

THE CHRISTIAN SENTINEL.

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CHURCH AND STATE.—No. III.

(Continued from p. 117, No. XV.)

15. We deem it proper here to record a few specimens of "Church and State" tyranny which is unsuspectedly practised by those who are "exceedingly mad against" any established religion.—The requiring a Universalist to take an oath before the civil magistrate is, in fact, as flagrant a breach upon the rights and dictates of conscience and religious liberty as ever was perpetrated by "the Holy Inquisition," *badly tortured* excepted. We all know that the law imposing the oath is founded on the assumption that the doctrine of Universalism is a most devilish and damnable falsehood.—Hence the tendering of an oath to a known Universalist in a Court of Justice is but civilly demanding him to swear himself out of his religious creed, or be thrust into prison. And what remedy do the premises admit for thus interfering with the rights and dictates of his conscience? Truly none but either to take his cool word without the form of an oath, or to leave out of the oath all reference to his being accountable to God for perjury.

Do not state Governors in the United States of America make periodical Proclamations commanding the people to observe *religious fasts and festivals*? And is not the annual thanksgiving in New England understood as a reproach on the Episcopal Church, while Episcopalians are called on by law to rejoice and give thanks with "the immortal puritans" for their sin of "heresy and schism." And do those rulers expect obedience to their commands, the rights and dictates of conscience to the contrary notwithstanding? Are not chaplains in the United States Service, and in the Legislative Assemblies, imposed on the people by law, regardless of the variety of "different denominations" who are thus REQUIRED to attend to their ministrations? And all this too in that boasted land of liberty where an *Established Religion* is regarded as next to none at all! Here then, the civil rulers presume to over-rule the consciences of the people, perform acts purely Ecclesiastical as matters of political right, even to the disgrace of a whole Church, and impose religious ceremonies and observances on the subjects of the realm without regard to their private sentiments. If they may lawfully do it in one particular instance, which effectually establishes the principle of right, and proceeds upon the ground that the people are bound to obey, who is to determine the extent of that right or the source of its origin? Furthermore, the assumption of Ecclesiastical jurisdiction involves and recognizes by law every principle recognized in the English Hierarchy. It assumes that the governor of the State is head of the Church, and that the Administration takes cognizance of things purely religious, and exercises a guardian care over the religious opinions and conduct of the people, and, in case of chaplains, hires their teachers with the public money, raised by taxation. Yet strange to say, in the very teeth of these notorious and undeniable facts, the principle on which they are performed is almost universally regarded as if it had ascended from the bottomless pit, and deserved to be renounced along with "the world the flesh, and the devil!"—How shall this difficulty be remedied? There is but one way—cautiously to avoid, in all matters of civil jurisprudence or political economy, all mention of, or allusion to, God and religion: For he has so constituted the world, that civil or national jurisprudence can hardly mention religion at all, without entangling itself in the snare of Church and State—without a virtual acknowledgment of the obligation to establish and support His truth by law.—"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

16. We furthermore deem it advisable to quote here some very appropriate observations from the QUARTERLY REVIEW, No. 85, for May 1830, article 3, being a review of the book of William Ellis the Missionary to the Society and Sandwich Islands, giving an account of the conversion of their inhabitants to Christianity:

"We must pass over some well-meant attempts for introducing the culture and manufacture of cotton, and for opening a direct trade with Port Jackson in a missionary ship. The political

experiments upon which the missionaries have ventured, the dangers which may yet await the new religion, and the condition in which the islanders must ere long find themselves, if those dangers should happily be averted or overcome, are topics which must occupy what further space remains to us. Little expecting at the commencement of their career, that they should ever be involved in such secular concerns, and little desirous that any such honours should be forced upon them, the course of things has led them to become the legislators of these islands, and practically to acknowledge, what perhaps they would not be willing in theory to admit, the importance and necessity of a connection between the government and the religion of a country. They found themselves closely united,—

The government, in all its multiplied ramifications, was closely interwoven with their false system of religion, in its abstract theory and in its practical details. The god and the king were supposed to share the authority over mankind between them. The office of high-priest was frequently sustained by the king, who thus united in his person the highest civil and sacerdotal stations in the land. The genealogy of the reigning family was usually traced back to the first ages of their traditionary history; and the king, in some of the islands were supposed to have descended from the gods. This was the case in Tahiti, where Oro the national god, was said to be the king father, and where language as preposterous and profane as that of the oriental courts was used toward the royal personage and every thing appertaining to him.

His houses were called *aorai*, the clouds of heaven; *annuanua* the rainbow, was the name of his canoe; his voice was called thunder, instead of saying the torches were burning in his dwelling, the people would say that the lightning was dashing in the clouds of heaven; and when he was travelling pick-a-back, the phrase was that he was flying from one place to another. When he appeared abroad, all persons uncovered the breast and shoulders, as they did when passing a temple or an altar; he who neglected or hesitated to perform these marks of reverence, was in danger of being killed on the spot, or marked for a sacrifice. His own lands were accounted sacred, and his own houses were the only habitations at which he might alight, and take refreshment, or repose. It must be needless to add, that his authority, though resisted not unfrequently in rebellion, was at other times supreme.

Now when Pomare became the first convert, and brought about a religious revolution, which extended through all these islands, it was not more required by good policy than it would have been consistent with the spirit and letter of the New Testament, that the missionaries should have brought the sanction of the new religion to support his authority, and have enforced, as among the first and most momentous of civil obligations, the religious duty of obedience to the sovereign. This they must have neglected to do; otherwise we should not be told, that since the people are free from the restraints which idolatry imposed, many of them refuse almost all lawful obedience, and evince a disinclination to render the king the supplies which are due to him by old established custom, and which are necessary for his support. The crown lands are not sufficient to maintain his establishment, and the deficiency was made up by requisitions from the people,—the kings being, like those in Hesiod's days, devouring; but they gave away also as fast as they received, and were far from being profusely supplied. Mrs. Company herself has not had nicer questions to deal with than have been brought before the directors of the London Missionary Society for consideration; but, both Mrs. Company and the Blackfriars' directors might have taken useful lessons from old experience. The former might have questioned, from the example of that Albuquerque who first established an European dominion in the East, whether, instead of endangering her government by prohibiting the sacrifice of widows on the husbands funeral pile, that very prohibition would not have rendered the British government more popular than anything which it has ever yet done for the people of India. The latter might take useful lessons from the history of Japan.

No material interference with the direct affairs of Government took place till the mission and the nation experienced the heaviest bereavement that had occurred since the introduction of Christianity. This was Pomare's death at the close of 1821. He had long been afflicted with elephantiasis, a disorder very prevalent