

# THE COLONIAL CHURCHMAN.

THE

"BUILT UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNER STONE. . . . . Eph. 2 c. 20 v.

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*From the British Magazine.*

A CHURCHMAN'S PRIVATE MEDITATIONS.

*A Walk to the Sea.*

The flowers upon the mountain's side  
Like lonely spirits dwell,  
Where beauty finds a place to hide  
In many a secret cell.

And now the wild variety  
Of sea-weeds on the shore,  
And shells of glorious ancestry,  
Old Ocean's beauteous floor.

There came in these a healing sense,  
To thoughts of my despair;  
A living and felt evidence  
Of sweet protecting care.

If thus His presence stands confest  
In shell, and flower, and stone,  
To Him each want within my breast,  
And every pain is known.

And now I feel me strong again  
To join your living songs;  
All animate, thou vocal main,  
With never resting tongues.

And ye that stand in gloom profound,  
Like sentry of the strand,  
To everlasting hills around,  
A bold fraternal band.

And she that from her silver boat  
Leans o'er the summer sea,  
The moon, takes up the glorious note  
In quiet majesty.

The moon, the mountains and the sea,  
Are in thy sheltered hand;  
But they are all no more to thee  
Than pebbles on the strand.

And though a sea of voices rise  
Throughout the boundless sky,  
Thou hear'st the inexpressed cries  
Of one as mean as I.

*For the Colonial Churchman.*

Messrs. Editors, (No. 8.)

I would yet say a few words concerning this greatly boasted unscriptural 'liberty of conscience;' especially in reference to the way in which its great advocates reduce this principle into practice. Ever the dissenter will excuse his dissent, or his schism, by the fashionable excuse—'Liberty of conscience!' It is strange to say, when we examine each of the different sects which are most followed, we are surprised to find that there is no such thing as liberty of conscience in any of them. Each has some peculiarity, or form, to which its members must submit; and some of them are even extremely strict and rigid in enforcing these upon the consciences of their disciples. It is in vain for them to say that they teach no doctrine, or use no ceremony, which is not recommended by the Scriptures, for it is well known that no Church can exist without some local rule for the preservation of Public Worship which is not directly ordered in God's word, and therefore every communion must have something peculiar to itself, such as a house of worship, different seasons and times for praying, singing, preaching, kneeling, sitting, or standing, a pulpit, or a desk, the communion of women, and many other customs and rules, not all plainly enjoined in the Bible, yet common among each sect, and imposed, or laid upon the consciences of many dissenters without the least murmur. Now, I ask, what then becomes of Liberty of conscience? Is it not all an imaginary scheme to deceive the unwary? The only liberty which it prescribes is that which every man could take at all times

and in all ages—even the liberty of abandoning all religion if he likes, and of submitting to no authority whatever—the liberty of running from one place of worship to another, and to pick out that which will best suit his fancy, or his passions,—or the liberty of following none at all, unless it be Atheism, Deism, Socinianism, Universalism, or some other equally unscriptural heresy. Yes, every reasonable christian must confess that a liberty which is in fact true licentiousness, and which leads a man to leave the Church of God, or all religion, without fear or remorse, is indeed a dangerous liberty, as regards the interest of both the Gospel and morality in the world. Experience has now folly proved that some restraint must be placed upon the fickle will of fallen nature; and it would be fully to suppose that men are to have more liberty in religious things than in political matters. No man could invent such a system but one who knows nothing, or who cares nothing for the revealed will of God. The Bible is too plain in requiring order, and unity, and submission to every ordinance of man for God's sake, to be mistaken except by those who are unwilling to obey its precepts. Religion also must necessarily be closely connected with politics—influence statesmen, frame good laws, and dispose mankind to observe them, but how is all this to be done under the influence of a dissenting liberty of conscience? I am aware that such a doctrine as this, is far from being acceptable to the generality of professing christians in our days; and I may be thought to be a great bigot, and a very intolerant person: yet I rejoice to be able to say that I shall willingly be a bigot in any good and scriptural cause; and I would think it an honour to suffer any reproach for the sake of Truth. I have often thought that, if to be opposed to dissent, schism, divisions, false liberalism, and all kind of heresies, be bigotry, then, there was never a greater bigot than St. Paul, and I would willingly walk in his steps. This mighty apostle was not satisfied to give the Gospel to the world, without entrusting so great a treasure to, as it were, a corporate body—a divinely incorporated society of faithful men who were to transmit the same to their posterity. And this Society, which no power on earth can dissolve, must of course be governed by laws and regulations, the importance of which laws and regulations is in proportion to the value of the treasure which they are to preserve and protect. I would, then, ask any man, any of the numerous and various teachers and propagators of dissent, now among us;—"shew me the chapter and verse of Holy Writ which authorize you to form a sect, or to support, or encourage the least shade of division among christians, without some great, plain, and scriptural reason:—a reason which would leave no doubt whatever on your mind on the propriety of so doing; and if you do this, then you will be at liberty to follow any system you please, and to divide and sub-divide, break and break, again and again, into parties and communions." But for my part, I could such a thing be proved from Scripture, I must plainly confess that my belief in the Bible would be greatly shaken, and my mind miserably confused. A late writer has well observed that "a well ordered mind can never be satisfied with the present state of the christian world." Yet, I repeat it with gratitude to a gracious God, it is not owing to any deficiency in the Book of truth, but, rather to the corruption of the human heart. And I cannot but hope that the time will soon come when christians will see the necessity for laying by all their trifling differences, and unite like brothers indeed, forming "but one flock under one Shepherd!" Let all selfishness, all party feelings, all interested motives, all worldly considerations, make room for love, peace, charity, and then the change will be great, then the scriptures will be revered, "then they that have the rule over us will be obeyed," then christians will

love one another for the sake of their Lord and Saviour, and the church will be "one body, fitly joined together, and nourished by that which every joint supplieth, unto the edifying of itself in love!" Oh! happy time! soon may it come!

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

*For the Colonial Churchman.*

A WORD TO SLEEPERS IN CHURCH.

I have often been amazed that persons not under the influence of bodily infirmity can so far forget themselves as to slumber away any portion of the time they are in the House of God. I have known the same persons to be wide awake for hours together in the Court House, the place of business, the party of pleasure, and yet close their eyes and even snore or nod their heads so as almost to crack their necks, before they have engaged for a few minutes in the services of a Church. What can be the reason of this? Is there any thing soporific in the atmosphere of that holy place, or in the things there discussed, in the news of a hell to be avoided, a heaven to be won, a Saviour who has died for sinners?—It cannot be that the preacher is to blame, for I see it under all preachings, even that of a Boanerges himself. And I see the closing eye, the gaping mouth, and the bowing head, almost as soon as the text is given out.—It cannot be from rudeness, for I see the most polished gentlemen, and the finest ladies, who would never think of going to sleep in any other company, composedly sleeping in the Church. What then can it be?—I am unable Messrs. Editors, to tell, unless it be that the soul is locked in the sleep of spiritual death,—the heart estranged from the things of God—under no sense of His presence—not awake to the realities of eternity—caring nothing for the heaven and the hell which are there—indifferent to the Saviour's love—and to the dangers of sin. It must be that God is forgotten, and the nature of the place and its proper employments not considered.—"What meanest thou O sleeper, arise and call upon thy God, if so be that He think on thee that thou perish not."

1. Consider that you are in the presence of God Almighty—and that if you would not sleep before one of your acquaintances, much more should you be careful not to do so before Him.
  2. Consider that things of everlasting importance to your soul form the business of the Church, and will you sleep while these are transacting? While you might learn the way to escape the pit of hell, and reach the kingdom of heaven.
  3. Consider that while you sleep you are unkind to your minister, whose heart is pained by such a sight—who has perhaps toiled over the midnight lamp and deprived himself of sleep to provide something for your improvement, which while he delivers, you will not, cannot hear.
  4. Consider that the sleeper in Church is a laughing stock to the careless, who point their fingers at such, and forget not to tell of them afterwards.
  5. Consider that perhaps it is the last time you will ever be able to join in prayer to God, or to hear His word.—Will you venture to pass that last time in slumbering and sleeping? What account will you give of minutes thus spent, when you stand before God in the great and terrible day? Suppose yourself on a death bed before another Sabbath. Would it comfort you to reflect that on the last Lord's day of your life, you slept away your opportunity of grace?
- To all that are given to this indecent, this unseemly, this unjustifiable practice, I would say, "what! have you not houses to sleep in, but will you profane the Church of the living God?—And I would kindly add—Remember the eye of God, remember