

RELIGION AND POLITICS.

At the present time political questions are largely engrossing public attention. Not only in our own Province, but throughout the whole civilized world, they are become the theme of discussion in all circles. And the agitation which they occasion is likely to increase rather than diminish. Under these circumstances it becomes a question of deep interest, though it must be admitted one of considerable perplexity, what is the relation of Christianity to civil polity, or what is the duty of christians in regard to the public questions of the day. Civil Government is an Institution of God to secure the social well being of man in the present life, while Christianity opens to us a future life, and acquaints us with the means by which its happiness may be secured. Christianity finds man a member of civil society, having rights of which it does not deprive him, and owing duties from which it does not release him. We may be therefore assured that in politics, as such, there is nothing inconsistent with the strictest profession of religion.

For various reasons, however, it is sometimes considered extremely desirable to separate the two. Worldly men and even professing christians aim at having them entirely divorced. It is often said that politics and religion have nothing to do with one another. The idea of bringing religion to bear upon public movements is resented as an uncalled for interference—as bringing religion into a sphere in which she has no business—and this is sometimes said with an assumed air of respect for her sanctity, as if she would contract defilement by contact with any thing so unholy as political agitation.

Taking this sentiment in the broad manner in which it is sometimes stated we must say that we can scarcely conceive of any thing more absurd, or in a moral point of view more indefensible. It is virtually saying that there is one department of human action, and that too one which largely influences human welfare, with which God is to have nothing to do, but that it is to be left to Satan guiding the corrupt principles of the human heart.—Can those who tell us that religion has *nothing* to do with politics really mean this. If they do, we would ask in what part of God's Word is any man or set of men exempted from the controlling influence of religious motive in any sphere of action. On the contrary, does not the Word of God bring every transaction of our lives under the rule of christian motives.—“Whether ye eat or drink, or *whatsoever ye do*, do all to the glory of God.” Or if it be admitted that this is certainly our duty as christians, it may be still argued that therefore politics, which it is assumed necessarily involves conduct inconsistent with such obligations, is not a proper sphere for religious men. But we would humbly ask, in what part of God's Word is there an exemption from the authority of the divine law for politicians? Are they indeed not “made under the law?” The very statement of such an idea conveys its refutation.

As to the expressions of mock deference with which it is proposed to exclude religion from influencing civil affairs, we cannot do better than quote the language of one of the greatest of modern thinkers:—

“This interdiction comes with its worst appearance when it is put forth in terms affecting a profound reverence of religion; a reverence which cannot endure that so holy a thing should be defiled, by being brought in any contact with such a subject, as the disastrous effect of bad government on the intellectual and moral state of the people. The advocate of schemes for the improvement of their rational nature may it seems take his ground, his strongest ground on religion for enforcing on *individuals* the duty of promoting such an object. In the name and authority of religion he may press on their consciences with respect to the application of their property