

tain of our Salvation was made perfect through sufferings. "Christ," says Bishop Hall, "expoused his church to himself on the bed of his cross, his head begirt with a pillow of thorns, and his body covered with his own blood; and it is not meet, while the head was crowned with thorns, the feet should tread on roses." The Church is militant here, against internal as well as external enemies. The external enemy proceeds by open violence to suppress or eradicate the truth; while the internal enemy, having the same end in view, proceeds by a far different method. He commonly professes a love for the truth, lulls our suspicions asleep, and, presenting a counterfeit truth to our eyes, endeavours to persuade us that that is the truth itself. The parable of the tares is, in this respect, a prophetic history of the Church; the tares represent counterfeit truth, in their resemblance to the good seed; they are sown while men are off their guard, and 'tis only when they have obtained some root and growth, that the alarm is felt and the distinction is perceived. The enemy attempts by no act of violence to eradicate the good seed, he is satisfied to draw off the nourishment of the soil from it, to prevent the expansion of the blade, and keep off the genial influence of the air and sun.—But so far as we are permitted to see, the time in which the enemy sows his tares is the most alluring circumstance of all. The husbandman has toiled—every furrow is broken; the soft winds of heaven blow over the crumbling glebe; alternate sun and shower shed their glad and genial influence around; and then, when the seed has been cast in, in the full assurance of a rich return, the enemy sows his tares. Had the husbandman not toiled, and left the ground untilled, the enemy had been content to leave the field to the thorns and the thistles which it might spontaneously bring forth. 'Twas the cultivation of the ground which afforded the opportunity for sowing the tares. How just the picture of the Church's trials. The more earnestly is the word of God preached, and the seed widely sown on hearts prepared for its reception, the more dangerous are the efforts of Satan, and the deeper and the darker are his schemes. There is, therefore, no season in which we are more loudly called on for watchfulness and prayer, than when everything around seems prosperous and smiling; nor need we look further than the history of our Church for the last few years, for an illustration of this truth. Consider for a moment the position she occupied at home and abroad. Long had it been the crime and reproach of England, that while her navies encompassed the globe, and her merchants were princes of the earth, she made but little general effort, in return for the tributary riches of foreign climes, to turn her vast opportunities of usefulness to any spiritual account, by preaching to the heathen under her sway the unsearchable riches of Christ. She left the dark places of the earth as she found them, "full of the habitations of cruelty." The Indian devotee might ascend the funeral pyre—the innocent child be crushed under the wheels of Juggernaut; superstitions, impure and cruel—exactions, merciless and severe, be practised; she cared for none of these things; nay, she tolerated and protected them, if she did not make them a guilty source of revenue. Coeval with the establishment of this Society, another spirit arose. Benevolent Christians were generally awakened to a sense of responsibility. 'Twas felt that upwards of one hundred millions of heathens, perishing in their blindness, had some claim on our compassions; and then was vindicated the mysterious ways of Him whose path is in the great waters and whose footsteps are not known. Long had the question been asked—Why has God invested England, one little spot of earth—a scarcely discernible speck in the world's map—with such vast resources and illimitable territories? The great question was solved. He was preparing a way for the dissemination of the Gospel, and the enlargement of his true Church; and the Christian's heart was filled with holy triumph as he saw the word of life speeding its blessed way to every known region of the earth, and witnessed the realization of the vision of St. John, when he beheld the "angel fly through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to all them that dwell on the earth, to every nation and kindred and tongue and people." And, oh, with what grateful homage did we bend before the throne, and utter our thanksgivings to him who alone doeth marvellous things; as we heard, day by day, of the triumphs of the cross, of the heathen casting their idols to the moles and to the bats, till the wonder was presented to our eyes of the spirit's divided work at Kishnagur, while all men were forced to exclaim, "the days of Pentecost are come." Thus was the Church but a short time since presented to our eyes—awakened to a sense of responsibility at home and abroad—honoured as the instrument of everlasting good—entrenched in the affections of her children—commanding the homage of those who were without—walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost. But, brethren, the tares have been sown. Only think of chaplains in India losing the precious opportunities of enlightening the heathen in questions ministering to endless strife—seeking, like Romish missionaries, to captivate the heathen imagination, instead of to con-

vert the heart—spoiling the truth with a mixture of vain philosophy after the traditions of men—placing in the foreground the rites and ceremonies of religion, instead of its substantial truths, as if to turn men from one species of ritual religion to another, that that was to convert the soul—entering, like modern Romish missionaries, into other men's labours, not to build up but to destroy, perverting the right ways of the Lord. Well may we enter into the grief and alarm of the good Bishop of Calcutta; and fervently should we pray to the great head of the Church, that this good man's hands may be strengthened, and that he may long be spared as the faithful and zealous guardian of the truth. I need not dwell on the effect of the new views at home. An attempt has been made to poison the fountain of knowledge, and to send forth the bitter waters of error and disunion over the land. Our Church had been deemed the very bulwark of Christianity, but the disciples of the new school have done much to render her an object of distrust and suspicion. Daily had she been receiving into her bosom the enquiring and conscientious members of other communions, but now—grievous is the crime, and awful the responsibility of those by whom the offence has come. The youngest amongst us will not live to see the end of the evils we deplore. But we are naturally anxious to inquire into the origin of this late change; and if we were obliged to assign in one word the great cause, we should say, because men, wise in their own imaginations, turned to other sources than the Bible for the information and direction of their faith—"to the traditions of men, after the rudiments of this world, and not after Christ." As regards external symbols, we know that the only image used in public worship, and that after a long period, was the picture traced by the workers in glass of the city of Alexandria on the communion chalice, of the Good Shepherd carrying home on his shoulders the lost sheep which had strayed into the wilderness. That images were not used, or any symbolical representations in the very ancient Church, we have abundant authorities among even Roman Catholic writers to testify. Chateaubriand, not very long since Prime Minister of France, a man of undoubted genius and learning, and at the same time a devoted son of the Church of Rome, thus expresses himself in a book of modern travels in North America—"When Christianity sprung up amidst a civilized world and spectacles of Paganism, it was simple in its exterior, rigid in its morality, metaphysical in its arguments, because it aimed at drawing from error people seduced by the senses or misled by system of philosophy. When Christianity passed from the delights of Rome and of the schools of Athens to the forests of Germany, it surrounded itself with pomp and images, for the purpose of enchanting the simplicity of the Barbarian."—Chateaubriand had too much honesty to wrest, too much learning to deny the plainest facts on historical record: he makes a defence, ingenious and eloquent, for the use and introduction of images and exterior pomp, but he candidly admits that "from the beginning it was not so." Only think, my brethren, that amidst the full light of gospel truth, the importance of postures and forms should be so magnified, and that the simple effusions of our beautiful Liturgy should be uttered by the officiating Minister, with his back turned to the people, in a tone and manner better suited to the low mutterings of heathen incantations. And yet all this is defended on the ground of Christian antiquity, while the fact is incontrovertible, that among the various Churches of antiquity no uniformity in customs, habits, prayers, or Church fabrics, prevailed; and touching this turning to the east, we know that in the cathedral of the Syrian Antioch, the altar (for we will not quarrel for a word) and the principal window faced the west. A real or supposed conformity to the spirit and practices of the early Fathers, is no doubt, a source of consolation to a Christian mind; but we must not forget that the solemn admonition, "cease ye from man," is not only the warning of inspired wisdom, but the dear-bought lesson of melancholy experience. I entertain too serious a respect for my present auditory, too jealous an apprehension of the evils that might be effected by the experiment, to bring in detailed enumeration before you the errors and infirmities of many of the most distinguished Fathers of antiquity; but what will the admirers, or rather the worshippers of antiquity (many of whom really worship "they know not what") say to a practice which we know prevailed, of popular preachers being applauded during their discourses, as in a public theatre—of the preachers themselves calling for the plaudits of the people; while the house of God, instead of presenting the solemn stillness of heart-searching and conscience-struck sinners, resounded to the acclamations of an excited auditory, who had heaped to themselves teachers, having itching ears. What will the advocates for ecclesiastical subordination and order say to the well-known fact, that the celebrated Origen had been suffered to preach in the Churches throughout an extensive district before he was admitted to the office of either Priest or Deacon? If we venerate antiquity, let us love it in its inspired form. The scriptures of the Old Testament contain some of the most ancient records in the world; and surely the scriptures of the New Testament must

be the oldest Christian document we have. With all their faults, infirmities, and irregularities, the ancient Fathers possessed one virtue, which should endear their memories to every sincere lover of the Bible. They upheld and maintained, with a holy simplicity and ardent eloquence, the fulness, sufficiency, and completeness of the written word, for all the purposes of Christian life and doctrine. This is a fact too often overlooked, as well as a merit that cannot be overrated. I feel that I have too long detained you by matter which is merely preliminary, from the two important questions which I propose to examine. 1st—How, with regard to these new views, are we to guide our judgments. 2dly—How are we to regulate our practice.

To be continued.

#### SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

High hopes were entertained of the King of Prussia, when in England, that he would pursue a liberal course in his own country. This, it now appears, is not the case, if several articles in recent English papers are to be received as correct. For our part, we never could divest ourselves of the fear that he was going too far for those who believe that Puseyism is allied to Popery. Read this:—"The King of Prussia has revived the order of the Swan, created by Joachim I., Elector of Brandenburg, in 1440, in honour of the Virgin Mary, and as a reward to persons eminent for their Christian virtues. The order was abolished by Joachim II., 1539, when he had embraced the doctrines of Luther. The person on whom the King has bestowed the order, is the Queen. His Majesty recently placed the image of the Virgin, which is the principal ornament of the order, round the neck of the royal consort, in presence of the whole court."—*Galignani*.

In the *London Watchman* there is a Petition to the House of Commons, in behalf of the Scotch Church, signed by thirty-four Wesleyan Ministers resident in London and its vicinity,—the names of the Missionary Secretaries, the Editor of the Magazine, and the Book Steward, being first. Should we have room we may insert the whole document; at present an extract must suffice. They say, "In the judgment of your petitioners, the distressing and injurious results of a final refusal of the Legislature to afford the desired relief to those whose consciences will compel them, in that case, to take up a new and different position, will not be confined to Scotland and its Church, but must eventually lead to consequences which will endanger the stability of other Churches, and weaken the other Protestant institutions of the empire; inasmuch as, in the opinion of your petitioners, it will be impossible to defend, on Scriptural grounds the Established principle itself, if it once become plain and unquestionable that the advantages of an Establishment, whatever those advantages may be, will only be conceded by the State on the condition that a Church so specially countenanced and encouraged shall purchase its distinctions, honours, and privileges, by the necessary sacrifice of its spiritual liberties, and the violation of its spiritual allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ."—*Christian Guardian*.

A writer in the *London Evangelical Magazine* in speaking of a neighbouring clergyman of the Established Church, and a thorough Puseyite, represents him as so exemplifying the Oxford spirit, that in order to save his parishioners from the taint of evangelical religion, he has burned a number of the publications of the London Religious Tract Society, among which are the *Lives of Janeway, and Flavel, and Bunyan's Barren Fig Tree!* The Bible, it may be expected, will share the same fate.—*Presbyterian*.

THE GREAT CONFLICT.—The belief is expressed by the leading Tractarians of Oxford, that the "two systems of doctrine," which he calls the "Catholic and Geneva," by which we understand formalism and spiritual religion, "are now, and probably for the last time, in conflict." We echo the sentiment: the conflict will be a dreadful one—a war of extermination—of principles. If "the signs of the times" are not mistaken, this country will constitute the theatre of that struggle, and the Great Valley of the West, already the scene of such animating interest, may be the Waterloo of truth and error. In such a contest, whatever may be the value of the fortified posts furnished by our educational institutions, or of the strong phalanx of educated and pious ministers, the artillery of the press, and the cavalry corps which our colporteurs will furnish, will be found no invaluable forces in the great struggle.—*Am. Tract Soc. Messenger*.