

into the arms of Christ and became children of grace and heirs of His kingdom. I cannot conceive an institution which thus directs us to Christ and to the benefits of His death and resurrection more pregnant with spiritual edification, as it is duly valued and duly improved in after life, than that of infant baptism as it is set forth in the ritual of our Church. For what can be so delightful to the Christian as to reflect that he knows not the time when he was not of the family of Christ? Unworthy as he may be, he is thankful that he has always belonged to Christ—that not the world or any creature has a prior claim on his love and obedience—that the good work has been begun in him—and that he has only to follow up by the aid of the Holy Spirit that which has been begun in him by the same Spirit—growing more and more to the likeness of Him in whose death he has a birthright—changing from glory to glory, until he finally attain to the full enjoyment of his adoption and inheritance among the saints in light. With how much greater force, too, must all exhortations to holiness and perseverance speak to him who is duly impressed with the awe of baptism as the sacrament of his regeneration! How strong is the appeal to him not to receive the grace of God in vain—not to faint in working out his salvation, for that grace unto salvation has been already given to him!

I greatly regret, therefore, that the question of the efficacy of the Sacrament, in the case of infants, has been made the subject of so much protracted disputation before the public. It cannot but have occasioned great profaneness and irreverence. When we consider the great variety of opinions and feelings, of which the mass of the public mind consists, and how little disposed the world at large is to appreciate revealed truth—how apt they are to suppose that it is a mere strife of words between conflicting theologians, and lose sight of the importance of the truth, so debated to themselves—the effect is like that of civil war in hardening the heart and corrupting a people—making not the actual combatants only, but the lookers-on, forget that they are brethren; and, in the Church itself, how surely might it not have been anticipated that the result of the controversy, to whichever side it is inclined would be attended with discord and dissatisfaction?

EFFECT OF THE JUDGMENT OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL.

Will not, however, you may ask (and it has been asked) a series of such judgments constitute a rule of interpretation of the Church's doctrine, in like manner as the judgments of the law-courts are interpretations of the laws and practically take the place of the laws themselves? First, I do not think it at all likely that we shall see many such cases brought before a Court of Appeal as the recent one—so very few have been the instances from the Reformation to the present time. But were there many such judgments, they could not have the force to supersede the dogmatic statements of the Church. There is no proper analogy between the judgments of the courts in relation to Acts of Parliament and the judgments of a Court of Appeal in relation to the doctrines concerned in such judgments. For the doctrines are themselves the ultimate interpretations of the truths of Scripture. They do not depend, like Acts of Parliament, on their actual working, to be ascertained as to their bearing and force. And besides, in a case of judgment on heresy, the rule by which the accused is to be tried is not to be sought in various and perhaps contradictory Acts of Parliament, but in concise definite sentences of easy and direct application to any case. The difficulty here will be rather to ascertain the precise doctrine of the person accused, as was evident in the late appeal; the Judges having stated that they were obliged to collect the opinions objected to, as well as they could, from the mass of writings before them. It must be remembered, too, that the Court of Appeal has to judge only of a particular case. They do not act as judges of controversy in the theological sense of that term. When the Church acts as a judge of controversy, disputes and doubts are supposed to exist on some point of doctrine or discipline among the members of the Church at large, and its authority is then interposed to settle the dispute. The result of such an interposition of authority is a doctrinal statement or a rule of discipline; but the judgment of a law court on a particular case can never have such a force. It is not an Ecclesiastical sentence, except incidentally, in having an Ecclesiastical matter for its subject.

Communication.

[We deem it necessary to follow the example of the London Church periodicals, and to apprise our readers that we are not responsible for the opinions of our Correspondents.—ED. CH.]

To the Editor of The Church.

NOTES OF A WINTER'S TRIP TO WASHINGTON.

Continued from our last.

When I entered the Senate Chamber, the Honble. Mr. Mason, one of the senators from Virginia, had the floor, and was discussing in a very able manner what he designated as a breach of the Constitution of the United States on the part of those States, which had enacted laws rendering the recovery of "fugitives from labour," as he designated runaway slaves, difficult and almost impossible.

He quoted some of the laws enacted by Pennsylvania on the subject, and showed that by those laws it was made a misdemeanour and rendered one liable to fine and imprisonment, if, as a bailiff, he assisted in the recovery of such a fugitive, or, if as a jailer, he received him into custody. He denounced this as a breach of compact, by which the several States were bound to together in one bond of union, inasmuch as it tended to deprive the slave-holding States of their property, recognised as such by the constitution. He stated that he had learned with much pleasure, that one of the States had assumed, as the property of the state, the property of their citizens thus wrongfully wrested from them, by the action of a sister State; he caused actions at law to be instituted for the recovery of the property of her citizens at the public expense. And he assumed the responsibility of advising his constituents, as one of the representatives of the sovereign state of Virginia, to take the same stand, and to reimburse themselves for their expenses by seizing upon the property of the citizens of such offending States whenever it might come within the bounds of Virginia. However rash such advice might be, I could not but admire the manner and bearing of Mr. Mason. His whole appearance and speaking filled my idea of an old Virginia gentleman. Tall, well made, and of strong handsome features, he treated the subject before him as one of the utmost importance; and with the strong feelings of a cavalier of the Old Dominion he laid down his principles firmly, and thence fearlessly indicated the course to be pursued. Strangely contrasted with Mr. Mason was the appearance, manner, and matter of the flippancy Mr. Foote, one of the Senators from Mississippi.

He had become quite notorious already, although only in the commencement of his second session. Whenever he rose to address the Senate, it seemed to be a signal for general inattention. Some took up their hats and walked out into the lobby; others began to arrange their papers, or to prepare their notes for their own speeches; his own friends looked unutterable things, and appeared to express by their looks their wish that Mr. Foote would for once show discretion and not injure their cause by his inanities. On this occasion he attempted a severe attack upon Mr. Seward, the Senator from New York, who is a strong opponent to "the institution of slavery." But so harmless was his attack that no body gave any attention to it; much less did Mr. S. deign to answer it. After rambling from one thing to the other, Mr. Foote sat down apparently as well satisfied as if he had acquitted himself in the ablest manner. Perfectly tired with the speech of the mad Senator from Mississippi, the Senate moved themselves into an Executive Session; and, consequently, together with masses of Sovereign Americans, I was forced to vacate my comfortable seat, and leave the Senate Chamber.

After dinner, I was standing near the Patent Office, admiring some handsome stones which the masons were putting into the wings, when I was accosted by a gentleman who had heard me preach at St. John's on the preceding day, and who, recognizing me as a stranger, advised me strongly to call at the house of Peter Force, Esq., and examine his large collection of books. I found the old gentleman completely surrounded with his books, which filled three or four large rooms. He appeared entirely engrossed in them, and told me that he spent all his time in their midst, seldom, if ever, going out of the house. His books were chiefly historical, and had special reference to America. I suppose that there is no single collection in the world so full of information relative to his immense country as is this of Mr. Force. They begin with the first history of the Indian tribes who inhabited this immense Continent before its settlement by Europeans—and bring their history down to the present times, and comprise English, French and American works of the subject. He possessed also a curious collection of pamphlets, newspapers, and reports of various bodies and societies, throwing light upon this favourite subject. He showed me an old newspaper, I think it was a copy of the Philadelphia Register, which contained the proclamation issued by the British Government, when putting the celebrated Stamp Act into operation. This Act, as well known, was one of the causes of the American Revolution. This number is the last published by Franklin; and contains the notice of the dissolution of partnership between him and the gentleman who continued its publication. The paper is in mourning on account of the proclamation. Mr. Force showed me a copy, in General Washington's hand writing, of the constitution of the Mississippi Company, of which he appears to have been the working man, though the junior member. Another curious document shewn me by the same obliging gentleman, was a memorandum kept by the third President, Jefferson, of all the various vegetables in the Washington market for the space of eight years; from 1810 to 1818—showing each day, when the President appears to have visited it, what vegetables were actually in the market. Mr. Force showed me also a book being a Roman Missal, printed ten years after the discovery of the art of printing, and which proved that whatever improvement has been made in printing faster than they did 400 years ago, they have not learned to print any better. This book was ornamented with gold letters at the beginning of each verse, and with much larger ones at the beginning of each chapter not of gold leaf, but of solid gold. Altogether this gentleman's collection is well worthy of attention of all serious in such things; and Mr. Force is exceedingly obliging, and anxious to show his collection to any one who desires to see it. From Mr. Force's I went to the Smithsonian Institute, to hear a lecture from Mr. Johnson, the celebrated lecturer on Agricultural Chemistry, in Durham University, England; but, although I went early, yet it was utterly impossible to get in.

Next morning I called with Mr. Senator Seward, on the President, General Taylor, and was much pleased with the old gentleman. He appears honest, good-natured, and anxious to fulfil the duties of his office for the good of the mighty people, over whom he has been unexpectedly placed. When he was first spoken of for the Presidency, soon after the battle of Buena Vista, I happened to be in Buffalo, when a lady mentioned to me that he no doubt would be the successful candidate for the Presidential Chair. I said that surely a republican people could not be so enamoured of war as to elect a successful General their Chief Magistrate, because he happened to win a victory over so feeble a foe as the Mexicans had shown themselves to be. She said that I would see him President if I and he lived long enough. And so it has proved. But it appears evident that the American Presidents will not in future be chosen from their ablest statesmen, for such have been long before the public; and it is easy to raise a cry against them which has great influence on the multitude. But if a man whose life has not been so public, happens to make a good hit or two, he will be found what is called "the most available man" for his party to propose as their candidate; and he will be run as such. Not having offended any, nor disappointed the hopes of any, there will be few prejudices against him—the majority will be willing to "try" him; and thus he will be elected unquestionably. There were much abler men belonging to the Whig party than General Taylor, amongst whom may be mentioned those very distinguished Senators, Henry Clay, and Daniel Webster. But then they have many opposed to them; and thus the one had never been proposed; and the other, though great hopes of his success, have, on more than one occasion been entertained, has always been defeated. The same may be said with regard to Mr. Polk's election. The ablest men on his side of politics were Mr. Van Buren, and General Cass; but there were strong opponents of each; and failing to nominate either, the party united upon Mr. Polk, who, although at one time Speaker of the House of Representatives, had yet been for some time in private life; and consequently, when he was brought forward by his party as their candidate, the cry from one end of the Union to the other was, "who is Mr. Polk?"

General Taylor is a short, and rather "squat" old gentleman. His features are hard, his cheek bones high, nose rather hooked, and his eyes small, dark, and piercing. He walks fast, and with a stoop in his shoulders. He laughs heartily at all the hard things said and written against him, by his political opponents; and with regard to the latter, says, "that he has outlived too many leaden bullets to be killed by paper ones."

The apartment of the President is spacious but plain, and altogether is very suitable for the residence of the Chief Magistrate of the United States. The view from the front windows towards the Potomac, is very fine, and gives us an excellent view of the part of Virginia just beyond that fine river. The honours of the house are said to be exceedingly well done by Mrs. Col. Bliss,

the General's daughter, as her brother is of too retired a disposition to mix with the gay world. From the President's, I went to the Capitol, and fortunately finding Mr. Filmore, the Vice President, in his room off the Senate Chamber, I was introduced, and presented to him the letters of introduction with which I had been favoured by mutual friends in Buffalo and Albany. Mr. Filmore is certainly a handsome and very courteous man, and fills with great dignity the Speaker's Chair in the Senate Chamber. Mr. Filmore treated me with great courtesousness, and though engaged with two handsome ladies, who having a passion for autographs of distinguished men, had waited on him for the purpose of procuring his, gave full directions to all the servants and messengers of the House to show me any and every thing I might wish to see. Leaving the Vice-President with his fair devotees of autographs, I hastened into the Senate Chamber, and knowing that I was some time before the hour for the meeting of the Senate, I was much surprised to find the Chamber full, and nearly half of those present, fashionably dressed ladies. But my surprise was at an end, when, immediately after the routine business of the day was disposed of, the distinguished Senator from Kentucky, Henry Clay, rose; and, after some very clear, forcible, and appropriate remarks, introduced a series of Resolutions, on which, as he said, he had spent a good deal of time, and to which he had devoted his best talents, and his extensive acquirements. The resolutions appeared to me well calculated to merit the many and great difficulties with which the great question of the day, that of slavery—was beset, and which, in the opinion of many, threatened the dissolution of the Union.

He presented them as a great peace-offering on the altar of his country; and he solemnly implored his brother Senators of both ultra parties to meet the common ground which he presented to them, laying aside all predilections and all prejudices, to unite together for the common good, by doing justice to all parties. His resolutions embraced the settlement of the vexed question of the Texas boundary—the prohibition of the use of the District of Columbia, as a slave mart for the sale of the negroes of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia to the Southern planters—the prohibition of slavery in the District, as soon as the inhabitants thereof should desire it, as the states of Virginia and Maryland should consent and as the General Government would reimburse those owners of slaves who might wish it for the slaves thus set free—and for allowing the newly acquired territories to enter the Union whenever, having the usual number of inhabitants, and having agreed upon a Constitution, and elected the necessary officers, they should apply for admission. Mr. Clay sustained these important resolutions in a most able speech of about an hour and a-half, which I considered myself as most fortunate in hearing. The great orator of the West is tall, I should think almost six feet high, very straight and very thin. His manner is calm and collected; but when roused he becomes exceedingly animated, and shows that the fire of his youth still lingers in the old man of three score and ten. His style of elocution is exceedingly good, combining dignity, grace, and power. His voice is said to be inferior to what it was in his earlier days; but still it appears amply sufficient for all the purposes of the Senate Chamber. It is true that as soon as his venerable form was seen rising in his place, every eye was turned toward him, and every ear was attention to the words of wisdom that were expected from his lips. As soon as it was whispered about that Mr. Clay was speaking every vacant seat in the Senate Chamber was immediately and noiselessly filled. His whole speech was such, that many parts of it were peculiarly striking. When with uplifted arm he solemnly avowed that no human, no earthly power should ever make him consent to the extension of slavery on territories now free—when he produced what he said had that morning been presented to him as a part of the veritable coffin of "the father of their country;" and besought his brother Senators, by the love they bore that country, for which Washington suffered, bled and died, to unite together, and, by a fair and equitable adjustment of all differences, to save their beloved country in the crisis, in which it now stood—the effect upon the crowds who thronged the Senate Chamber, was electric.

All appeared moved by the earnestness and solemnity with which "the old man eloquent" made this his last and greatest patriotic effort to save that country, which for nearly half a century he has served in her highest legislative Assemblies. Some points in this great speech appearing to the able Senator from Mississippi, W. Jefferson Davis, open to attack, he arose and in a short but able speech, met some of the statements of his brother Senator. Mr. Davis, does not appear to make much pretensions to oratory; but there is a strength, a boldness and honesty and ability about his speeches, which mark him as no common man. He called in question some of the statements of the distinguished Senator from Kentucky as well as controverted some of his arguments. This of course brought up the latter, who stated his readiness to argue the whole question with the Senator from Mississippi at any time he would name. The latter immediately arose and declared that there was the place and the present time; and that he was perfectly ready for measuring his sword with that of the able and experienced Senator from Kentucky. Mr. Davis is the son-in-law of the President, whose daughter he ran away with, and married against the wishes of her parents. The President never would hear of a reconciliation with his son-in-law, till the battle of Monterey, when being an eye-witness of the valour of his son-in-law, who had vacated his seat in Congress, in order to go to the war, he rode up to him after the battle and offering him his hand, he declared his willingness to be reconciled to him, assuring him, that, though he considered himself an injured man, yet he was now glad to acknowledge so noble a fellow as his son-in-law.

The debate on Mr. Clay's resolutions called up some of the best speakers in the house; amongst whom I had the privilege of hearing Mr. Berrien of Georgia, Mr. Butler of South Carolina, Mr. King of Alabama, Mr. Badger, of North Carolina, Mr. Cass of Michigan, Mr. Rush of Texas. I was anxious to hear Mr. Benton of Missouri, Mr. Webster, and some other of their compeers, but I could not help thinking that I had been highly favoured during the two afternoons that I had spent in the Senate Chamber. General Cass, who is a very prominent candidate for the Presidential office, is an ill-looking old man, of hard features, very corpulent and wears a light brown or red wig. Mr. Benton is rather a large man, of fine appearance and will not unlikely be next President, if his long continuance in public life does not give his opponents too many opportunities to raise cries against him. Mr. Webster is rather a tall strongly made man of dark features, and with a head and physiognomy which indicates him as a man of strong passions as well as uncommon intellect. He is generally acknowledged to be the ablest man in the Union; but no party has sufficient confidence in him to place him in the Presidential chair.

In addition to these gentlemen whom I have mentioned, I was much struck with the speech or rather action of Mr. Downs, one of the Senators from Louisiana—

What he said I know not, for though nobody listened of his speech, he became so excited that he threw his hands, arms, and legs, about him, as if he was struggling to save himself from a watery grave, without any knowledge of the art of swimming. Not satisfied with these extraordinary gesticulations he would periodically draw back his head and then rush forward with it in a very threatening position as if determined to batter down Governor Seward and all the fanatics of the North. Altogether his gestures and postures were forbidding and painful in the extreme. After the public business of the Senate was completed, I was shown by one of the servants of the Capitol up to the top of the dome; and, thence, at an elevation of 210 feet above the ground, had a very extensive view of Washington, Georgetown and the surrounding country. The plan of Washington is a grand one indeed, and if ever filled up will make a great city. Certain prominent spots were selected as the site of the Capitol, of the President's house, of the City Hall &c., and from those sites wide avenues were laid out in different directions; these avenues run at oblique angles with the streets, which are at right angles with each other. These avenues are called after the names of the several States. The avenue leading from the Capitol to the President's house is thus called Pennsylvania Avenue, being the principal street of Washington. At a distance to the right of this Avenue the ground rises, and on it are placed in prominent situations, the City Hall, the General Post Office, and the Patent Office. On the opposite side nearer the Potomac, is the Smithsonian Institute, a handsome edifice of dark freestone, built with money bequeathed by an Englishman of the name of Smithson. This person left his property, to a large amount, to certain trustees, to establish an institution in the United States, where Lectures should be given on scientific subjects and where general secular education should be promoted. From some defect in the will the trustees did not feel themselves authorized to carry out the benevolent intentions of the donor; and before Congress could interpose her powers, a good part of the sum left had become invested in Arkansas Bonds. With a portion of the remainder the institute has been built, and a few lectures established. But as the institute is based upon infidel principles, and professedly excludes all religion from its teachings, no permanent good can be expected from it. The Smithsonian Institute, in point of architectural beauty, is an ornament to the city.

Not far from the institute is the commencement of the great national monument to George Washington, to which each state in the Union is to send an immense stone. The base is to be a square, from which will rise a tall column, on the summit of which will be placed a statue of the Father of his country. Should Washington continue to be the seat of government of the United States, it will grow to be a place of considerable importance; for although it is not well situated for trade; yet, as Congress draws together the leading men of the nations and detains them there for fully six months in each year, and as they are now falling into the habit of taking their families with them, which thus forms a most excellent society: persons of independent means, who each year are becoming more and more numerous in the United States, will, on account of the good society to be met with there; fix upon Washington as the place of their permanent abode. Even now, a large number of wealthy families reside there, who are entirely unconnected with either Congress or the Executive Government. That which I considered the handsomest building in the city, is the General Post Office. It is built of white marble, and with only a few ornaments; but everything about it is calculated to excite good keeping that it commands itself to one's taste and judgment. The front extends along a whole front of a square and it is intended that it shall cover the whole square; which will not give too much room for its business. At present it covers fully two thirds of the square; and as soon as the proprietors of the remaining third become somewhat reasonable in their demands, the General Government will purchase the remainder and carry out their original plan. The amount of business transacted in that office may be conceived of, when it is known, that the accounts of every post office in the Union, great or small, must be sent there, where they are carefully examined; that the contracts with all the carriers of the mail, throughout their extended country, emanate from that office. As the country increases so the business of the office increases, and the additional business requires additional clerks, and they must have additional room. I had often heard of Colli's revolving pistols; but I never saw one till my visit to Washington. It happened that a gentleman from New York who manufactured them on a very large scale, boarded at the same house with myself; and one evening he was showing one of his pistols to a fellow boarder in the drawing-room; and kindly exhibited it to me. It has six barrels, each with a touch hole and percussion cap on it. These barrels are moved by a spring successively under the hammer of the pistol, and thus are ignited when the hammer is thrown down upon the cap by the trigger being touched. This gentleman found a ready market for all he had with him; and sent off for a new supply to meet the demand created for these death dealing weapons by the excitement raised by the discussion of the slavery question. One thing that struck me very pointedly was the great number of miserable horses seen in the streets of Washington. There were some few good horses in the city, but the great majority of those before the public carriages were certainly inferior to the very worst seen in northern cities. The cattle that I saw about Washington were also most unlike the fine large sleek and well proportioned cattle of the North. That this is a general rule I do not presume to say; but it had few exceptions as far as my observation went. Another striking feature of Washington is the coloured population. On the Sunday that I was there these sable sons and daughters of Ham appeared in large numbers, especially after dinner. Many of them had the children of the several families where they belonged, in charge, and the contrast between the white skin of the Anglo-Saxon, and the coal black skin of the African, around whose neck the arm of the Anglo-Saxon child was thrown, was most marked. But it was towards the evening, when the work of the day having been completed, the negro's holiday began, that they showed to the best advantage; then it would have astonished an untravelled northerner to see the coloured beaux and belles of Washington, as they promenaded up and down Pennsylvania Avenue. Amongst the crowd I could not but observe one couple, the man was rather short, but like most short men he carried his head high; he had on a hat, which had been about two years out of fashion; his coat, given him by his master, reached down some distance below his knees; his nether garments had evidently been made for a man fully twelve inches taller than himself, *tout ensemble* a long segar, protruded most fashionably from the side of his mouth. The sable belle who leaned most confidently upon his arm, was somewhat taller than her beau, the waist of her dress came close under her arms and the bonnet which adorned her head was high in the crown and exceedingly ample in its front. Nevertheless, if