

## THE CHRISTIAN SENTINEL.

THREE RIVERS, FRIDAY 7th JANUARY, 1831.

## SOME OBJECTIONS TO THE UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE CONSIDERED.

(Concluded from p. 125, No. XVI.)

Obj. 7. "Civil Government is founded upon the will of the people." \* If therefore the State supports religion, it ought to "consult the faith of the nation rather than its own." †

Ans. The will of the people is then the fountain of supreme authority—the cause of the necessity of civil rule, and government is its creature—its ox and its ass. Government cannot originate or continue unless the people will it: for if they withhold the foundation it cannot and ought not to rise; and if they withdraw it, it ought and must fall. The right of originating and continuing government includes the right of originating and executing law; and hence, "thou shalt not kill" is but idle wind till the will of the people stamps it with the signet of authority! The will of the people is the rule of right and wrong; and the people can will any thing. "THE MAJESTY OF THE PEOPLE"—has therefore only to breathe the blast of its displeasure upon civil government, and it crumbles to dust! For, said Mr. Wesley to his sister, "I tell thee sister, that the voice of the people is the VOICE OF GOD!" ‡

But we have shown that religion is for government and government for religion;—and true religion is nothing but good government, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." Religion cannot exist without civil government: but as that owes its existence to the will of the people; and since a declaration of the "faith of the nation" is but the expression of a part of that will, "the faith of the nation" stands upon the same foundation and authority. So said "the nation" of the French some forty years since.

But Paley's position, if it proves any thing besides his own folly, proves by far too much, and is about as applicable to the Koran as to the Bible. It goes upon the supposition that Christianity was thrown into the world at random in a crude chaotic state, for "the will of the people" to fabricate it into whatever fashion best suited their ideas of propriety, according as they determine upon "the form of" their "garments." Or, since "there is no Apostolic precept and example for any one form of Church Government," § of course, as there is no mention made of more than one, we have scripture authority for NONE WHATEVER! "The Kingdom of Christ" was, however, established in the world; but as the Christian Guardian informs us, WITHOUT ANY GOVERNMENT! ¶ Hence, unless "the will of the people" is the true and proper foundation of religion, he who attempts to make a Church is guilty of adding to God's word, and encounters the curse contained in Rev. xxii. 18.

It is matter of regret that the Guardian did "not stop to prove—what could very easily be done—that the very principle of Ecclesiastical Establishments is essentially Anti-Christian, Anti-scriptural, and inconsistent with civil liberty." § Some, however, are not very prone to "stop to prove" all the broad-cast assertions

which they may find it convenient to make. 'T's a cheap way of clearing up difficulties, when a man can persuade us that, if he had time, he could do it in an instant! Jemima Wilkinson saved herself the trouble of walking across Cayuga Lake by persuading her followers that she could do it without the least inconvenience. But we humbly conceive that the Bible would be a curious text book for authority in a thing so "easily to be done." The Jewish nation would certainly be a most unexceptionable evidence to the assumption that the obnoxious principle is essentially Anti-Christian, Anti-scriptural, and inconsistent with civil liberty. We had humbly believed that the Scripture is neither Anti-Christian, ANTI-SCRIPTURAL, nor an enemy to civil liberty; and that a nation governed by its laws would really be one of most enviable distinction. For if they exalted Israel "high above all people," many will still think that a government and laws constituted and administered after the only pattern the Divine Lawgiver has ever been pleased to exhibit, would be superlatively good. And we must be permitted to hold this old fashioned sentiment as one most dear to a Christian's heart, that THE WILL OF GOD is INFINITELY a better foundation for "civil government" than "the will of the people"—and that his religion is quite as preferable to theirs, as his will is to their will.

What an Act of Christian Guardianship must it be to place THE MAJESTY OF THE PEOPLE on such a proud and commanding elevation.

But again: civil government being founded upon the will of the people, that will must be the fountain of honor, law and justice. For that power which creates the necessity of government, must be competent to create—not barely to adapt, but to CREATE honor, law, justice and allegiance. And as allegiance to a pure Christian government is but another term for "pure and undefiled religion," by a concatenation of cause and effect, we reduce it also under the dominion of "the will of the people," as being, like their voice, the will of God. But, taking the stream at fountain head,

"—primæ ab origine mundi,"

how was it at the beginning? Where had civil government, law, justice and honor, their origin and foundation at first? Did our father Adam raise up a family to manhood, and then "consult" "the will of the people" before he presumed to exercise "civil government"? And since, "the will of the people" is the sole arbiter of law and justice, right and wrong, did it originate the Ten Commandments and the Jewish Code;—or did it not produce the golden calf, while "the voice of the people" in indication of their Sovereign will exclaimed: "These be thy Gods O Israel?"

Why did not Moses "consult the faith of the nation RATHER than his own" when he came down from the Mount and founded new God, religion and GOVERNMENT founded on UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE AND THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE, which were in the sequel designed to lead them back to Egyptian liberty?

There is an old fashioned tradition, that "there is no power but of God?"—[of course the Apostle did not intend to stamp usurpation with the Divine warrant;] "the powers that be are ordained of God;" and that "for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's Ministers." But now—"quam tempora mutantur!"—"the will of the people" has "robbed God" of his prerogative and shut him out from even a participation in the affairs of his own creatures! "The will of the people" is placed ABOVE the will of God!

"But let us advance a step further. Suppose some form of religion to have been established: What then? Where will the next step land us? Why, truly, at the fulfilment of that ancient prophecy—"Ye shall be as gods." For since "the will of the people" is the only legitimate foundation of civil government; and since it has the power of changing religion at any time; and since there can be no government without both a God and religion, and since "the will of the people" has been known both to make and proclaim their own gods; and since the maker of a god must be as great as the god that is made; and since religion is but "the will of the people," seeing they have power to put it down or to build it up:—"since these things are so," the infernal prediction is fulfilled; man has burst into the sacred inclosure of the divine prerogative and usurped the authority of the Most High; and when

\* Christian Guardian: vol. 2, no. 4, p. 14, col. 4.

† Paley as quoted by the Christian Guardian.

‡ To which she pointedly replied—"Yes, brother, and it vociferated, Away with him! Crucify him!"—Quoted from memory.—It is true that a whole people do possess the physical power of producing anarchy at any moment; but what has that to do with right? so also a whole people can submit themselves to civil rule; but on what depends the necessity of submission? On the will of man, or of God who made him? Human corruption causes government to be necessary; but there is also another cause, namely: God is the head of all principality and power, and his sovereignty precludes any other foundation for civil government.

§ See "the case stated," Ch. Guard. vol. 1 no. 50.

¶ See the same.

§ See Ch. Guard. vol. 2, no. 4. We beg the reader's patience with this short criticism.—We make it in order to show the weakness and folly of talking and writing at random, and the dangerous and destructive principles into which blind zeal will thrust us.