

at first refused to receive the oath after our Presbyterian mode, and that he afterwards, on being reasoned with on the matter, withdrew his objections, and allowed our friend to swear in the way he wished. The remark of the official, after hearing the oath, was very remarkable. It was to this effect—"It is an awful oath, and I would be very sorry to take it." Yes, the taking an oath, like any other act of worship in which a direct address is made unto God, is a very awful thing, and none should take it either carelessly or irreverently.

Dr. Paley, an Episcopalian, and a very different writer from Mr. Fisher, whom we have already quoted, makes the following candid admissions in regard to the English form of the oath—

"The forms of oaths in Christian countries are also very different; but in none, I believe, worse contrived, either to convey the meaning, or impress the obligation of an oath, than in our own. The kiss seems rather an act of reverence to the contents of the book, (as in the Popish ritual, the priest kisses the Gospel before he reads it) than any part of the oath."—*Moral Philosophy*, Book III., part I., chap. xvi.

We will only further add, that all the members of our churches should, in every case in which they are called to take an oath, require that it be administered as our reforming fathers had it administered, and so shun the appearance of practising or encouraging superstition and will-worship:

"I shall at once" (said his Lordship) state my objections to the measure; they are not to its details, but to its principles. My ground for opposing the Bill is, because it sanctions, for the first time, and solely through ignorance of the law on the part of those who framed it, the principle that the law of evidence varies in different parts of the kingdom. The fact is, that, in England and Scotland, the law proposed to be enacted for Ireland, by the present measure, exists at this moment. And here I must observe, that the language of the Bill is, in a measure, insulting to the Presbyterians. It terms them, 'the people called Presbyterians.' It might just as well have said, 'the people called Englishmen,' for the Presbyterians are just as much established in Ireland, as are those professing the doctrines of the Church of England. The Quakers are not established, and therefore they are termed the people called Quakers; but the Presbyterians are upwards of 2,500,000 in number. They are established by law, and include some of the most eminent men in the kingdom. The Bill proposes to give to the Irish Presbyterians, supposing them ignorantly and absurdly, as different from the English and Scotch Presbyterians, the right of being sworn, not by kissing the book, but by holding up their right hand. This it does with as much seriousness as if it were not the law of evidence at this day—as if it had not been acted upon for a century—as if a Presbyterian had not been sworn in the Court of Queen's Bench within the last twelve months in that way—as if a man had not been convicted, capitally, at Newgate, on the evidence of a Presbyterian sworn in that way—as it in the year 1745, the question had not been raised at Carlisle, on the trial of the Scotch rebels, by a Presbyterian refusing to take the oath in the accustomed way, and who, being allowed to take it by holding up the right hand, the judges, on being appealed to, decided that he had a right to do so. But what is the difficulty it is alleged to be necessary to remove? In the year 1781, the Irish Parliament chose to bring in a Bill giving to seceders the right of being sworn like the Presbyterians of England and Scotland, namely, by holding up their hands. This Act is no relief to them (for they possessed the right before); and instead of being an extension of their privileges, it actually abridges them, for it excludes them from being witnesses in criminal cases unless sworn in the ordinary way; so that if a person commit murder or robbery in the presence of a Seceder, the latter is not competent to become evidence of the fact,

unless at the sacrifice of his conscientious scruples. I have alluded to the manner in which this Bill is framed, in order to show how they execute the business of legislation in another place. There never was such ignorance exhibited as in the framing of the Act in question; it astonished English lawyers at the time, and it would no doubt astonish them more to see the English Parliament following in the wake of those in Ireland, and by giving their assent to the present measure, exhibiting equal ignorance of the law.

"When men profess to be law-givers, it is not too much to expect that they should know a little of the law with which they propose to meddle. This evidently has not been the case with the framers of the present Bill, who could neither have read its preamble nor that of the Act of 1781. It states that it is expedient to extend to Seceders farther reliefs, but gives them that which is no relief at all. If ever there was a measure sent up to this House which exhibited hopeless blundering, total incapacity, complete ignorance—it is the present preposterous and ridiculous piece of legislation; and I therefore hope that your Lordships will unite with me in rejecting it."

ON THE EVANGELIZATION OF IRELAND.

Among the few papers handed over to us by the former editor, is one from a lady in Toronto, entitled, "*Extracts from Letters about Ireland, from 1st March to 1st May, from friends in Edinburgh.*"

These extracts describe various features of the famine and pestilence as they at the time prevailed in Ireland, and the efforts which friends of our esteemed correspondent were making to relieve the sufferers, in the way of sending them contributions through Protestant ministers and missionaries in Ireland. As the distress, happily, no longer prevails now in anything like the extent to which it did prevail when these extracts were made for the *Record*, much of their interest is lost, and so we have thought ourselves justified in withholding them from the public. We trust, however, our kind correspondent will soon send us another paper of "extracts," or of original matter, and we promise that it shall not receive the same imprisonment which the paper referred to has received during the temporary suspension of the *Record*.

The condition of Ireland is, at the present moment, deeply interesting. Her great agitator has been cut off, and two of God's sore judgments—famine and pestilence—have been visited upon her. The raging fever of political excitement is for the time subdued, and she lies weak and prostrate under the severe regimen to which God has seen fit to subject her.

It does not, however, follow that she is to arise from her present prostration in a state of sound, social, and moral health. When the physical frame is labouring under a constitutional malady, the mere recovery from some external injury which it had received does not imply a restoration of health. And so the removal of dearth and pestilence from poor Ireland may leave her still wretched as before. The awful judgments of God shall have been in vain, in respect to her people, if they be left, as they have long been, the slaves of ignorance and superstition. Demagogues and priests will, as heretofore, delude and oppress them, and social disorder and misery prevail throughout the land.

A medicament must be applied to the very heart of the mass of the Irish people, and that medicament alone is the gospel of salvation. It can do for all the provinces of Ireland what it has done—to the extent to which it has been applied—to Ulster—make the people intelligent, industrious, peaceful, and happy.

Now, God can raise up reformers even amongst the Romanists of Ireland, and let us pray that he would do so; but it is obviously the binding duty of the Protestant churches in Ireland, and England and Scotland to send the light of the gospel to the benighted Papists; and to do so now all the more earnestly that God's judgments have fallen so heavily on them. And we rejoice to think that Protestants of all denominations are stirring themselves up to this great, and, alas! long neglected duty.

There are indications that the popular mind has been awed and subdued by the recent judgments of God, and that something like gratitude has been produced towards the people of Britain—heretics though they be deemed—for the abundance and seasonableness of their liberality; and Protestant are wisely taking advantage of this state of feeling in Irish Romanists, by addressing to them the word of God—the message of salvation.

The Irish Presbyterian church has been stimulated to increased zeal and activity in their missions to the south of Ireland. The Free Church of Scotland has been contributing largely to these missions, and appears to be contemplating to have missions of her own, but in co-operation with those of the Irish Church. Indeed, she has recently sent some of her most devoted ministers to proclaim the word of life to the poor benighted and judgment-stricken Romanists of Ireland; and we trust that she will yet devote still more of her energies and resources to this most interesting field.

A popish population from Ireland is rapidly spreading itself over the western coast of Scotland, and is accumulating in her central towns and cities; and this consideration itself may well provoke increased zeal for the evangelization of Ireland. And then able Gaelic scholars can easily master the peculiarities of the Irish dialect, and make themselves intelligible in it. Hence, a peculiar reason for carrying forward the College at Oban, on the coast of Argyshire, which has been projected by the Free Church. Preachers could be sent forth from a school there, as from Iona of old, the seat of those primitive Christians, the Culdees; and the Irish Church might establish a similar institution in the wilds of Kerry. Then, when the Irish heard in their own language, from men of their own stock, the message of salvation, in all its fulness and simplicity, might we not hope that they would be brought to welcome it, and through the power of the blessed spirit of God, be delivered from the spiritual darkness and death with which they are now covered. We have, unconsciously, run into these remarks, when we meant merely to introduce to our readers a letter from an excellent Edinburgh minister of the Free Church, who has been itinerating in Ireland. It is addressed to the editor of the *Edinburgh Witness*, and is found in that paper of date 11th September last. Another letter, equally interesting, from the same pen, is found in the paper of the 4th. Mr. Brannigan,