

For the Pearl.

BIBLE PRECEPTS.

No. 2.

As an appropriate introduction to the commandments of the inspired Apostles on the treatment of enemies, we beg leave to quote the following remarks from the Quarterly Review. "People are apt to see the force of evidence or of argument only as it strikes for their own prejudices—the wish is father to the thought." The wolf when he was learning to read, could make nothing out of the letters, whatever they might be, that were set before him, but 'lamb.' CUDWORTH suggests that even geometrical theorems, (that the three angles of a triangle for instance, are equal to two right angles,) if connected with offensive moral truths, might possibly become the subject of doubt and controversy. And Mr. Le Bas, who adopts this sentiment in his valuable essay on Miracles, adds in a note, somewhat after the manner of Warburton's Illustrations, 'If the Pythagorean proposition (Euc. I. 47.) were to impose on mathematicians the Pythagorean maxim of a strict vegetable diet, what carnivorous student of geometry would ever get to the end of the first book in Euclid? Or if we could conceive the doctrine of Fluxions had, somehow or other, been combined with an obligation to abstain from the use of wine; does any one believe that it would have gained its present undisputed establishment throughout the scientific world? Should we not at this very day have many a thirsty analyst protesting that he was under an absolute inability to comprehend or to credit the systems?" So far the Review. And now, abandoning all preconceived opinions, let us with all humility and readiness of mind, receive the law of kindness from the lips of those holy men who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

"Bless them which persecute you; and bless and curse not (a). Recompense to no man evil for evil. (b) Provide things honest [meditate things comely.—Macknight] in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath [the wrath of God]: for it is written,

"Vengeance is mine; I will repay saith the Lord. THEREFORE, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. (c).

"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.—Paul's letter to the Romans.

"Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.—Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.

"Ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. * * * * Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife [brawlings], envyings, murders, . . . and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith [fidelity] meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.—Paul's letter to the Galatians.

"Be ye angry [at sin as Christ was, but not the sinner,] and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath; neither give place to the devil.

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking be put away from you with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.—Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; (forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.) And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness.—Paul's letter to the Colossians.

"Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.—Paul's letter to Titus.

"If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' ye do well; but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law [of love] as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep [profess to do so] the whole law [of love,] and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For the law [of love] that said, 'Do not commit adultery,' said also, 'Do not kill.' Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law [of love.] So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

"Who is a WISE MAN and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with MEKKNESS OF WISDOM; but if ye have bitter envying, and strife in your heart, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and

every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be persuaded, full of mercy and good fruits, without wrangling, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.—Letter of James.

"Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

First letter of Peter.

"Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. * * * * He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

"If a man say, 'I love God,' and hateth his brother he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen? and this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God, love his brother also?

First letter of John.

The above are some of the commandments of the Apostles of the Saviour, teaching us how we should feel and act towards our enemies. And will any man, after reading them without prejudice, say that they authorize us to hate, to wish curses, to desire destruction to the most deadly, the most blood-thirsty foes? Do the lives of the Apostles so explain their commandments of peace and love—let us hear them; "being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we intreat." This is very different from cursing our revilers, and resisting our persecutors. And do the commandments above cited, sanction the idea that we may resist the assassin unto death? May we curse and desire to kill those who seek our lives to destroy them? Rather may we not in the following words of Professor Ripley interpret the sayings of Christ in

Matt. v. 38, 29.—Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'An eye for an eye,' etc.; but I say unto you that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on one cheek turn to him the other also, etc. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; "that is inflict not on another an injury similar to the one he has inflicted on you. This is retaliation.—Resist not evil; resist not, in the spirit of retaliation, an evil, that is an injurious man, one who has done thee evil. Resist him not by doing him an evil in return. Do not to him as he has done to you. Turn to him the other cheek also. So far from resisting an injurious man by doing him a similar injury, submit to still further injury. If he has smitten one cheek, revenge not the insult, or the injury by returning the blow; but rather, in meekness, not in a provoking spirit, turn to him your other cheek. Rather suffer repeated wrong, than do wrong."

Let a legitimate application of these principles be made to the intercourse of individuals and nations, and no good man can ever engage either in defensive or aggressive warfare. Retaliation is returning injury for injury, blow for blow; and if we may not strike a man after he has struck us, we certainly may not before. Is it then the spirit of Christianity that has indicted the thousand bitter, revengeful and deadly paragraphs that have circulated against the murderers of our brethren in the Canadas? Will it be said that our sentiments are true in reference to individuals but not to nations? What, is there one code of morals for individuals, and another for nations, who are made up of individuals? Is it possible, that the mere fact of my being politically associated with a thousand or a hundred thousand others renders right less imperative, or wrong less odious? And if not, on what ground is it said, that I am bound in my individual capacity to love those that hate me, while in my social and political capacity I am permitted to hate and to do or resist evil, where otherwise I should be required to love and to do good?—On this subject we close with the commanding language of Dr. Chalmers.

"Another obstacle to the extinction of war, is a sentiment which seems to be universally gone into, that the rules and promises of the Gospel which apply to a single individual, do not apply to a nation of individuals. Just think of the mighty effect it would have on the politics of the world, were this sentiment to be practically deposed from its wonted authority over the councils and the doings of nations, in their transactions with each other. If forbearance be the virtue of an individual, forbearance is also the virtue of a nation. If it be incumbent on men, in honour to prefer each other, it is incumbent on the very largest societies of men, through the constituted organ of their government to do the same. If it be the glory of a man to defer his anger, and to pass over a transgression, that nation mistakes its glory which is so feelingly alive to the slightest insult, and musters up its threats and its armaments upon the faintest shadow of a provocation. If it be the magnanimity of an injured man to abstain from vengeance, and if by so doing, he heaps coals of fire upon the head of his enemy, then that is the magnanimous nation, which recoiling from violence and from blood, will do no more than send its christian embassy, and prefer its mild and impressive remonstrance; and that is the disgraced nation which will refuse the impressiveness of the moral appeal that has been made to it.—O! my brethren, there must be the breathing of a different spirit to circulate round the globe, ere its christianized (!) nations resign the jealousies which now form them to each other in the scowling attitude of defiance; and much is to do with the people of every land; ere the prophesied influence of the gospel shall bring its virtuous, and its pacifying control to bear with effect on the counsels and governments of the world."

PACIFICUS.

LUTHER AND MELANCTHON.—They were like two points negatively and positively electrified which mutually regulate each other. Luther animated Melancthon, and Melancthon moderated Luther. If Luther had not had Melancthon, perhaps the floods would not have inundated him. When Melancthon was absent from Luther, he hesitated, even yielded, when he ought not to have yielded. Luther performed much by his energy. Melancthon perhaps accomplished no less by pursuing a more slow and tranquil method. Both were upright, candid, generous; both filled with love for the word of eternal life, were devoted to it with a fidelity and zeal which animated them all their life.

THE PEARL.

HALIFAX, FRIDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 14, 1838.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENTS USELESS.

"Let there be no rubrics of blood."—Lord Bacon.

"It is impossible to conceal from ourselves, that capital punishments are more frequent, and the criminal code more severe in this country, than in any other in the world.—Sir Robert Peel, 1830.

It is a source of gratification to every enlightened and philanthropic mind, that considerable ameliorations have been introduced into the criminal law of England since the year 1830. Still much remains to be done. For a number of offences the British Government yet claims the right to hurry a man to the bar of God. Against such a right with thousands of our fellow subjects we do most earnestly protest. One very respectable and numerous sect of Christians, some smaller sects, and many other persons of other Christian denominations, men of good judgment and reputable character, deny the right absolutely and altogether. A still greater number are in doubt, even among the less informed classes of the community; not perhaps because they are all able to analyze and argue the subject, but because they find in their bosoms a sort of instinctive feeling, which at once condemns the taking of human life, as an usurpation of the prerogatives of that Being, who alone can give life. And on the subject of the abolition of death-punishment in all cases whatever, who is not interested both personally and relatively? How painful the situation of many, who, being liable to serve on juries, feel a conscientious scruple to assist in a verdict affecting the life of a man, and who cannot be satisfied that they are in no wise responsible, when acting a part, without which every sanguinary statute would be inert. There are individuals, and those not a few, who would rather suffer death themselves, than pronounce a verdict which would ensure the execution of a criminal. But to our subject.

I. AUTHORITIES ARE NUMEROUS FOR THE ENTIRE DISUSE OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENTS:

"To sacrifice a man in honour of an abstract principle of safety, is like following the example of the Indians in offering human sacrifices to their gods. There is a kind of Atheism in the stroke which takes from man the responsibility of his destiny, and which sends him to the grave in the midst of his crimes."—Lucas.

"It seems to be fast approaching to an axiom, that crimes are less frequent in proportion as mercy takes the place of severity, or as there are judicious substitutes for the punishment of death."—Clarkson.

"Is it not absurd, that laws, which detest and punish homicide, should, in order to prevent murder, publicly commit murder themselves?"—Marquis Beccaria.

"Whether hanging ever did, or can, answer any good purpose, I doubt; but the cruel exhibition of every execution-day is a proof that hanging carries no terror with it."—Sir W. Meredith.

"I prohibit that any man should be put to death for any cause whatever."—William the Conqueror.

"Capital punishments are prejudicial to society, from the example of barbarity they furnish, and that they multiply crimes instead of preventing them."—Bradford.

"In a reign of tranquility; in a form of government approved by the nation; where all power is lodged in the hands of a true sovereign; there can be no necessity for taking away the life of a subject."—Marquis Beccaria.

"In no countries are atrocious crimes more frequent, than in those in which the punishments are the most inhuman."—Burgh.

"The practice of capital punishments ought to be abolished in christian and civilized countries."—W. Ladd.

"An examination of those parts of the Bible which are generally supposed to authorize the punishment of death, did not fix on us the impression that the Almighty had delegated to man the right of deliberately destroying a human being, even for the crime of murder."—Missionaries of the London Society in the South Seas.

"Where shall we look for a defence of our conduct in putting criminals to death, we, who profess to be christians, but whose hands are embued with blood; who at one time wield a sword and at another erect a gallows, and who make the batchery of mankind a legalized and permanent business! We may find it perhaps in the authors of profane antiquity, in some code of heathenism, in the obscure songs and legends of some barbarous and unchristianized period, in the Alcoran and the Aedda; but we may venture to say with entire confidence, that we do not find it in the Bible."—Professor Upham.

"The pernicious system of putting men to death is to be regarded as one of the thousand usurpations, that have been introduced by mistake or by cruelty, and which are rendered venerable and sacred by lapse of time. Like the use of the rack, the trial by ordeal, the enslavement or the destruction of prisoners taken in war, the poisoning of wells and fountains, and other pernicious and unlawful practices, which were once authorized and perhaps considered essential to the existence of society, the time is coming, when it will be condemned by the good judgment and the humane feelings of mankind, and wholly renounced as both inexpedient and wrong."—Ibid.

a The repetition of the word *bless*, shows the importance of this precept, and yet in the very teeth of it, is the motto of the kings of Great Britain—*Honi soit qui mal y pense*—Evil be to him that evil thinks. b Dr. Adam Clarke remarks that, "the motto of the royal arms of Scotland is in direct opposition to this divine direction.—*Nemo me impune lacesset*, of which, 'I render evil for evil to every man,' is a pretty literal translation. This is both antichristian and abominable, whether in a state or in an individual." c Blackwell, after having praised the language in which this precept is delivered, adds, "This is a noble strain of Christian courage, prudence, and goodness, that nothing in Epicurus, Plutarch, or Antonine can vie with. The moralists and heroes of paganism could not write and act to the height of this."