

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER.]

## THE APOCRYPHA.

It is very pleasing to the observing Christian, to know that in consequence of the great improvements which of late years have been made in the art of printing, books have become so plentiful and cheap, and particularly copies of the Holy Scriptures, that no one who is capable of understanding the will of God, need be destitute of a copy of the sacred volume; and that not only the smaller and more common editions of the Bible, but even the quarto edition with marginal references, we now considered a necessary part of the furniture in most houses, placed in such a position as to be seen and read of any who may enter them, instead of being shut up in a box, drawer or closet, as was commonly the case a few years ago, as though the owners of them were either afraid or ashamed of risking their reputation by appearing so religious as to permit a Bible to be seen in their possession. And although it is to be feared that in many instances, this exhibition of the Scriptures in families, is merely in conformity to the fashion of the present age, yet, like any other fashion, having a good tendency, should be encouraged by every lover of truth. For it is a great satisfaction to every sincere enquirer after truth (as every professing Christian is supposed to be) to be able to "compare spiritual things with spiritual;" and as the Bibles which contain marginal references are so very convenient for that purpose no family should be destitute of them.

But as many of those editions of the Bible which have the *Apocrypha* bound up with the Sacred text (as though those uninspired writings constituted a part of the Holy Scriptures) have been and still continue to be circulated throughout many parts of this Province; and fearing that some persons may mistake the nature of those writings (for I have met with protestants of various denominations who have considered them a necessary part of the Bible) I consider it my duty to make a few observations respecting them, by which it will plainly appear, that they ought not to be connected with the Holy Scriptures, any more than any other uninspired writings.

First: They were never received by the Jews as inspired writings, although it is well known that they took great care in preserving the Holy Scriptures.

Secondly: They were never referred to either by Christ or his apostles, although some part of almost every book of the Old Testament was either quoted or referred to by him or them.

Thirdly: They are almost entirely destitute of that sublimity of expression which is peculiar to the Holy Scriptures, and which any person of common discernment, may easily discover by comparing them together.

Fourthly: They contain many statements which contradict the Holy Scriptures, of which the following particulars are a part, viz: Representing Joikim as the son of Zerubbabel, whereas he was the son of Joshua the high priest (Neh. xii 10, compared with Hag. i. 1.) Darius is repre-

sented as being king of Assyria, long after that Kingdom was dissolved. Some things are said to have been done under Darius which were done under Cyrus. The reason given for the return of the Jews from Babylon is altogether different from that recorded in the Holy Scriptures. It is also what is stated respecting Monteca, Hannan and Ahasuerus. In the "The Wisdom of Solomon," (ch. x, 3, 4) the murder of Abel is said to have been the cause of the flood. In the "Book of Ecclesiastics," (which is superior to any of the other Apocryphal books) it is declared that "alms maketh an atonement for sins," (iii. 30), and the same doctrine is contained in Tobit (vii. 9), and in which book (Tobit), the prayers of saints are said to be presented to God by angels (vii. 15.). In the "Second Book of Maccabees," an offering of prayer and sacrifice to make reconciliation for the dead is applauded (xii, 43, 44, 45), as is also a most unreasonable account of suicide (xiv, 41, 46), and the author of that book concludes by saying, "And if I have done well and as is fitting the story, it is that which I desired, but if slenderly and meanly it is that which I could attain unto," thereby plainly shewing that he did not profess to have written by inspiration.

There are many more inconsistencies contained in the Apocrypha, which any careful reader, and especially every one acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, may easily discover; among which the story of "Bell and the Dragon" is probably not the greatest.

It was in consequence of the decision of the Popish Council of Trent, A. D. 1546, that the Apocrypha became connected with the Holy Scriptures, for they declared those writings to be of equal authority with the inspired volume, and denounced Divine wrath against all who should despise or reject them. And it is no wonder that Papists universally consider the Apocrypha to be of Divine authority, for it is from those writings as well as from the writings of the Fathers, that they derive many of their errors, such as salvation by works, especially by giving alms, Purgatory, prayer for the dead, &c.

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## THE PREVALENCE OF ERROR:

AN IMPERATIVE CALL FOR GREATER ZEAL AND FAITHFULNESS ON THE PART OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

If ever there was a time in our history, when more than ordinary zeal and faithfulness were demanded on the part of Christian churches; it is the present—if ever there was a period in the history of our beloved christianity, when the children of God were called to cluster around the Zion of their hope, when they were called to give a reason for a hope that is within them, and to manifest the cheering, elevating and heavenly influence of those streams of life that have gushed forth from the city of our God and the sustaining and abiding power of those rich supplies of grace that nourish for heaven—it is the present time. While Christians have been slumbering in fancied security; the enemies

of truth have been rousing their energies and forging new instruments for the destruction of the temple of our God. While the professed guardians of a gospel faith and hope have been reposing on couches of ease, the enemies of God and human liberty have been gathering strength for a more fierce and tremendous conflict. We are not to think that because the fires of persecution have been extinguished and the sword of cruel slaughter is no longer bathed in the blood of the victims of a Papal superstition, that Rome has ceased to look upon the spread of gospel truth with less hatred and fiendish malignity, than when her history was traced in the smokes of the stake and the purple streams of innocent blood. We must not be deluded by her mask of present kindness or her proffered hand of peace, or think for a moment that she is less determined to rivet the iron chains of a soul debasing superstition upon all within her grasp, than when she held all Europe in the manacles of a galling tyranny. Babylon hates Jerusalem: her enmity is unmitigated by time and unchanged by circumstances—and while she has life and power both will and must be consecrated to bar her doors against the light of the gospel and the purity of its precepts, when they burst in upon her, she dies. But from her adroitness in adapting appearances and professions to existing circumstances, she is ingeniously endeavouring to delude the children of truth and liberty into a dreamy security, while her coffers are actively pouring forth gold to corrupt and the Vatican sending out its herds of Christ-hating agents to proselytize and to delude. The churches should remember that her basilisk eye is fixed with deadly gaze upon the inviting and promising field, the field where God has placed them to guard and disseminate his own truth and while they are engaged in every thing but aggressive movements, satisfied with merely maintaining their visibility and many of them thoughtless and heartless in respect to thousands less favoured with religious light and advantages. The votaries of a papal superstition are paving the way to occupy, and by its withering and benumbing influence to cover it with the relics of the dead and blasted prospects and hopes of the living. Every moment of repose and inactivity on our part is imparting strength to the arm that would gladly tear down the altars which truth has rendered sacred—desecrate the very temples which a present Christ has hallowed—rake up the ashes of our beloved dead to extinguish in inky darkness every hope of the living.

This enemy is before us. We are called upon by all that is cherished on earth and sacred in heaven, to give with fullness and clearness of tone the trumpet sound of the olden time, which bore on its blast confusion and dismay to the enemies; but joy, peace and triumph to the lovers of Zion. But this is not the only formidable enemy, that love to God and our fellow men should bring us into vigorous, determined and unyielding contact with. A God-defying infidelity, clothed in more deceptive and dangerous garb than ever before appeared, is with unblushing front stalking forth and demanding an entire surrender of our judgment, our conscience and convictions of responsibility to the demands of God, the claims of Christ and the interests of society. It is not that daring form of infidelity, which during