

The Church.

"HER FOUNDATIONS ARE UPON THE HOLY HILLS."
STAND YE IN THE WAYS, AND SEE, AND ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS, WHERE IS THE GOOD WAY, AND WALK THEREIN, AND YE SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.—JEREMIAH VI. 16.

VOLUME III.]

COBOURG, UPPER CANADA, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1839.

[NUMBER XXI.]

Poetry.

THE CROSS OF CONSTANTINE. BY THE LATE LADY FLORA HASTINGS.

"Conquer in this!" not unto thee alone
The vision spoke, imperial Constantine;
Not presage only of an earthly throne
Blazed in mid heaven the consecrated sign;
Thro' the unmeasur'd tract of coming time,
The mystic cross doth with soft lustre glow;
And speaks, through ev'ry age, in ev'ry clime,
To every slave of sin and child of woe.

"Conquer in this!" Ay when the rebel heart
Clings to the idols it was wont to cherish,
And as it sees those fleeting hours depart,
Grieveth that things so bright were formed to perish.
Arise, hereav'd one! and athwart the gloom,
Read in the brightness of that cheering ray—
Mourn not, O Christian, tho' so brief their bloom,
Nought that is worth a sigh shall pass away!

"Conquer in this!" when fairest visions come,
To lure thy spirit to a path of flowers;
Binding the exile from a heav'nly home
To dwell a lingerer in unholy bowers;
Strong in thine strength who burst the bonds of sin
Clasp, to thy bosom clasp the holy cross!
Dost thou not seek a heav'nly crown to win?
Hast thou not counted all beside but loss?

"Conquer in this!" tho' powers of earth and hell
Were leagued to bar thee from thy heavenward way,
The Cross shall ev'ry dark'ning shade dispel,
Chase ev'ry doubt, and re-assure dismay.
Faint not, oh, wearied one; faint not—for thee
The Lord of Righteousness and Glory bled,
And his good Spirit's influence, with free
And plenteous unction, is upon thee shed.

"Conquer in this!" when by the fever'd bed
Thou see'st the dark-winged angel take his stand,
Who soon shall lay thy body with the dead,
And bear thy spirit to the spirit's land.
Fear not, the Cross sustains thee, and its aid
In the last trial shall thy succour bring;
Go fearless thro' the dark, the untried shade,
For sin is banish'd, and death hath no sting!

CHRIST THE ONLY SAVIOUR.

A Sermon on the Eighteenth Article of the Church of England, preached at the Carrying-Place, Murray, on Wednesday Oct. 16, 1839, before the Midland Clerical Association, by the Rev. A. N. Bethune, Rector of Cobourg, and published at their request.

ISAIAH xliii. 11.—"I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Saviour."

"Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound," is the exclamation of the Psalmist in reference not merely to that emancipation from temporal slavery, which the year of the Jubilee proclaimed; but, enlarged with prophetic vision, he looks forward to a greater and more blessed deliverance,—to the rescue from the thrall of Satan of those who are tied and bound with his galling chain,—to a relief from the bondage of corruption and the condemnation of sin,—and to an exchange from this dreariness and awfulness of the soul's captivity into "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

The "joyful sound" of this deliverance might well awaken the Psalmist's transports; because to prophets and righteous men it was of all others the most important and engaging theme; because even to the glorified above—to the angels and elders who are about the throne of God—the subject of their triumphant and never-ending song, is "the Lamb that was slain and that redeemed us to God by his blood."

And while holy men of the old time before us looked forward to this day of redemption and were glad; while seraphs in heaven proclaim eternally "honour, and glory, and blessing" to him who wrought out that deliverance; will the heart of man be uninterested now, and his tongue be silent, when he contemplates this all-sufficient Saviour? No—to him who "knows that joyful sound," we must believe it to be the theme compared with which all other subjects are but vanity,—as the one constraining and engrossing topic, which gives to life its charm and divests eternity of its terrors.

When, indeed, the church-going bell proclaims its summons, and multitudes in obedience to its solemn call are gathered within the courts of the sanctuary, the thoughtful christian would consider as appropriate to every individual composing these assemblages,—as the prevailing sentiment of their heart and lips, while they journeyed onwards to their Father's house,—"What must I do to be saved?"

When a Christian minister sees before him a devout and attentive congregation; when he proceeds to declare, in his own imperfect manner, the counsel of God; when every ear is turned to him for the humble instruction he is commissioned to impart, he will be struck with the feeling that the voices of the multitude around him are ready to be raised with this question, "What must I do to be saved?"

Yes, my brethren, that is the object, ostensible at least, of your coming here: not for the light and unworthy purpose of mere curiosity and entertainment; but to be told of your sinfulness and your danger,—to be reminded that you are immortal beings—that you stand on the brink of eternal ruin—and, happy they who know the joyful sound, to be told of the only Saviour. And would that we—ye, Christ's unworthy heralds and ambassadors—could always answer that question with the fulness and the earnestness which the importance of the theme demands; that we could always address you with that power and persuasiveness of instruction, which would make you feel your nothingness and your sinfulness in the sight of God, and bring you in penitence and tears to Christ the only Saviour. And would that you, my brethren, were all affected, as perishing sinners ought to be, by this deep and constraining feeling! Would that the reiterated declaration of man's depravity and his fearful peril,—would that the earnest promulgation of the only Saviour, should bring you all indeed to the feet of Jesus, and cause you to lay there all your anxieties and fears, all your desires and hopes!

There may be those—alas! we know that there are those—who exclude from their thoughts this solemn subject; who are content to pass as carelessly through life's pilgrimage, while every day they bend their steps nearer to the grave, as if that pilgrimage were all that need engage their care,—as if they had no souls to be saved, no future judgment to expect. There is, we are warranted, in the spiritual world, the stony soil in which the implanted seed can take no root and make no progress; there is, we are assured, the stony heart which no reason can touch and no love subdue. But sometimes the which the theme of mercy could not move.—Some of us have seen, and all have heard of, the penitence and contrition of the condemned criminal; how earnestly, in

those hours which he thinks to be his last, he invokes the mercy of a long-sighted God and shudders for the safety of his soul about to wing its way into the unknown terrors of the eternal world. Careless as he may have been, in former times, of every moral restraint and religious duty,—the certain anticipation and the close approach of death and the judgment-day, breaks up his long cherished delusion, exposes to his shuddering view the naked deformity of the soul, and drives him, in overpowering remorse for his unnumbered crimes, to the mercy-seat of God and to the cross of his Redeemer. Then, in the meekness of a spirit humbled and subdued—in the agony of a heart broken and contrite now,—he asks this, as the one only question of interest to his trembling soul, "What must I do to be saved?"

Many of us, too, have seen the worldly-minded man checked in his careless career by the stroke of disease; and when brought to the brink of the grave, repining with deep sorrow and terror at his past neglect and wickedness. We have seen the languishing sufferer looking back, with a shudder of dismay, upon the dreary waste of a mispent life; and, late as it is, raising his earnest cry to God for mercy and forgiveness. When the soul is hovering on the dread brink of eternity, then it is that he averts his gaze from the pomps and splendours and joys of life to which he had been enchained so long; then it is that he looks with an eager eye and an anxious heart to the bow of mercy athwart the gloomy cloud of heavenly wrath; then it is that his soul yearns towards the sweet promises and the surpassing comforts of religion; then it is that Christ the only Saviour is the theme on which alone his spirit can repose with confidence or hope, and that the "joyful sound" of that Saviour's name is the one most welcome to his ears.

These, my brethren, are pages in life's history which rebuke, with force enough, the careless and the wayward ones whose treasure is in the world, and whose worship is paid to the world's idols. They convey rebuke and warning enough to those who, while they are passing through life as if its transient comforts were all they lived for, will hear without dismay and receive without concern this solemn exhortation, "Prepare to meet thy God." It should be rebuke enough to those who build upon foundations for which there is no Scripture warrant,—who keep out of sight the only means of rescue and safety,—who treat with indifference the only Name by which we can be saved. It ought to be rebuke and warning enough to those who, when you tell them of their native sinfulness and of their everlasting peril, and when you point to Christ Jesus as the only Saviour, will receive your counsel with distrust, and perhaps reply that they have framed to themselves a rule of duty and a system of morals, by adhering to which they will be in no danger of future rejection at the judgment-seat of God. It ought, I must add, to convey rebuke enough to those who venture presumptuously to say, that "a man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professes, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature. For," to continue the language of one of those Scriptural Articles of our Church* from which I have been quoting, and the tendency of which it is my purpose to set before you to-day, "Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved."

There was a time, you are aware, when the Christian Church—then, comparatively, a small and humbly speaking, a powerless band—were the objects of persecution to their pagan enemies; but the records of history inform us also that, in process of time, truth prevailed over error, and the religion of the cross penetrated even into the palaces of kings. Then it was that heathen philosophers and priests sued, at the imperial tribunal, for that mercy and protection which they had denied, when in power, to their Christian opponents. One of their arguments for the toleration of paganism and its recommendation to the regal favour was,—That God is more honoured by the varieties and different methods of worshipping and serving him, than if all should fall into the same way; that there is a beauty in this diversity, and a suitability in it to the infinite perfections of God; and that it does not look so much like a mutual agreement or concert, as when all men worship him in one way!

I adduce this fact of history to shew the origin of an opinion which, even in these enlightened days, has, in a modified degree at least, gained a species of currency; so that, apart from the fallaciousness of the argument itself, you may be induced to receive with the greater suspicion and distrust a sentiment which has emanated from the advocates of pagan superstition and heathen blasphemy,—which was originally advanced by those who laboured with misguided zeal for the extinction of the Christian name. That this was a favourite opinion with the upholders of false religion and the open enemies of the truth, will be further apparent from the fact that the false prophet Mahomet inculcated precisely the same sentiment. He, in order to entrap what is usually termed the "liberal," though it is in reality the licentious spirit of mankind, affirmed that all men in all religions were equally acceptable to God, provided they served him faithfully in them. I might go on to shew, that the same doctrine has been advanced by certain infidel philosophers of a later age,—who very plainly inculcated the opinion, in order to do away with the veneration which is due to revealed religion, that all faiths and all creeds were equally acceptable to God!

I repeat, that when sentiments like these emanate from a quarter so positively hostile to the truth, they are to be met with distrust and heard with caution. Instead of being allured by their attractive speciousness, and charmed with their show of liberality, rather should our language be,—"Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou sauest not the things that are of God, but those that are of men."

Men are never, in any age or under any circumstances, free from the influence of human infirmity; and even under the Christian dispensation, pernicious sentiments have gained a prevalence which have undeniably their origin in that fallen and malignant spirit who is "the father of lies and a murderer from the beginning": so that, to adopt the language of a distinguished divine,† "some to make themselves and others easy, in accommodating their religion to their secular interests—to excuse their changing—and to quiet their consciences, have set up this notion, that seems to have a largeness both of good nature and charity in it; looks plausible; and is calculated to take in the greatest numbers: they therefore suppose, that God in his infinite goodness will accept equally the services that all his creatures offer to him, according to the best of their skill and strength."

* The Eighteenth.
† Bishop Burnet.

In opposition to this baneful opinion,—emanating, as we have seen, from the strong-holds of Satan, but calculated to contaminate even the flock of Christ,—the Eighteenth Article of our Church was framed;—"that they are to be accused that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth; so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved."

Let me, however, direct your attention to a distinction which the words of the Article obviously imply,—the being saved by a law, and the being saved in a law. The condemnation of the Article is directed against the first as an instrument of salvation, an operative or leading cause; and not against the last, as a circumstance merely accidental or contingent. To be saved by a law or sect, means of course by virtue of that law or sect, as an operative and meritorious cause; whereas to be saved in a law or sect, imports that men may experience the compassion and pardon of Almighty God, even though engaged, through their blindness, in false religion. A large portion of mankind are still lying in pagan or Mahometan darkness: many, even within the precincts of Christendom, cling to false and soul-destroying tenets: not a few, even in the ranks of professed Protestantism, maintain opinions which strike at the root of what we deem the very foundation of our Christian hopes. Here it is not to be doubted that those who commit this "sin ignorantly, in unbelief," may experience the compassion of a merciful God and receive his forgiveness; yet the words of Scripture caution us—and the Article I have quoted, which is based upon the Scriptures, cautions us,—not to apply to such false religions of false tenets one single property which can be deemed acceptable to God; but to believe that if those who maintain them should experience God's compassion and forgiveness, it is not through any virtue or excellence of the "law or sect" which they profess. No, there is but one way of reconciliation to the Father,—Jesus Christ and him crucified: through that one means it is that we can gain acceptance with God; and all living beyond the pale of Christ's privileged fold who may, at the last dread day of scrutiny, experience his pardon and be exempt from condemnation, will have no *covenanted* title to plead,—no hope to build upon, grounded upon the promises of God.

But while we would judge charitably of the heathen and the alien; while we would allow to those who are strangers to the Gospel's "joyful sound" a place, though it be in the uncovenanted mercies of God; this indulgent hope cannot, my brethren, be extended to those who hear, but will not hearken,—who have been gathered within the fold of the one good Shepherd, but choose to stray away into the wilderness of their own devices. We dare not apply this judgment of charity to those who, having heard the proclamation of the Saviour's name, think lightly of his claims, and disregard his merits, and in the vaunted sufficiency of *reason's* guidance, frame a law of action and lay down a rule of salvation for themselves. We presume not to give so much countenance to wilful error as to include within the compass of God's uncovenanted mercies, those who slight revelation and reject the preached Saviour; asserting in a phraseology which is perhaps too popular, that he who lives a correct and moral life, does all that God requires; and in doing this, that he need not feel alarm in the prospect of death or in the anticipation of the judgment-day.

"Come and let us reason together," I might say, upon this point,—that the fallaciousness of such an opinion may be thoroughly exposed, and the nakedness and helplessness of the sinner who appeals to such a refuge, be laid bare before his view. The time will not permit to enter minutely into this inquiry; and it may be enough to ask, who there is that, upon a close investigation of the principles of his heart and the practice of his life, can exclaim in any tone of confidence, "I have not sinned—I have fulfilled the law of righteousness." The best and the most highly favoured in the old time before us, breathed a far different language. "How can a man be just with God," was the cry of the righteous Job; "if he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand." And this was the application of the holy Psalmist, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.—If thou, Lord, shouldst be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who shall stand?"

But appealing from the declaration of the word of God, and the confessions of those whose names stand brightly out upon its hallowed pages; appealing from them to the conscience and the heart, what is there, my brethren, to relieve the darkness of the picture? Let the most boastful, the most confident, single out from the days and years of his life that which he looks upon as the happiest and the best! Alas, we dare not speak of years; but what is the day or hour in the course of his pilgrimage which he would select as free from soil and stain? Who would be willing to lay bare to the world,—who would consent to be judged at the tribunal of God, for the secret thoughts and deeds even of one day, of one hour of his existence? Who amongst the most boasting and self-justifying, would venture to cast his everlasting destiny upon a chance so desperate as this? Who, upon such a plea, would encounter the presence of his Maker and demand admission into the blood-purchased joys of heaven? Alas, he that contrasts the purity of the law of God and the vastness of its requirements, with the short-comings and mis-doings with which he is every moment chargeable, will feel the force and truth of this warning to the Laodicean church: "Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve that thou mayest see."

And oh, is the Divine judgment of our sinfulness nothing; when, in order to clear the guilty, and reconcile the conflicting attributes of Justice and Mercy, it was necessary that the Son of God himself should die,—that he should discharge the ransom for our sins,—that he, by his own cruel and ignominious death upon the cross, should pay the penalty of God's violated law and cancel the hand-writing of condemnation that was against us? Shall we, in contemplating the vastness and the preciousness of that sacrifice,—in viewing the means which God himself has thus appointed for the redemption of the sinner,—venture to think lightly, or to speak lightly, of the doctrine of Christ crucified, or allow one moment's indulgence to the pernicious sentiment, that to be in Christ or out of Christ is a matter of indifference, or that there

can be any security of salvation except through the name of Him alone?

If then, my brethren, salvation is, as the Scriptures reveal it, "the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord," how much does it concern us to search and see whether that "gift" be ours! Doubtless many think they are sharers in that boon, who think carelessly and act as recklessly. They profess to be believers in the name of Jesus, and on that ground hope for the salvation and expect to inherit the eternal life, which the blood of Jesus purchased.—But how do they manifest their faith; how do they prove their "part and lot" in the Saviour of souls; what evidence do they afford that their profession is sincere? Is it by a course of life as little distinguished as possible from the unbeliever and the unconverted; or is it by living in sin, by being devoted to all the idolatry of the world, by thinking less of religion than of any thing else, by joining in its exercises with constraint and fulfilling its enjoined duties with reluctance? Are full and true evidences afforded, that they are "new creatures in Christ;" that they have "put off the old man" of sin, and are "renewed in the spirit of their mind?" Alas, my brethren, too many think that all is well and all is safe, who, with some vague profession of the faith of Jesus, have never looked with anxiety into their spiritual condition; have never shed the genuine tear of contrite sorrow; have never sought redemption, with becoming earnestness, at the cross of the foot; have never asked, with strong crying and tears, the faith by which they can be saved.

Blessed be God, to such the day of salvation is not yet irretrievably gone. The "eleventh hour" may have arrived, and found us toiling and idle; but the gate of the vineyard is not yet closed, if we will faithfully ask admission. But beware, brethren—procrastination may prove your ruin: another hour, and the application may be in vain; the door may be shut, and the lamentable petition for admission answered by the stern voice of unalterable rejection. "They shall call upon me, but I will not answer: they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices."

To-day then, my brethren, work while it is called to-day. Pray, while the mercy-seat can yet be invoked; go to the cross, while still the Saviour beckons and invites; accept the gift, while yet it is freely proffered. Else, dreadful alternative, the only Saviour may be no Saviour to you: the last summons may come and the book of recorded guilt be laid open, and no Redeemer's blood to blot out the accusing sentence from its fearful pages. "I know you not," may be the answer to the pleading cry; "depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," may be the doom which no contrition then can avert; which no appeal to the long-sighted and rejected Saviour can change.

THE DYING SINNER.*

Every thing changes with this unfortunate being. These changes and the fondness with which he clings to his past pleasures embitter the last moments of his unhappy existence.

There is a change in his influence and authority: from the moment that his death appears inevitable, the unfeeling world begins to forget him; his faithless friends fall off; his flatterers seek out new patrons and other benefactors, and even his domestics, intent upon considering their share of his effects, forget to attend their dying master. He sees no more around him the band of those sympathisers who in the days of his prosperity were so lavish of their deceitful blandishments; his future successor receives all their attention, while he is left to writhe on the bed of death unpitied and unheeded.

There is a change in the public esteem; the world which before had been immoderate in its praises now takes no notice of him; the change that his death will make on the scene may form for a while the topic of discourse, but this brief interval passed, his name is mentioned no more, scarcely will it be remembered that he ever existed. He beholds with anguish this impending oblivion, he sees that he must die, that the void caused by his departure from this world will soon be filled up by his heir, that not even a vestige of him will be left, and that they who have seen him surrounded with splendor will ask themselves, "Where is he now?" "Whither has fled the applause that his power and wealth gained for him?" This is the state to which the faithless world conducts its deluded votaries, and these are the effects of a criminal love of Mammon.

There is a change in every thing that surrounds him; his eyes strive in vain to repose on some pleasing object, they behold nothing but the gloomy countenance of death. But the recollection of the past, the contemplation of the present inflict not the deepest wound on his guilty conscience. He would not be so miserable were these the sole sources of his anguish. It is the thought of the future that throws him into a state of agony and despair. The future! that region of darkness into which he is about to enter, that unknown land from which no mortal ever returns; where he knows not the punishment prepared for him: that boundless infinity of space whither death is about to bear him uncertain of his fate; the tomb, that habitation of the dead, where he must mingle his own dust with that of his ancestors. The future! that unlimited eternity that strikes him with dread; the awful moment when he must render account to a justly incensed God of a life, every minute almost of which was spent in crime. Alas! while he saw his dreadful doom afar he took a frightful pride in being thought to despise it; he piqued himself on his firmness and courage, and derided those who quailed before the arm of an Omnipotent God. But when the summons from his maker reached him, he became a frail and feeble creature; when he saw death at hand prepared to usher him into that eternity he mocked at, then he tremblingly extended his hands to heaven, supplicating that God for mercy from whom he could expect nought but consign punishment.

* Translated for the Church from a Sermon by Massillon.

WESLEYAN MATTERS.*

EXTRACTS—SECTION II.

WESLEYAN METHODISM ACCORDING TO ITS PRESENT FORM, as constituted and settled in the successive Conferences between the years 1791 and 1797.

"1791. Ques. 1. Is it necessary to enter into any engagement in respect to our future plan of economy?"

"Ans. We engage to follow strictly the plan which Mr. Wesley left us at his death."†

"1792. The Lord's Supper shall not be administered by any person among our societies in England and Ireland for the ensu-

ing year, on any consideration whatever, except in London."

"1793. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall not be administered by the preachers in any part of our connexion, except where the whole society is unanimous for it, and will not be contented without it." (E)

"1794. Preaching in church hours shall not be permitted except for special reasons, and where it will not cause a division.

"As the Lord's Supper has not been administered except where the society has been unanimous for it, and would not be contented without it, it is now agreed that the Lord's Supper shall not be administered in future when the union and concord of the society can be preserved without it.

"The preachers will not perform the office of baptism except for the desirable ends of love and concord; though baptism, as well as the burial of the dead, was performed by many of the preachers long before the death of Mr. Wesley, and with his consent." (F)

"1795. 1. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall not be administered in any chapel, except the majority of the trustees of that chapel on the one hand, and the majority of the stewards and leaders belonging to that chapel (as the best qualified to give the sense of the people) on the other hand, allow of it. Nevertheless, in all cases the consent of the conference shall be obtained before the Lord's Supper be administered."

"4. The administration of baptism, the burial of the dead, and service in church hours, shall be determined according to the regulations above mentioned."

"10. Wherever divine service is performed in England on the Lord's-day in church hours, the officiating preacher shall read either the service of the established church, our venerable father's abridgment, or, at least, the lessons appointed by the calendar. But we recommend either the full service or the abridgment."

"The following regulations we have done our utmost to satisfy every party, and to unite the whole. You, by your trustees on the one hand, and your proper representatives, the leaders and stewards, on the other, are to determine concerning the introduction of the sacraments, or the service in the church hours, among yourselves. We have gone abundantly further. We have in some degree deposited our characters and usefulness in your hands, or the hands of your representatives, by making them judges of our morals, doctrines, and gifts. We apprehend that we could have made no further sacrifice, without sapping the foundation of methodism, and particularly destroying the itinerant plan." (G)

"1797. In short, brethren, out of the great love for peace and union, and our great desire to satisfy your minds, we have given up to you far the greater part of the superintendent's authority. And if we consider that the quarterly meetings are the sources from whence all temporal regulations, during the interval of conference, must now originally spring; and also that the committee, formed according to the plan of pacification, are, in every instance, in which the trustees, leaders, and stewards, choose to interfere, respecting the gifts, doctrines, or moral character of preachers, supersede in a great measure the regular district committees,—we may, taking all these things into our view, truly say, that such have been the sacrifices we have made, that our district committees themselves have hardly any authority remaining but a bare negative in general, and the appointment of a representative to assist in drawing up a rough draught of the stations of the preachers. And besides all this, we have given the quarterly meetings opportunity of considering every new law—of suspending the execution of it for a year in their respective circuits, and of sending their sentiments upon it to the conference before it be finally confirmed." (H)

"Notes to Extracts—Section II.

(E) "This regulation was communicated to the societies in a circular letter, of which the following are extracts.—

"A few of our societies have repeatedly importuned us to grant them the liberty of receiving the Lord's Supper from their own preachers. But, desirous of adhering most strictly to the plan which Mr. Wesley laid down, we again and again denied their request. The subject, however, is now come to its crisis. We find that we have no alternative but to comply with their requisition, or entirely to lose them!"

"You may clearly see from hence, dear brethren, that it is the people in the instance referred to, who have forced us into this further deviation from our union to the Church of England. Still we wish to be united to it as a body at large. The few societies which answer the description mentioned in the above resolution need but have a small influence on the whole connexion. We cannot, however, we will not part with any of our dear flock, who love God and man, on account of unessential points."

As to whether it is a point in itself essential or otherwise, it need not here be considered. But perhaps few will question its being essential to a practical observance of church communion, and that it is the turning point upon which the change of a society into a church entirely hinges; and perhaps no Wesleyan preacher will deny its having been, at all events, a most essential point in the view of Mr. Wesley himself; their late founder and "Father in God." (See note D.)

(F) This observation seems to refer to Scotland, which had been always excepted from the general rules as to the Lord's Supper and church attendance, for the obvious reasons before mentioned. (See note B.)

(G) These extracts demonstrate the extreme reluctance with which the conference was drawn into these deviations from Mr. Wesley's plan."

(H) By virtue of these concessions, it is evident to an attentive observer that the arrangement of all the local details of the society's proceedings is now placed in the hands of the people, or of their representatives, the trustees and leaders and stewards, in every circuit. Without referring, therefore, to any of the actual results which may have arisen in particular instances, it may be allowed to one who rejoices, and who "will rejoice" in the preaching of Christ crucified, by whomsoever he may be preached, to remark upon the duty and importance of great watchfulness, on the part both of the preachers and the people, against allowing the introduction or continuance of any plans in their respective circuits, calculated to accelerate the progress of separation from that favored branch of the church of Christ, (elder branch, as they may now feel disposed to call her,) from whence they originally sprang, and upon whose vitality they perhaps still chiefly thrive. Most earnestly would he solicit their prayerful consideration of the serious embarrassments, and even hindrances, with which, in the absence of an ever-watchful caution, they may often unintentionally, by the detail of their plans, obstruct the parochial ministers' work and labor of love.

THE RELIGIOUS RESPONSIBILITIES OF NATIONS.

Thus far on the personality and consequent religious responsibilities of the men who compose a governing body: but there is also a real and not merely supposititious personality of nations which entails likewise its own religious responsibilities. The plainest exposition of national personality is this—that the nation fulfils the great conditions of a person: namely, that it has unity of acting, and unity of suffering; with the difference that while

* i. e. of Circuits.
† Jackson, pp. 34, 35. † Ibid. p. 36.