

For the Colonial Churchman.

The following verses relating to two important events in the life of a young man in whom we take much interest, have been handed us for insertion.—It is often pleaded in excuse for blemishes in composition, that the piece was not intended for publication; but however untruly such a plea is often raised, we believe that in the present instance it may, if required, be advanced with propriety—These lines having been intended solely for the private and partial eyes of intimate friends.—Ed. C. C.

TO A YOUNG MAN ON HIS BEING CONFIRMED.

By his Aunt.

'Twas beautiful to see thee go,
In all the bloom of youth—
Enlist—a Soldier of the Cross,
A Champion for the Truth.
Gird on the armour of your God,
With zeal your foes defeat;
The prize is Heaven, whose bright reward
Your vict'ry shall complete.

Though thorns spring up around your path,
Afflictions o'er you roll,
And Satan's fiercest storms of wrath
Attempt to drown your soul.

Though friends forsake you one by one,
All earthly comforts fly—
There is prepared, by GOD'S dear SON,
A rest for you on high.

TO HER NEPHEW ON HIS FIRST GOING TO THE COMMUNION.

By his Aunt.

And wouldst thou like to join that ardent throng,
Whose hallow'd lips Immanuel's praise prolong?
Whose golden harps peal through the courts above,
And vibrate only with redeeming love?
How sweet the sound, seraphic floats,
Till Heaven reechoes their transported notes.
To souls redeemed the theme can never tire;
No—not when countless ages shall expire.
Pure, subtle, spirits—never need repose,
And holy zeal, there, no abatement knows—
Do not such thoughts enkindle a desire
To quit dull earth and join that radiant choir.
My soul, quite freed from sin and Satan's thrall,
I think, would sing the loudest of them all.
From earth detach'd, a union Death shall sever—
Triumphant sing—"Worthy the Lamb forever!"

For the Colonial Churchman.

Messrs. Editors,

(No. 7.)

I have to prove that 'liberty of conscience,' or the liberty for every man to do as he likes, is nowhere to be found in the Bible.

I should think that the well-known fact that the word of God pronounces the conscience of man to be liable to err, and that we may be led, like St. Paul, to do things directly opposed to the will of God, "in all good conscience," or rather, without being approved by our conscience, it being "defiled," and that it ought to be sufficient to shew the folly of depending too much upon so unsafe a guide, The

following are some of the passages of Scripture in which conscience is mentioned as being evil, or unsound. Heb. x. 22. 1. Tim. iv. 2. Titus, 1. 15. Now if it be possible for the devil to disguise himself in such a manner, and to give such a colour to his plans, that they may appear, even to good and well-meaning men, quite religious and holy, is it right to lay no restriction upon the conscience of man? Can we unreservedly follow its dictates? Or rather, how comes it to be in such high reputation in our days? Alas! I fear it is a bad 'sign of the times!' It certainly does not shew a very general esteem, or love, or submission, to the written word of inspiration. But we can prove the unscriptural foundation of 'liberty of conscience' under another point of view. St. Paul commands christians to "obey them that have the rule over them, and to submit themselves." (Heb. xiii. 17.) What then, are we to understand by the obedience required in this text of Scripture? Does the apostle mean that we should "obey them" only so far as they pleased our fancy, or our taste, or answer our peculiar views? If so, then what is the use of the injunction? But if not so, if we are to pay them a strict and constant obedience, without consulting our own private opinion, which cannot be safely depended upon, then, where is 'liberty of conscience' to be found in the Bible? Here we are, by the revealed will of Heaven, bound to "obey them that have the rule over us, and to submit ourselves," and, behold! what is the fashion among those who profess to follow the apostles' precepts? How do they obey the apostles, and their successors? How do they "submit themselves" to the lawful and regularly ordained clergy,—to them who have, by a divine appointment, "the rule over them, and who watch for their souls?" I suppose there is no inhabitant of Europe, or America, who does not know that it is now the fashion for every one to select his own spiritual teacher, and, of course, to dismiss him at pleasure, or whenever he may dare to "rule" his employer in any way which may not happen to meet his approbation! This is a strange way to obey them that have the rule over us!—St. Paul could only speak to one church, and of one kind of rulers. He never acknowledged any christian minister who had not entered by the door into the Sheepfold, or who had not been regularly ordained and appointed to rule over the faithful; but since his time, ministers of various shades, of various opinions, and of various names, have sprung up, and have fought, and are still fighting, each for a share in the government of the christian world! So, men, having lost sight of a large portion of the Holy Scriptures, and forgotten what they owed to the true catholic and apostolic clergy, have been tempted by novelties; and at last, have found it a very convenient thing to hire a spiritual ruler, to be ruled by themselves as they might require, and to be exchanged for another at any time, or so soon as they are tired of his services. Thus, no doubt, few know who are the persons, or the church, to which the apostle speaks when he says:—"obey them that have the rule of you, and submit yourselves;" and the reason of this is, that St. Paul never thought of giving such a thing as 'liberty of conscience,' but that men have taken it themselves, in defiance of all authority, or without any precept. Liberty of conscience, therefore, is opposed to the word of God, opposed to reason, and opposed to the prosperity of true religion. It is only good for the unruly, the stubborn, the despiser of order, and the lover of confusion, and religious licentiousness.

But some may ask, does not the apostle say, that "where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty?" Yes, but he surely could not mean liberty for every man to do as he pleases, or to invent as many new creeds or forms of worship as we like, since he would then be at variance with himself. How could he forbid divisions in one place, enjoin perfect love and

unity in another, and obedience to spiritual rulers in the next, and then destroy the whole by giving full liberty to all men to do as they pleased? This is impossible. But the liberty of which he speaks in 2. Cor. iii. 17, is in reference to the understanding the spirituality of the Law of Moses, which was covered from the Jews, but which covering, or "vail," was taken away in Christ.—There is yet another passage, which a man quoted to me the other day to prove that liberty of conscience was a christian privilege. I mean the 5 ch. of Gal. and the first verse.—"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." This passage has a special reference to circumcision. Some were inclined to continue the observance of that ordinance, and the apostle is anxious to make them understand that it was done away with, and a more perfect dispensation, and a simpler or freer form of worship was to be substituted in its room. Christians do certainly enjoy many privileges which the Jews did not possess. The Jewish church was, as it were, encumbered with an infinite number of typical ceremonies and ordinances which could never be omitted without the greatest danger; but the christian church is quite different in her ceremonies, and external forms; the most painful or difficult parts of the Jewish worship being removed, our's becomes milder and more Gospel-like! But let us not suppose that we may abuse this liberty for the fulfilment of our own lusts, or of our own peculiar wishes. Christ has made us free from the curse of sin, but let us take care "not to use this liberty for an occasion to the flesh." The liberty which leads people to disregard "them that have the rule over them," disobeying their commands, and slighting their counsels, is indeed a most pernicious liberty. And this is, however, the very principle which has given birth to the numberless sects in existence. Let a man even imagine that he could also preach, and without any further consideration, without consulting whether he has the authority, or not, without caring whether he "enters by the door" or not, he immediately sets up as a minister, draws away disciples after him, and a sect is formed!! Another will find something to blame in his spiritual guide, or he may not understand some parts of the church services, or he may suppose that he could devise some better plan for the extension of the Gospel, or he may be too closely reproved by the minister over him, or he may find some of his enemies in the habit of attending the same place of worship,—any of these, and a thousand other motives, may lead a man in our days to form, or to join, a sect; and it may never happen to him to think of the evil which he must commit by his disregard for all apostolic rules and order! Is not such a conduct the fruit of the false liberalism, so prevalent in the world?—How different is the conduct of the true, humble, and unpresuming member of the church of Christ! How differently also does the Holy Spirit direct us in the whole of the sacred volume! The votaries of dissent excuse themselves, and their favourite principle, by their wish to do good, but a more consistent, a more scriptural course of conduct equally affords the means of being useful, without being guilty of tearing to pieces that seamless coat of Christ. Might not private christians be very useful, nay, much more useful in the church, than in leaving her communion for the sake of a few indifferent things which they may not understand. Yes, I am sure that whoever possesses grace enough to "obey them that have the rule over him, and to submit himself," though he should have to crucify his strongest will in order to do so, will behave more according to God's word, and be more beneficial to his fellow-creatures.

I remain, Messrs. Editors, Your's, &c.
June, 1838.

S.