

THE CHRISTIAN SENTINEL.

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CHURCH AND STATE.—No. II.

(Continued from p. 93, No. XI.)

3. But in the outset there must be adopted some rule of discrimination; namely: the state must be able to decide what is Christianity and what is not, or it can do nothing as it ought. It must judge of religion for the people, or there the matter ends. It cannot be under obligation to support falsehood instead of truth, though the people might most vehemently desire it. And the people must also be under the same obligation to abide by its decision, as it is to decide according to truth, because the obligation on both it and them is from God alone. But the state is bound also to lay such information before the people as may enable them to exercise their private judgment or sense of right or wrong in a proper manner, as far as they are capable. But as nothing that belongs to the Church originated with the people, or is dependent on their authority, or even their testimony, the state cannot go to them for information as in matters of worldly concern; but it must go to the Church, in her character of "the pillar and ground of the truth;" (See 1 Tim. iii. 15.) For since God did give the canon of Scripture, and commit it to an order of men by him appointed to "have the rule over" the people: it must be granted that the State is thus enabled by means of the Bible and the Christian Ministry, and the history of the Church kept by itself from the days of our Lord, according as the Jewish priesthood kept the archives of the Jewish Church,—it is thus enabled to gain correct information on every thing respecting the Church. The fact of her being constituted "the pillar and ground of the truth," secures to her all the real advantages of claimed infallibility; that is, places it in her power by means of her own archives, (at the head of which stands the Bible,) to exhibit a pure system of *scripture doctrines*, with authentic Holy Orders and the Sacraments, and show to whom it belongs to govern in the kingdom of Christ, as his successors over the visible Church. The same in its measure is true of the Church and State maintained in every religious family. The head of it, by means of the Bible and the Church as his mother in Christ, is enabled to know what God requires him to "teach diligently to his children:" and they, when they arrive at a proper exercise of private judgment, are enabled to see the propriety and feel the truth of the whole, according to their information.

4. But as there are corruptions of Christianity quite as inimical to the spirit of the Gospel as pure heathenism, the State must also have authority to judge between different denominations claiming to be Christian, and to decide on which to bestow its favor and protection, as being in accordance with truth and primitive order. For, would the doctrinally orthodox Dissenters, for example, be willing to share the Clergy Reserves with David Wilson, of Yonge Street, near York, U. Canada, or with an association of *Universalist preachers*? "I trow not." And it is quite evident that, admitting it were right to patronize some denominations, it would be grossly wicked in the State to extend the same to some others: for then it might happen that the State would *hire the devil* to promulgate a creed of "damnable heresies." Hence if the State attempts to assist Christianity, it must commence by an interference with what are called the rights and dictates of conscience and religious liberty, and lay itself open to the charge of persecution. The same is true of family government, where the father, by authority derived from God and the Church, taxes the labor of his Children for the purpose of imposing on them a religion which very likely the dictates of their consciences and their notions of religious liberty may instigate them to abjure either in whole or in part afterwards.

5. But if it be objected that the comparative knowledge or ignorance between adults and children calls for different rules for the two, it is answered;—That when God first sent the Gospel to men, it found them, as respects religion, as ignorant as children, and as incapable of judging for themselves; nay, even averse to it. Yet he did not stop to ask their advice or opinion, or consult their wishes, but commanded his heralds to go forth and say, "Thus

saith the Lord;" while the leading argument used to obtain belief was *miracles*, carrying a shew of authority, like a parent's word to the tender mind of his child. The human family has not, as we humbly submit, to this day emancipated itself from the necessity of receiving the Gospel in pretty much the same way: for still the first evidence is the same miracles—then "the reason and fitness of things." The first generation of Christians certainly could not: and they being under obligation to "teach it diligently to their children" in all respects as they received it without adding or diminishing, of course no future generation can have lawful power to break the entail. And as we know of no period while the son is under the father when his authority as a religious teacher under God and the Church is not the same as when he first taught him the name of the Saviour; so while he continues the subject of the state do we know of no period when disobedience thereto as the guardian of public virtue and the protector of the Church can become his religious privilege or his duty. For the Church being supposed to be wholly orthodox both in doctrine, holy orders and Church government, his duty to Church and State, as it *was in Israel*, is one and the same, and he cannot disobey either Church or State without equally disobeying both. If human government is *moral* in the highest sense, that is, in regard to God, it cannot be otherwise.

6. The foregoing supposes that as the Church commenced, as a thing of *unity*, under an exclusive system, as "one body" politically, a particular kingdom and communion, under a particular government and ministry: so it ought to possess *external unity*. For this the Jewish Church claims our attention as an example and pattern. Nor may we despise the admonitory fact, that the Scripture acknowledges neither the ten tribes after they forsook the temple and the Levitical Priesthood, nor yet the schismatic Samaritans, to be parts of the true Church; though they both adhered to the Mosaic Ritual. Nay, the Samaritans even had a Priesthood descended from Aaron, and the one who stood at the head of the secession had been a priest in the temple at Jerusalem. See Neh. xiii. 28. "And one of the sons of Joiada the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son in law to Sanballat the Horonite; therefore I chased him from me." He found means to erect a temple on Mount Gerizim, where he officiated as high priest according to the Mosaic ritual; and from that time the Samaritans were externally as strict Jews, and believed as firmly in the promised Messiah, as those at Jerusalem. Yet we find that our Lord did not acknowledge them as a Church, but in that respect treated them exactly like heathens. Why did he preserve such a marked distinction between the Jews and Samaritans, each party in the mean time claiming to be the true Church, believing alike, and alike in external customs? What reason can be rendered in reply which may not somewhere have a pointed application in parallel cases at this day? If "all scripture is given for our learning," what are we to learn from this? That every human society which claims to be an authentic Church is such in truth?—But we leave the reader to pursue the subject in the current of his own reflections.

But external unity in the true sense of the word and under one particular communion was practised in the Jewish Church, and is practicable in the Christian. Nay, the Christian Church commenced under one communion, and was commanded so to continue. In the nature of things it could not be otherwise. Not to mention dozens of passages where external unity is commanded in the most positive terms, and even anathemas pronounced on those who should "separate themselves," and "draw away disciples after them," one from John xvii. 21, shall suffice:—"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU HAST SENT ME." The words in capitals determine that he meant external unity in Government and Communion as well as in doctrine and sentiment; for "the world" has no means of judging but by its ears and eyes. And it is well known that cavillers at the Gospel have spoken thus: "Let all the sects unite as the loyal subjects of one king and government, and we will then believe you." Since therefore "the Church of the living God" "is the pillar and ground of the truth," she must possess competent means to inform the State which communion is the legitimate object of its homage and care, or it cannot be known at all.—When we say that the Church is thus competent, we intend to include in its means the Canon of