

others are caught up into heaven, singing "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints."

AMICUS.

CHARITIES WHICH GOD PRESCRIBED TO THE JEWS UNDER THE LAW.

In this we include all that they were indispensably obliged to furnish for religion. This enumeration may well make Christians blush, as it convinces us of this melancholy truth, that, though our religion excels all other religions in the world, yet its excellence lies in the Gospel, and not in the lives of those who profess it.

1. The Jews were obliged to abstain from all the fruits that grew on trees new planted the first three years. These first fruits were accounted uncircumcision. It was a crime for the planters to appropriate them. Lev. xix. 23.

2. The fruits of the fourth year were devoted to the Lord. They were called *holy*, to praise the Lord withal. Either they were sent to Jerusalem, or being valued, they were redeemed by a sum equivalent paid to the priest; so that these people did not begin to receive the profits of their fruit trees till the fifth year.

3. The Jews were obliged every year to offer to God the first of all the fruits of the earth. Deut. xxvi. 2. When the head of a family walked in his garden, and perceived which tree first bore fruit, he distinguished it by tying on a thread, that he might know it when the fruits were ripe. At that time, each father of a family put that fruit into a basket. At length, all the heads of families, who had gathered such fruit in one town, were assembled, and deputies were chosen by them to carry them to Jerusalem. These offerings were put upon an ox crowned with flowers, and the commissioners of the convoy went in pomp to Jerusalem, singing these words of the 122d Psalm: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." When they arrived at the city, they sung these words: "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem." At length they went to the temple, each carrying his offering on his shoulders, the king himself not excepted, again singing: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors." Psalm xxiv. 7, 9.

4. The Jews were obliged to leave the corn on their lands' ends, for the use of the poor; and, in order to avoid the frauds which might be practised in this case, it was determined to leave the sixtieth part of the land as a just proportion for the poor. Lev. xix. 9.

5. The ears of corn, which fall from the hand in harvest time, were devoted to the same purpose; and if you consult Josephus, he will tell you, that the Jews held themselves obliged, by this command of God, not only to leave the poor such ears of corn as fell by chance, but to let fall some freely and on purpose for them to glean.

6. The Jews were obliged to give the fortieth part of their produce to the priest, at least: it is thus the Sanhedrim explained the law written in the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy.

7. They were obliged to pay a tenth to maintain the Levites. Num. xviii. 21.

8. The produce of the earth every seventh year belonged to the poor; at least, the owner had no more right than the people who had no property. Lev. xxv. 3-7. This command is express; and the Jews have such an idea of this precept, that they pretend the captivity in Babylon was a punishment for the violation of it. To this belong these words. Lev. xxvi. 34.

9. All debts contracted among this people were released at the end of every seven years; so that a debtor, who could not discharge his debt within seven years, was, at the end of that time, released from all obligation to discharge it. Deut. xv. 1, 2.

To all these expenses add extraordinaries for sacrifices, oblations, journeys to Jerusalem, half shekels to the sanctuary, and so on; and you will find, that God imposed upon his people a tribute amounting to nearly half their income. One reflection must not be omitted, that is, that the Gos-

pel is an economy infinitely more noble, and more excellent than the law. The Gospel, by abolishing the Levitical ceremonies, hath enforced the morality of Judaism much more effectually, and particularly what regards charity. Jesus Christ hath fixed nothing on this article. He hath contented himself by enjoining us, in general, "to love our neighbour as ourselves," not being willing to set any other bounds to our love for him, than those which we set to our love for ourselves. SAURIN.

I. CORINTHIANS i. 27, 28.

"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are."

The following extract from "A Memoir of the late Rev. WILLIAM BLACK, of Halifax, N.S., by MATTHEW RICHEY, A.M." furnishes a striking and beautiful exemplification of the above passage:—

"On Sunday, the 17th of April, 1784, we find Mr. Black at Shelburne, after having visited Windsor and Halifax on his way thither, under which date the following interesting entry occurs in his journal:—

"I preached three times, and met two classes: one of white people, and the other blacks. The blacks are very lively. O that they might provoke the whites to jealousy, to love and to good works! The day following, eight of the friends accompanied me in a boat to Birtchtown, where I preached to about two hundred negroes. Some were deeply affected, and others greatly comforted. It is indeed wonderful to see what a blessed work the Lord has been carrying on among these poor creatures. Within seven or eight months past, upwards of sixty of them profess to have found peace with God. And what is further remarkable is, that the principal instrument God has employed in this work is a poor negro, who can neither see, walk, nor stand. He is usually carried by another man to the place of worship, where he sits and speaks to the people, or kneels and prays with them."

GALATIANS iii. 21.

"Wherefore the law was our school-master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

The Greek original of the above passage would be more correctly rendered, "the law was our (leader, or conductor,) to bring us unto Christ." The word used by the Apostle is not *didaskulos*, a teacher, master, instructor; but *paidagogos*, a leader. This word, says Parkhurst, is "rendered in our translation, *instructor, school-master*, but, among the Greeks, properly signified a servant, whose business it was constantly to attend on his young master, to watch over his behaviour, and particularly to lead (*agein*) him to and from school and the place of exercise. These *paidagogoi* were generally slaves, imperious and severe, and so better corresponded to the Jewish teachers and Jewish law, to which the term is applied by St. Paul. Xenophon and Plutarch expressly distinguish between *paidagogous*, and *didaskalous*, teachers." "Thus (says Dr. Adam Clarke,) the law did not teach us the living, saving knowledge; but, by its rites and ceremonies, and especially by its sacrifices, it directed us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. This is a beautiful metaphor, and highly illustrative of the Apostle's doctrine."

Acts iii. 10.

THE BEAUTIFUL GATE OF THE TEMPLE.

This gate is supposed to be the same that is called by Josephus the *Corinthian gate*. About 150 years before this, Corinth was burnt by the Romans, and images of gold, silver, and brass were melted together, of which metal (called Corinthian brass, and valued above gold and silver,) this gate was made.

JEWISH SECTS MENTIONED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE ESSENES.

THE ESSENES, who were the third principal sect among the Jews, differed in many respects from the Pharisees and Sadducees, both in doctrines and in practice. They were divided into two classes: 1. The *practical*, who lived in society, and some of whom were married, though, it appears, with much circumspection. These dwelt in cities and their neighbourhoods, and applied themselves to husbandry and other innocent occupations. 2. The *contemplative* Essenes, who were also called Therapeutae, or Physicians, from their application principally to the cure of the diseases of the soul, devoted themselves wholly to meditation, and avoided living in great towns, as unfavourable to a contemplative life. But both classes were exceedingly abstemious, exemplary in their moral deportment, averse from profane swearing, and most rigid in their observance of the sabbath.

They held, among other tenets, the immortality of the soul, (though they denied the resurrection of the body,) the existence of angels, and a state of future rewards and punishments. They believed every thing to be ordered by an eternal fatality, or chain of causes. Although Jesus Christ censured all the other sects of the Jews for their vices, yet he never spoke of the Essenes; neither are they mentioned by name in any part of the New Testament. The silence of the evangelical historians concerning them, is by some accounted for by their eremitic life, which secluded them from places of public resort; so that they did not come in the way of our Saviour, as the Pharisees and Sadducees often did. Others, however, are of opinion, that the Essenes being very honest and sincere, without guile or hypocrisy, gave no room for the reproofs and censures which the other Jews deserved; and, therefore, no mention is made of them.

But though the Essenes are not expressly named in any of the sacred books, it has been conjectured that they are alluded to in two or three passages. Thus, those whom our Lord terms eunuchs, who have made themselves such for the kingdom of heaven's sake, (Matt. xix. 12,) are supposed to be the contemplative Essenes, who abstained from all intercourse with women, in the hope of acquiring a greater degree of purity, and becoming the better fitted for the kingdom of God. St. Paul is generally understood to have referred to them, in Col. ii. 18, 23; where "voluntary humility" and "neglecting the body," are peculiarly applicable to the Essenes; who, when they received any persons into their number, made them solemnly swear that they would keep and observe the books of the sect and the names of the angels with care. What is also said in the above-cited passage, of "intruding into things not seen," is likewise agreeable to the character of the Therapeutic Essenes; who, placing the excellence of their contemplative life in raising their minds to invisible objects, pretended to such a degree of elevation and abstraction, as to be able to penetrate into the nature of angels, and assign them proper names, or rightly interpret those already given them; and also to pry into futurity, and predict future events. On these accounts, it is highly probable that they were "vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind."

Further, the tenets referred to by St. Paul, (Col. ii. 21, "touch not, taste not, handle not.") are such as the Essenes held, who would not taste any pleasant food, but lived on coarse bread, and drank nothing but water, and some of whom would not taste any food at all till after sun-set; if touched by any that were not of their own sect, they would wash themselves as after some great pollution. It has been conjectured that there might be a sodality of Essenes at Colosse; as there were in many other places out of Judaea; and that some of the Christians, being too much inclined to Judaism, might also affect the peculiarities of this sect; which might be the reason of the apostle's so particularly cautioning the Colossians against them.

Michaelis thinks that St. Paul alludes to the tenets and practices of the Essenes in his Epistle to the Ephesians, and in his first Epistle to Timothy.

(To be continued.)