars thus desecrated, you invite me to contribute. I am sorry to be obliged to return you an unfavorable answer, and for these further reasons exclusive of those given above.

‘Mr. O’Connell, whom you will easily understand me to have alluded to, has, without scruple or regard to common honesty, done his utmost to induce his worshippers to withhold the property called tithes. Out of this immediately grew the act which threw upon a large class of landlords the payment of that impost. I am made liable for that nearly on the whole of my estate in your parish, for which my tenants at present considerably in arrear. Exclusive of this I have had to sustain protracted and expensive litigation to recover my own impropriate tithes, which are, for the last four years, in many places still unpaid. All this, upon a property heavily encumbered, it is hard to bear up against. I should therefore, have had to decline acceding to your desire but for these proofs of the dissolution of all government in this country. As it is, however, I must do so, or by complying commit an act of meanness and teachery to my own principles. Whenever I find my Roman Catholic countrymen come forward manfully, and repudiate the man who has involved our common country and its people in such discredit, and confusion, whilst picking their pockets, I shall not be backward in any contribution of that sort which either charity or religion, properly understood, may require at my hands. I have no objection if you think fit, may I should wish you to read this letter to your parishioners whenever the fair of their chapel comes under their consideration.’

‘I am, &c., your most obedient humble servant.’

WESTMEATH.

CLERGY RESERVES IN UPPER CANADA.

So much has been said on this long agitated question, and so much prejudice has been excited against the church, for claiming only her due, that we think many of our readers will thank us for setting before them the following clear and able statement of the case, which we extract from our contemporary the ‘Church,’ published at C. C. bourg, U. C.—*Ed. C. C.*

Clergy Reserves.—By the Act of 1791, the whole spirit of the British Constitution was undeniably intended to be communicated to the Charter of the Province; and accordingly a provision was instituted for the support of religious worship according to the model and rules of the Established Church of the Empire.—Thirty years had passed, and not a doubt was ever expressed of the exclusive right of the Church of England to that appropriation: all denominations of Christians concurred in believing that it belonged to that Church alone. That this feeling was decided and universal, there are various enactments of the Provincial Legislature to prove; and when these were passed, there was not a syllable of remonstrance from any quarter to be heard.