

THE CHRISTIAN SENTINEL.

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CHURCH AND STATE.—No. III.

(Continued from p. 109, No. XIV.)

13. We are told that *all* Scripture is given for our learning and instruction in righteousness. In this sense, then, the Old Testament must be as sure a guide in matters of faith and practice as the New, in every thing not actually abrogated under the Gospel. It is evidently a body of prophecy on the future condition of the Christian Church; a system of types and shadows of good things to come. But what, under the new dispensation, is there to correspond as a substance to the prophetic type of the constitution of the Jewish Church and State, and the exclusive patronage of the civil power being given to *one denomination*? This must have a meaning or it must not. If it has, what is it? If it is to have no bearing on the condition of the Christian Church, what is its use as a lesson of instruction? It cannot be claimed as to be hereafter fulfilled in *heaven*; for there can be no condition of the Church in "the world to come," as far as God has been pleased to indicate to us "what we shall be," that has any very close correspondence in detail to the Ecclesiastical Polity of the Jews. That was given for a double purpose—to form the moral character here for a new state hereafter, and at the same time to take care of certain worldly things and policies not in themselves of a moral nature, but yet necessary as auxiliaries to the moral process. The arts and sciences, and political economy, merely as such, and as they are instrumental in keeping alive the human race, and providing new means of subsistence commensurate with the increase of population, are just what they ought to be if death were the extinction of being, and pure atheism were the true creed. But since the measure of time is no limit to the hopes of man, and an eternity of glorified existence is placed within his reach, God has so ordered it that these worldly things and policies are the appointed servants of the Church, the very stepping stones in our ascent to the "city whose builder and maker is" Himself. In that "heavenly inheritance," this double policy of keeping up *present* existence, and providing at the same time for *future* existence, will have no place. And it is plain and intelligible that in settling the Jewish polity, he adapted the frame work of its constitution expressly to the necessities of the PRESENT HUMAN CONDITION. Certainly also, the whole heathen world, possessing the same order of things undisputed among themselves, and having it before their eyes as a pattern for near 1500 years, must have concluded that if the Jewish Church was God's Church, that they, in becoming God's people must continue to follow God's pattern. If not, why is also prophecy so worried in some instances as to be unintelligible except we look for its fulfillment in the union of Church and state? Why is the New Testament, when speaking of the abolished ritual, silent on the unlawfulness of the state providing for and protecting the Church? Why in ordaining apostles did our Lord choose one with a distinct reference to each of the twelve political chiefs of the twelve tribes, appointing them to sit on thrones as ministers of political justice? Why is he himself descended from the royal line of a political kingdom which had no concern with the priesthood: nay even pre-figured by a ROYAL PRIEST? Why did St. John see in the vision of the Holy City "twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel—and twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb?" Why are all these things left on record in favour of those things which are very recently discovered to be such horrible abominations, and not one solitary expression in disapprobation of them?

Suppose a pious king, like Josiah, should find his subjects sunk in ignorance and vice in consequence of pernicious heresies in religion, and he should wish to effect a reformation among them, how must he set about it? Must he proclaim that he possesses no authority in the premises, and ought not to possess any which is not resolvable into mere private opinion and advice, and that their opinions and advice carry as much authority as his own? Must he tell them that it is an abomination in the sight of God for him to imitate those good kings of old whose example God himself has com-

mitted to paper for his learning and instruction? He feels himself the father of a great family, and, like other good parents, he wishes to correct the disorders of his household, and teach his children the fear of God. He finds that the man after God's own heart took the liveliest possible interest in religion—that he amassed vast treasures for building a house of national worship—that he regulated the services of the sanctuary, appointed the priests to serve in their courses, with singers, porters, and nethimims, and that he composed a volume of Divine Songs for public worship, and directed them to be used in the public congregation. He finds that the wisest king who ever swayed a sceptre removed the high priest for misconduct, and appointed another to fill his place; and that others rendered themselves famous for their pious zeal in reforming religion and providing for its becoming administration. Yet though finding himself "compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses," must he "turn away from him that speaketh from heaven" and conclude that these examples were left on record for no purpose but to warn him against the monstrous crime of *committing adultery with the Church* by attempting to reform those whose "mind and conscience is defiled" being "alienated through the ignorance that is in them," with a view to bring them back to "the faith once delivered to the saints?" Were he to attempt so perilous yet necessary a work, according to the recent discoveries in the moral science and the art of Christian Government, his subjects would be amply justified in hurling him from his throne, and cutting off his head. Their grossest corruptions of God's word, the very things which plunge them into vice and moral and political degradation, are their rights, privileges, dictates of conscience, and religious liberties; and any attempt to recover them from their delusions by means of his kingly authority, must be regarded as TREASON AGAINST THE PEOPLE! Nay, they possess an inalienable right to spread their errors and corrupt others; and any effort of their political father to throw in a countervailing influence and stop the contagion must instantly be met with bitter revilings and rebellious threats!

Corrupt notions concerning religion or any thing connected therewith, never fail to poison the fountain of political feeling and opinion, and consequently more or less to threaten true freedom either immediately or remotely. Religious Factions are but too sure of becoming political factions and dictating to the Government: the moment they are sufficiently powerful to make an impression. Here again the monarch's hands are tied, and he cannot put forth even the mildest exercise of his authority to teach the truth and save a sinking state*, without what is called religious persecution:—in other words, without drawing a line of distinction between truth and falsehood, and countenancing the one, and discountenancing the other.

If as they claim, the connection of Church and state is an *adulterous* connection, the aid of the State in the Reformation of England and Scotland ought to be held in utter detestation as foul and criminal;—for a few years of time cannot purify the unclean. It is right at all times to cease from doing evil, and wrong at all times to persevere in a bad way. Certainly an adulterous intercourse can at any period be broken off with safety, as far as simply ceasing to "commit lewdness" is safe. The Government therefore instead of effecting the reformation, and securing by the strength both of Church and State to the people a pure system of faith and practice, might righteously have left them, even in the most perilous juncture of affairs, to the "rights and dictates of their own consciences." What these high-sounding words might mean at that particular time needs not the most profound research to ascertain; neither need any one be at a loss to make a tolerably fair calculation of the awful consequences of then putting into practical operation the identical principles which are now claimed as the perfection of Gospel liberty. Whether the Christian world has been benefitted or not by the union of Church and State in England, the bitterest enemies of the Church CANNOT BE IGNORANT: neither do we think it very problematical what would be the consequences if at this particular time,—at this most critical state of the Christian world, that insolent POLITICAL FACTION which directs the LONDON UNIVERSITY, and the LONDON WORLD, could succeed in prostrating at its feet the sacred bulwarks of England's brightest glory. And in view thereof, we

* Truth would you teach or save a sinking land?—PORR.