

THE OBSERVER.

TORONTO, JANUARY, 1851.

TO SUBSCRIBERS.

We send the *Christian Observer* to those who have forwarded to us their names as Subscribers. We have attended strictly to the instructions which we have received relative to the post office address of each subscriber; still it will be marvellous if some mistakes have not occurred. If any paper has been sent to a wrong address, or a wrong post office, parties concerned will please notify us of the fact immediately. It can scarcely be necessary for us to remind the Subscribers of the conditions on which the *Observer* is sent to them. Their names have been a sufficient pledge to us, that they were respectively willing to forward to Toronto one dollar, on the reception of the first number of the paper. On such a guaranty—the good faith of Christians—we have ventured to proceed. Will the pastor of each church, or some brother, where they have no pastor, enclose the money from all the Subscribers in their respective localities, in one letter, and forward the same to A. T. McCord, Esq. Toronto. We ask our brethren in the ministry to exert themselves to increase the list of Subscribers, and as many of them are far from being wealthy, we request such, when forwarding the subscriptions of others, to keep back their own.

In sending money, be sure to give the name and post office address of each individual paying.

New subscribers must forward their money with their names, as we cannot send the *Observer* to them on any other condition. We mention this at the commencement of our career, so that none may hereafter take offence at our course. This is not with us a *business* transaction. We give our own labours for the good of the denomination, and certainly no man can be offended if we do not also give paper and printing. We will send the first number to those who subscribe before the issuing of the second.

We send this number of the *Observer* to some of our brethren who have not subscribed, with the request that they will now do so, with their churches. Should

any decline, it will not be necessary to return this paper. Silence will be understood.

To Editors.—We request our brethren of the press to whom we send this number of our paper, and who are willing to aid us to favour us with an exchange. Address, *Christian Observer, Toronto, C. W.* Will the *Primitive Church Magazine*, London, England, please change the address from *Pioneer to Christian Observer*.

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

Since men began to multiply on the face of the earth, the world has been in motion; but of late years it has been literally in commotion. There was a time when man was free, when the human body knew no manacle, and the rational spirit bowed only to God's teachings in sacred things. But families soon grew to tribes; tribes grew to nations, and nations expanded to empires. The authority of a father was easily assumed by the head of a tribe, and the increase of power corresponding with the increase of the subjects of his government was the natural result. The monarch took the place of the chieftain with still increasing authority, and the emperor in his greatness, soon sealed the fate of millions of human beings with a nod. Stealthily was man robbed of his civil rights; inch by inch reduced to vassalage. He was led within the inclosure of a snare, and perceived not that there was a snare until he was fast in its toils. To burst the bands asunder now requires a desperate effort.

But his civil bondage, however galling it may have been, dwindles down to a mild philanthropy which contrasted with his moral vassalage. To say nothing of the heavy burdens which the priests of Israel bound upon men's shoulders, while they themselves would not touch them with one of their fingers; or of the desperate moral thralldom in which the masses in heathen lands were held by designing knaves, or cunning philosophers falsely so called; what has been for ages the condition of men under the free Gospel of the Son of God? Christ taught the aspiring that, he who would be greatest amongst his people must be servant of all; and the Apostles rebuked every attempt on the part of Church officers to lord it over God's heritage. Each Church was in it-

self a perfect body, transacting its own business with great simplicity, and exercising its own power in the work of discipline, without, in any case consulting a supreme earthly head, or submitting to the dictation or decisions of a judicatory above the churches. This freedom of the saints, however, was of short duration. Even in the days of Paul, the mystery of iniquity began to work, and its full development, throw darkness and the shadow of death over the souls of men. A darkness, out of which the world has not yet emerged; but which is becoming more and more visible.

An early effort of antichrist was, to keep the Scriptures from the people, and this impious work was soon accomplished. Amongst other means employed, were dreaming systems of interpretation, which so bewildered the multitude as to cause them willingly to resign the sacred treasure into the hands of proud, designing, and in many instances, wicked men, being glad to rid themselves of so troublesome and incomprehensible a book. Thus perdition's bauc, and heaven's high corrective of sin was withdrawn, and a seal placed upon this fountain of living waters. The work of degrading and enslaving the human soul now progressed rapidly. The whole energies of perdition seem to have been exhausted in consummating the heinous plot against the rights and interests of mankind, and against the Christian religion. The institutions of the gospel were modified and changed; additions were made to their number, and saving efficacy was ascribed to all. Faith gave place to ceremonies of human invention, and love yielded to boisterous passion and mole-eyed superstition. Nor is this the whole, *advice* and *council* once honestly sought by sister Churches, and kindly given by the Metropolitan Church put on the air first of authority, next of legislation—democracy in Church government was by the over-reaching power of an aspiring oligarchy repudiated and that in turn was crushed by a haughty despotism. Here was now a body calling itself "*The Church*," although nothing of Gospel simplicity was connected with it. Indeed with a few exceptions, the faith of the Gospel was unknown, within its pale, the love of the Gospel unfelt, and the hope of the Gospel unappreciated. Human enactments were substituted for avon's