

THE CHRISTIAN SENTINEL.

THREE RIVERS, FRIDAY 5th NOVEMBER, 1850.

CHURCH AND STATE.—No. 1.

In No. 7 of the Sentinel we promised to consider briefly the three following questions; namely, 1. Whether a government whose subjects are Christians ought to profess its belief in the Gospel likewise. 2. Whether so professing it is under obligation to contribute to its support. 3. If doing any thing be justifiable, how it ought to be done.—The question which denomination ought to be encouraged in preference to others, will not enter into the discussion: at the same time we declare our decided attachment to religious toleration.

I. Ought a Government whose subjects are Christians, as such, to recognize the Gospel as the only true Religion?

1. A sense of propriety seems to require that it should. It appears becoming that the state should profess the religion of its subjects. 'Tis by divine appointment that kings reign and princes decree justice; and therefore it is fitting that, in their official character and acts they should acknowledge the tenure by which they hold their places. For instance, an army of infidels, (which once was feared in England,) should invade a country for the avowed purpose of destroying Christianity, ought not the government to meet them "in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel," after the example of the pious kings of the Old Testament? Every Christian's own conscience responds yes. And hence the origin of the use of naval and military Chaplains, after the manner of God's law to Israel. The Gospel also commands us to pray for our civil rulers, which implies that they, in their station, should acknowledge the Christian faith.

2. The state is bound, under God, to set a good example before the people, after the manner of old time when the law of the land professed to be the guardian of public virtue. But this in a Christian country cannot be done unless the Gospel is acknowledged by law.

3. The Christian Religion, by infusing its spirit more or less into codes of law, pervades, and measurably regulates political economy; and the ideas, and principles, and even the language of Scripture find their way into judicial proceedings.

4. Prophecy indicates as much when it declares that kings shall be the nursing fathers, and their queens the nursing mothers of the church: and unless they are such in their royal capacity, the prophecy can have no application to them.

5. Analogy says the same. 1. Every family is a complete commonwealth in miniature; and the head of it, as lord paramount, is bound to acknowledge and "serve the Lord Christ" with his household. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

2. Every heathen government that ever existed, as far as we know, has acknowledged the supremacy and worship of the Gods; which custom must have come down to them by tradition from Noah and his family. The wildest barbarians have their national religion and their priesthood; as evidently imitations of the true religion as base coins are of true currency. Satan transforms himself as an angel of light, and in playing the wolf he wears "sheep's clothing."

6. We may refer to a class of precedent of higher authority than the analogy just mentioned. God made his own divine Majesty the special object of reference for every statute which he gave to Israel: which was indeed but carrying out into a more extensive detail the indications of his will to the preceding patriarchs. And certainly we cannot in truth say that it would not be right for a state in these days to do all its official business expressly in the name of that Great King by whom all others reign.

A valued correspondent has suggested to us that the article on Mourning apparel which appeared in No. 6 of the Sentinel, and which ought to have been credited at the time to the Auburn Gospel Messenger, may be thought to have the appearance of an oblique attack on Temperance Societies. We beg leave to disclaim all such intention, in copying the article; and to state our impression that it was the Auburn Editor's drift rather to correct an abuse of a thing, than to pronounce the thing itself unlawful. Our own opi-

nion in regard to Temperance Societies, (which is but that of an individual,) is in their favor, provided they are conducted with moderation and discretion, and not attempted to be made a test of personal piety. It is clearly all men's duty to be sober, temperate, and vigilant, because their adversary, the devil, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: and none fall an easier prey to him than those who surrender their reason at the shrine of drunkenness. But yet, as this is clearly a subject on which good men may differ as to the propriety of adopting such or such a measure for the attainment of a given end, those who join a Temperance Society from proper motives ought not, as we humbly conceive, harshly to judge the known friend of temperance who does not; neither ought the other to decide that the member of a Temperance Society is essentially wrong in being such. A man may do much in the cause of temperance in a private way. He may refrain from the use of ardent spirits himself either altogether or nearly so; and he may discourage it among his servants and workmen. A man who truly fears God will do so at any rate; and he who does not, and is tempted to an abuse of this kind, in private, will care but little for the restrictions he has publicly imposed upon himself. For our own part, we have long wondered how any truly pious and considerate man, could engage largely and from year to year in the traffic of strong liquors, when he must know that at least three-fourths of it go at once into the service of sin and Satan. If the evil cannot be cured without Temperance Societies, let them be resorted to: but this should be clearly made out before a man is judged for not joining them. There is no doubt that personal vanity may be mingled with other incentives on these occasions; and an eye may be had now and then to a printed report, as well as to other good things. And knowing this, if a serious minded person should choose to do good more "in secret," and not "let his left hand know what his right doeth;" he is certainly intitled to the forbearance and charitable construction of his brother. And amongst those who do not come forward on those public occasions, it is but fair to conclude that some are kept back for the reason stated above. In the United States, excitements of all kinds are the order of the day; and many whose sober convictions keep them in "doubt as to whereunto these things will grow," and at a distance from them, are too often regarded as unregenerate in heart and mind.

Before receiving the communication above alluded to, we had selected a "temperance" article for this number of the Sentinel from the New York Christian Advocate and Journal, a paper which always gives, as far as we are acquainted with it, some valuable articles both on divinity and practical religion; and we profess our readiness to give any original communications of the kind, of reasonable length, an equal chance with others. It would probably gratify some of our subscribers, and need not offend any: and where it tends to promote a Christian Spirit, and calls for no sacrifice of the principles of truth; it cannot be wrong to yield measurably to the partialities of our fellow-creatures.—But on all occasions, we must request that Correspondents will favor the Editor with their real names. We have received some communications without knowing from whence they came.

SOCIETY FOR CONVERTING AND CIVILIZING, THE INDIANS, IN UPPER CANADA.

Although the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts have ever manifested a laudable zeal for the spiritual welfare of the Indians, and labored with no inconsiderable success for the conversion of the Mohawks and all the other tribes of the Six Nations, now settled on the Grand River and Bay of Quinte, long before as well as subsequent to their removal to this Province; and although the New England Company have also turned their attention to this subject, and rendered them essential service; yet to all serious Christians, it must be a matter of deep concern to reflect, that there exist in this Province a very great number of the Aborigines of this Country, the original possessors of the soil on which we are now living, and enjoying the blessings of civilized life, to whom the glad tidings of salvation, as published in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, are still altogether unknown. And while some well-disposed Christians have set an example in the glorious work of converting them, which reflects upon them the