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**THEOLOGY**

THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTES  
**PART THIRD**

*The Morals of Christianity*  
by Richard Watson.

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without  
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

Wesleyan Heritage Publications

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THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTES:

*Or, a View of the*

EVIDENCES, DOCTRINES, MORALS, AND INSTITUTIONS

OF

CHRISTIANITY.

BY RICHARD WATSON.

A NEW EDITION,  
WITH A COPIOUS INDEX, AND AN ANALYSIS  
BY J. M'CLINTOCK.

COMPLETE IN TWO VOLUMES.  
(One Digital Volume - Ed.)

*TWENTY-SIXTH EDITION.*

# PART THIRD.

## THE MORALS OF CHRISTIANITY.

### CHAPTER 1. — THE MORAL LAW

OF the law of God, as the subject of a Divine and adequately authenticated revelation, some observations were made in the first part of this work. That such a law exists, so communicated to mankind, and contained in the Holy Scriptures; — that we are under obligation to obey it as the declared will of our Creator and Lord; — that this obligation is grounded upon our natural relation to him as creatures made by his power, and dependent upon his bounty, are points which need not, therefore, be again adverted to, nor is it necessary to dwell upon the circumstances and degrees of its manifestation to men, under those former dispensations of the true religion which preceded Christianity. We have exhibited the leading DOCTRINES of the Scriptures, as they are found in that perfected system of revealed religion, which we owe to our Saviour, and to his apostles, who wrote under the inspiration of that Holy Spirit whom he sent forth “to lead them into all truth;” and we shall now find in the discourses of our Lord, and in the apostolical writings, a system of moral principles, virtues, and duties, equalling in fulness and perfection that great body of DOCTRINAL TRUTH which is contained in the New Testament; and deriving from it its vital influence and efficacy.

It is, however, to be noticed, that the morals of the New Testament are not proposed to us in the form of a regular code. Even in the books of Moses, which have the legislative form to a great extent, all the principles and duties which constituted the full character of “godliness,” under that dispensation, are not made the subjects of formal injunction by particular precepts. They are partly infolded in general principles, or often take the form of injunction in an apparently incidental manner, or are matters of obvious inference. A preceding code of traditionary moral law is also all along supposed in the writings of Moses and the prophets, as well as a consuetudinary ritual and a doctrinal theology; both transmitted from the patriarchs. This, too, is eminently the case with Christianity. It supposes

that all who believed in Christ admitted the Divine authority of the Old Testament; and it assumes the perpetual authority of its morals, as well as the truth of its fundamental theology. The constant allusions in the New Testament to the moral rules of the Jews and patriarchs, either expressly as precepts, or as the data of argument, sufficiently guard us against the notion, that what has not in so many words been re-enacted by Christ and his apostles is of no authority among Christians. In a great number of instances, however, the form is directly preceptive, so as to have all the explicitness and force of a regular code of law; and is, as much as a regular code could be, a declaration of the sovereign will of Christ, enforced by the sanctions of eternal life and death.

This, however, is a point on which a few confirmatory observations may be usefully adduced.

No part of the preceding dispensation, designated generally by the appellation of "THE LAW," is repealed in the New Testament, but what is obviously ceremonial, typical, and incapable of co-existing with Christianity. Our Lord, in his discourse with the Samaritan woman, declares, that the hour of the abolition of the temple worship was come; the Apostle Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, teaches us that the Levitical services were but *shadows*, the *substance* and *end* of which is Christ, and the ancient visible Church, as constituted upon the ground of natural descent from Abraham, was abolished by the establishment of a spiritual body of believers to take its place.

No precepts of a purely political nature, that is, which respect the civil subjection of the Jews to their theocracy, are, therefore, of any three to us as *laws*, although they may have, in many cases, the greatest authority as *principles*. No ceremonial precepts can be binding, since they were restrained to a period terminating with the death and resurrection of Christ; nor are even the patriarchal rites of circumcision and the passover obligatory upon Christians, since we have sufficient evidence, that they were of an adumbrative character, and were laid aside by the first inspired teachers of Christianity.

With the MORAL PRECEPTS which abound in the Old Testament the case is very different, as sufficiently appears from the different and even contrary manner in which they are always spoken of by Christ and his apostles. When our Lord, in his sermon on the mount, says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy the law;

but to fulfil;" that is, to confirm or establish it; — the entire scope of his discourse shows, that he is speaking exclusively of the moral precepts of THE LAW, eminently so called, and of the moral injunctions of the prophets founded upon them, and to which he thus gives an equal authority. And in so solemn a manner does he enforce this, that he adds, doubtless as foreseeing that attempts would be made by deceiving or deceived men professing his religion to lessen the authority of the moral law, — "Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven;" that is, as St. Chrysostom interprets, "he shall be the farthest from attaining heaven and happiness, which imports that he shall not attain it at all."

In like manner St. Paul, after having strenuously maintained the doctrine of justification by faith alone, anticipates an objection by asking, "Do we then make void the law through faith?" and subjoins, "God forbid, yea, we *establish* the law:" meaning by "the law," as the context and his argument shows, the moral and not the ceremonial law.

After such declarations it is worse than trifling for any to contend, that, in order to establish the authority of the moral law of the Jews over Christians, it ought to have been formally re-enacted. To this we may, however, farther reply, not only that many important moral principles and rules found in the Old Testament were never *formally* enacted among the Jews, were traditional from an earlier age, and received at different times the more indirect authority of inspired recognition; but, to put the matter in a stronger light, that all the leading moral precepts of the Jewish Scriptures are, in point of fact, proposed in a manner which has the full force of formal re-enactment, as the laws of the Christian Church. This argument, from the want of formal re-enactment, has therefore no weight. The summary of the law and the prophets, which is to love God with all our heart, and to serve him with all our strength, and to love our neighbour as ourselves, is unquestionably enjoined, and even re-enacted by the Christian Lawgiver. When our Lord is explicitly asked by "one who came unto him, and said, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" the answer given shows that the moral law contained in the decalogue is so in force under the Christian dispensation, that obedience to it is necessary to final salvation: — "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." And that nothing ceremonial is intended by this term is manifest from what follows. "He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal,"

&c, ~~<01917>~~ Matthew 19:17-19. Here, also, we have all the force of a formal re-enactment of the decalogue, a part of it being evidently put for the whole. Nor were it difficult to produce passages from the discourses of Christ and the writings of the apostles, which enjoin all the precepts of this law taken separately, by their authority, as indispensable parts of Christian duty, and that, too, under their original sanctions of life and death: so that the two circumstances which form the true character of A LAW in its highest sense, DIVINE AUTHORITY and PENAL SANCTIONS, are found as truly in the New Testament as in the Old. It will not, for instance, be contended, that the New Testament does not enjoin the acknowledgment and worship of one God alone; nor that it does not prohibit idolatry; nor that it does not level its maledictions against false and profane swearing; nor that the Apostle Paul does not use the very words of the fifth commandment preceptively when he says, ~~<4010>~~ Ephesians 6:2, “Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise;” nor that murder, adultery, theft, false witness, and covetousness, are not all prohibited under pain of exclusion from the kingdom of GOD. Thus, then, we have the whole decalogue brought into the Christian code of morals by a distinct injunction of its separate precepts, and by their recognition as of permanent and unchangeable obligation: the fourth commandment, respecting the Sabbath only, being so far excepted, that its injunction is not so expressly marked. This, however, is no exception in fact; for beside that its original place in the two tables sufficiently distinguishes it from all positive, ceremonial, and typical precepts, and gives it a moral character, in respect of its *ends*, which are, first, *mercy* to servants and cattle, and, second, the *worship* of Almighty God, undisturbed by worldly interruptions and cares, it is necessarily included in that “law” which our Lord declares he came not to destroy, or abrogate; in that “law” which St. Paul declares to be “established by faith;” and among those “commandments” which our Lord *declares* must be “kept,” if any one would “enter into life.” To this, also, the practice of the apostles is to be added, who did not cease themselves from keeping one day in seven holy, nor teach others so to do; but gave to “the Lord’s day” that eminence and sanctity in the Christian Church which the seventh day had in the Jewish, by consecrating it to holy uses; an alteration not affecting the precept at all, except in an unessential circumstance, (if, indeed, in that,) and in which we may suppose them to act under Divine suggestion.

Thus, then, we have the obligation of the whole decalogue as fully established in the New Testament as in the Old as if it had been formally

re-enacted; and that no formal re-enactment of it took place, is itself a presumptive proof that it was never regarded by the Lawgiver as temporary, which the formality of republication might have supposed.

It is important to remark, however, that although the moral laws of the Mosaic dispensation pass into the Christian code, they stand there in other and higher circumstances; so that the New Testament is a more perfect dispensation of the knowledge of the moral will of God than the old. In particular,

- 1.** They are more expressly extended to the heart, as by our Lord, in his sermon on the mount; who teaches us that the thought and inward purpose of any offence is a violation of the law prohibiting its external and visible commission.
- 2.** The principles on which they are founded are carried out in the New Testament into a greater variety of duties, which, by embracing more perfectly the social and civil relations of life, are of a more universal character.
- 3.** There is a much more enlarged injunction of positive and particular virtues, especially those which constitute the Christian temper.
- 4.** By all overt acts being inseparably connected with corresponding principles in the heart, in order to constitute acceptable obedience, which principles suppose the regeneration of the soul by the Holy Ghost. This moral renovation is, therefore, held out as necessary to our salvation, and promised as a part of the grace of our redemption by Christ.
- 5.** By being connected with promises of Divine assistance, which is peculiar to a law connected with evangelical provisions.
- 6.** By their having a living illustration in the perfect and practical example of Christ.
- 7.** By the higher sanctions derived from the clearer revelation of a future state, and the more explicit promises of eternal life, and threatenings of eternal punishment.

It follows from this, that we have in the Gospel the most complete and perfect revelation of moral law ever given to men; and a more exact manifestation of the brightness, perfection, and glory of that law, under which angels and our progenitors in paradise were placed, and which it is

at once the delight and interest of the most perfect and happy beings to obey.

It has, however, fared with morals as with doctrines, that they have been often, and by a strange perversity, studied, without any reference to the authority of the Scriptures. As we have had systems of NATURAL RELIGION drawn out of the materials furnished by the Scriptures, and then placed to the sole account of human reason; so we have also various systems of morals drawn, as far as the authors thought fit, from the same source, and put forth under the title of MORAL PHILOSOPHY, implying too often, or, at least, sanctioning the inference, that the unassisted powers of man are equally adequate to the discovery of doctrine and duty; or, at best, that Christianity but perfects what uninspired men are able not only to commence, but to carry onward to a considerable approach to perfection. This observation may be made as to both — that whatever is found correct in doctrine, and pure in morals in ancient writers or systems, may be traced to indirect revelation; and that so far as mere reason has applied itself to discovery in either, it has generally gone astray. The modern systems of natural religion and ethics are superior to the ancient, not because the reason of their framers is superior, but because they have had the advantage of a light from Christianity, which they have not been candid enough generally to acknowledge. For those who have written on such subjects with a view to lower the value of the Holy Scriptures, the remarks in the first part of this work must suffice; but of that class of moral philosophers, who hold the authority of the sacred books, and yet sedulously omit all reference to them, it may be inquired what they propose, by disjoining morals from Christianity, and considering them as a separate science? Authority they cannot gain, for no obligation to duty can be so high as the command of GOD; nor can that authority be applied in so direct a manner, as by a revelation of his will: and as for the perfection of their system, since they discover no duties not already enjoined in the Scriptures, or grounded upon some general principles they contain, they can find no apology, from the additions they make to our moral knowledge, to put Christianity, on all such subjects, wholly out of sight.

All attempts to teach morals, independent of Christianity, even by those who receive it as a Divine revelation, must, notwithstanding the great names which have sanctioned the practice, be considered as of mischievous tendency, although the design may have been laudable, and the labour, in some subordinate respects, not without utility: —

1. Because they silently convey the impression, that human reason, without assistance, is sufficient to discover the full duty of man toward God and toward his fellow creatures.
2. Because they imply a deficiency in the moral code of our religion, which does not exist; the fact being that, although these systems borrow much from Christianity, they do not take in the whole of its moral principles, and, therefore, so far as they are accepted, as substitutes, displace what is perfect for what is imperfect.
3. Because they turn the attention from what is fact, the revealed LAW of God, with its appropriate sanctions, and place the obligation to obedience either on fitness, beauty, general interest, or the natural authority of truth, which are all matters of opinion; or, if they ultimately refer it to the will of God, yet they *infer* that will through various reasonings and speculations, which in themselves are still matters of opinion and as to which men will feel themselves to be in some degree free.
4. The duties they enjoin are either merely outward in the act, and so they disconnect them from internal principles and habits, without which they are not acceptable to God, and but the shadows of real virtue, however beneficial they may be to men; or else they assume that human nature is able to engraft those principles and habits upon itself, and to practise them without abatement and interruption; a notion which is contradicted by those very Scriptures they hold to be of Divine authority.
5. Their separation of the *doctrines* of religion from its *morals*, leads to an entirely different process of promoting morality among men to that which the infinite wisdom and goodness of God has established in the Gospel. They lay down the rule of conduct, and recommend it from its excellence *per se*, or its influence upon individuals and upon society, or perhaps because it is manifested to be the will of the Supreme Being, indicated from the constitution of human nature, and the relations of men. But Christianity rigidly connects its doctrines with its morals. Its doctrine of man's moral weakness is made use of to lead him to distrust his own sufficiency. Its doctrine of the atonement shows at once the infinite evil of sin, and encourages men to seek deliverance from its power. Its doctrine of regeneration by the influence of the Holy Spirit, implies the entire destruction of the love of evil, and the direction of the whole affection of the soul to universal virtue. Its doctrine of prayer opens to man a fellowship with God, invigorating to every virtue. The example of Christ,

the imitation of which is made obligatory upon us, is in itself a moral system in action, and in principle; and the revelation of a future judgment brings the whole weight of the control of future rewards and punishments to bear upon the motives and actions of men, and is the source of that fear of offending God, which is the constant guard of virtue, when human motives would in a multitude of cases avail nothing.

It may indeed be asked, whether the teaching of morals must then in all cases be kept in connection with religion? and whether the philosophy of virtues and of vices, with the lower motives by which they are urged upon men, may not be usefully investigated? We answer, that if the end proposed by this is, not altogether speculative, but something practical; if the case of an immoral world is taken up by moralists with reference to its cure, or even to its emendation in any effectual degree, the whole is then resolved into this simple question, — whether a weaker instrument shall be preferred to that which is powerful and effective? Certain it is that the great end of Christianity, so far as its influence upon society goes, is to moralize mankind; but its infinitely wise Author has established and authorized but ONE process for the correction of the practical evils of the world, and that is, the teaching and enforcement of THE WHOLE TRUTH as it stands in his own revelations; and to this only has he promised his special blessing. A distinct class of ethical teachers, imitating heathen philosophers in the principles and modes of moral tuition, is, in a Christian country, a violent anomaly; and implies an absurd return to the twilight of knowledge after the sun itself has arisen upon the world.

Within proper guards, and in strict connection with the *whole* Christian system, what is called moral philosophy is not, however, to be undervalued; and from many of the writers above alluded to much useful instruction may be collected, which, though of but little efficacy in itself, may be invigorated by uniting it with the vital and energetic doctrines of religion, and may thus become directive to the conduct of the serious Christian. Understanding then by moral philosophy, not that pride of science which borrows the discoveries of the Scriptures, and then exhibits itself as their rival, or affects to supply their deficiencies; but as a modest scrutiny into the reasons on which the moral precepts of revelation may be grounded, and a wise and honest application of its moral principles to particular cases, it is a branch of science which may be usefully cultivated in connection with Christianity.

With respect to the *reasons* on which moral precepts rest, we may make a remark similar to that offered in a former part of this work, on the doctrines of revelation. Some of those doctrines rest wholly on the authority of the Revealer; others are accompanied with a manifest rational evidence; and a third class may partially disclose their *rationale* to the patient and pious inquirer. Yet the authority of each class as a subject of faith is the same; it rests upon the character of God and his relations to us; and that doctrine is equally binding which is enjoined on our faith without other rational evidence than that which proves it to be a part of a revelation from heaven, as that which exercises, and delights our rational faculties, by a disclosure of the internal evidence of its truth. When God has permitted us to “turn aside” to see some “great sight” of manifested wisdom, we are to obey the invitation; but still we are always to remember that the authority of a revealed truth stands on infinitely higher ground than our perception of its reasonableness.

So also as to the moral precepts of the Bible, the rational evidence is afforded in different degrees, and it is both allowable and laudable in us to investigate and collect it; but still with this caution, that the authority of such injunctions is not to be regulated by our perception of their reasons, although the reasons, when apparent, may be piously applied to commend the authority. The discoveries we may make of fitness or any other quality in a precept cannot be the highest reason of our obedience; but it may be a reason for obeying with accelerated alacrity. The obligation of the Sabbath would be the same were no obvious reasons of mercy and piety connected with it; but the influence of the precept upon our interests and that of the community commends the precept to our affections as well as to our sense of duty.

With respect to the *application* of general precepts, that practical wisdom which is the result of large and comprehensive observation has an important office. The precepts of a universal revelation must necessarily be, for the most part, general, because if rules had been given for each case in detail, then truly, as St. John observes, “the world could not have contained the books written.” The application of these general principles to that variety of cases which arises in human affairs, is the work of the Christian preacher, and the Christian moralist. Where there is honesty of mind, ordinarily there can be no difficulty in this; and in cases which involve some difficulty, when the interpretation of the law is made, as it always ought, to favour the rule; and when, in doubtful cases, the safer

course is adopted, such is the explicit character of the general principles of the Holy Scriptures, that no one can go astray. The moral philosophy which treats of *exceptions* to general rules, is always to be watched with jealousy; and ought to be shunned when it presumes to form rules out of supposed exceptions. This is affecting to be wiser than the Lawgiver; and such philosophy assumes an authority in the control of human conduct to which it has no title; and steps in between individuals and their consciences in cases where almighty God himself has not chosen to relieve them; and where they are specially left, as all sometimes are, to “Him with whom they have to do,” without the intervention of any third party. Systems of casuistry and cases of conscience have happily gone into general disuse. That they have done more harm upon the whole than good, and defiled more consciences than they have relieved, cannot be doubted by any one who has largely examined them. They have passed away just in proportion as the Scriptures themselves have been circulated through society, and as that preaching has been most prevalent which enforces the doctrine of supreme love to God and our neighbour, as the sum of the law and of the Gospel. They most abounded in the Romish Church, as best befitting its system of darkness and delusion;<sup>f1</sup> and though works of this kind are found among Protestants in a better form, they have gradually and happily fallen into neglect.

A few words may here be offered on what has been termed the ground of moral obligation.

Some writers have placed this in “the eternal and necessary fitness of things;” which leaves the matter open to the varying conclusions which different individuals may draw, as to this eternal and necessary fitness; and still farther, leaves that very natural question quite unanswered, — Why is any one *obliged* to act according to the fitness of things?

Others have referred to a supposed original perception of what is right and wrong; a kind of fixed and permanent and unalterable moral sense, by which the qualities of actions are at once determined; and from the supposed universal existence of this perception, they have argued the obligation to act accordingly. This scheme, which seems to confound that in human nature to which an appeal may be made when the understanding is enlightened by real truth, with a discriminating and directive principle acting independently of instruction, is also unsatisfactory. For the moral sense is, in fact, found under the control of ignorance and error; nor does it

possess a sensitiveness in all cases in proportion to the truth received into the understanding. The worst crimes have often been committed with a conviction of their being right, as in the case of religious persecutions; and the absence of the habit of attending to the quality of our actions often renders the abstract truth laid up in the understanding useless, as to its influence upon the conscience. But if all that is said of this moral sense were true, still it would not establish the principle of obligation. That supposes superior *authority*; and should we allow the moral sense to act uniformly, still how is the *obligation* to perform what it approves to be demonstrated, unless some higher consideration be added to the case?

More modern moralists have taken the tendency of any course of action to produce the greatest good upon the whole as the source of moral obligation; and with this they often connect the will of God, of which they consider this general tendency to be the manifestation. It were better, surely, to refer at once to the will of God, as *revealed* by himself without incumbering the subject with the circuitous, and, at best doubtful process of first considering what is good upon the whole, and then inferring that this must needs be the will of a wise and benevolent Being. The objection, too, holds in this case, that this theory leaves it still a mere matter of opinion, in which an interested party is to be the judge, whether an action be upon the whole good; and gives a rule which would be with difficulty applied to some cases, and is scarcely a all applicable to many others which may be supposed.

The only satisfactory, answer which the question as to the source of moral obligation, can receive, is, that it is found in THE WILL OF GOD. For since the question respects the duty of a created being with reference to his Creator, nothing can be more conclusive than that the Creator has an absolute right to the obedience of his creatures; and that the creature is in duty obliged to obey Him from whom it not only has received being, but by whom that being is constantly sustained. It has indeed been said, that even if it be admitted, that I am obliged to obey the will of God, the question is still open, “*Why* am I obliged to obey his will?” and that this brings us round to the former answer; because he can only will what is upon the whole best for his creatures. But this is confounding that which may be, and doubtless is, a rule to God in the commands which he issues, with that which really *obliges* the creature. Now, that which in truth obliges the creature is not the nature of the commands issued by God; but the relation in which the creature itself stands to God. If a creature can have no

existence, nor any power or faculty independently of God, it can have no right to employ its faculties independently of him; and if it have no right to employ its faculties in an independent manner, the right to rule its conduct must rest with the Creator alone; and from this results the obligation of the creature to obey.

Such is the principle assumed in the Scriptures, where the creative and rectoral relations of God are inseparably united, and the obligation of obedience is made to follow upon the fact of our existence; and if the will of God, as the source of obligation, be so obvious a rule, the only remaining question is, whether we shall receive that will as it is expressly revealed by himself, or, wilfully forgetting that such a revelation has been made, we shall proceed *to infer* it by various processes of induction? The answer to this might have been safely left to the common sense of mankind, had not the vanity of philosophizing so often interposed to perplex so plain a point.

We must not here confound the will of God as the source of moral *obligation*, with the notion that right and wrong have no existence but as they are so constituted by the will of God. They must have their foundation in the reality of things. *What* moral rectitude is, and *why* it *obliges*, are quite distinct questions. It is to the latter only that the preceding observations apply. As to the former, the following remarks, from a recent intelligent publication, are very satisfactory: —

“Virtue, as it regards man, is the conformity or harmony of his affections and actions with the various relations in which he has been placed, — of which conformity the perfect intellect of God, guided in its exercise by his infinitely holy nature, is the only infallible judge.

“*We sustain various relations to God himself.* He is our Creator, — our Preserver, — our Benefactor, — our Governor. ‘He is the Framers of our bodies, and the Father of our spirits.’ He sustains us ‘by the word of his power;’ for, as we are necessarily dependent beings, our continued existence is a kind of prolonged creation. We owe all that we possess to him; and our future blessings must flow from his kindness. Now there are obviously certain affections and actions which harmonize or correspond with these relations. To love and obey God manifestly befit our relation to him, as that great Being from whom our existence as well as all our comforts flow.

He who showers his blessings upon us ought to possess our affections; he who formed us has a right to our obedience. It is not stated merely, let it be observed, that it is impossible to contemplate our relation to God without perceiving that we are morally bound to love and obey him; (though that is a truth of great importance;) for I do not consent to the propriety of the representation, that virtue depends either upon our perceptions or our feelings. There is a real harmony between the relations in which we stand to God, and the feelings and conduct to which reference has been made; and therefore the human mind has been formed capable of perceiving and feeling it.

*“We sustain various relations to each other. God has formed ‘of one blood all the families of the earth.’ Mutual love and brotherly kindness, the fruit of love, are required by this relation, — they harmonize or correspond with it. We are children; we are loved, and guarded, and supported, and tended with unwearied assiduity by our parents. Filial affection and filial obedience are demanded by this relation; no other state of mind, no other conduct, will harmonize with it. We are, perhaps, on the other hand, parents. Instrumentally at least we have imparted existence to our children; they depend on us for protection, support, &c; and to render that support, is required by the relation we bear to them. It is, however, needless to specify the various relations in which we stand to each other. With reference to all I again say, that they necessarily involve obligations to certain states of mind, and certain modes of conduct, as harmonizing with the relations; and that rectitude is the conformity of the character and conduct of an individual with the relations in which he stands to the beings by whom he is surrounded.*

*“It is by no means certain to me, that this harmony between the actions and the relations of a moral agent, is not what we are to understand by that ‘conformity to the fitness of things,’ in which some writers have made the essence of virtue to consist. Against this doctrine, it has been objected, that it is indefinite, if not absurd; because, as it is alleged, it represents an action as right and fit, without stating what it is fit for, — an absurdity as great, says the objector, as it would be to say that ‘the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle are equal without adding to one another, or to any*

other angle.' Dr. Brown also, in arguing against this doctrine says, 'There must be a principle of moral regard, independent of reason, or reason may in vain see a thousand fitnesses, and a thousand truths; and would be warmed with the same lively emotions of indignation, against an inaccurate timepiece or an error in arithmetic calculation, as against the wretch who robbed, by every fraud that could elude the law, those who had already little of which they could be deprived, that he might riot a little more luxuriously, while the helpless, whom he had plundered, were starving around him.' Now, why may we not say, in answer to the former objector, that the conformity of an action with the relations of the agent, is the fitness for which Clarke contends? And why may not we reply to Dr. Brown, that, — allowing, as we do, the necessity of that susceptibility of moral emotion for which he contends, — the emotion of approbation which arises on the contemplation of a virtuous action, is not the virtue of the action, nor the perception of its accordance with the relations of the agent, BUT THE ACCORDANCE ITSELF? 'That a being,' says Dewar, 'endowed with certain powers, is bound to love and obey the Creator and Preserver of all, is truth, whether I perceive it or no; and we cannot perceive it possible that it can ever be reversed.'

"All the relations to which reference has been made, are, in one sense, arbitrary. Our existence as creatures is to be ascribed to the mere good pleasure of God. The relations which bind society together, the conjugal, parental, filial relation, depend entirely upon the sovereign will of Him who gave us our being; but the conduct to which these relations oblige us, is by no means arbitrary. Having determined to constitute the relations, he could not but enjoin upon us the conduct which his word prescribes. He was under no obligation to create us at all; but, having given us existence, he could not fail to command us to love and obey him. There is a harmony between these relations, and these duties, — a harmony which is not only perceived by us, — for to state that merely, would seem to make our perceptions the rule, if not the foundation of duty, — but which is perceived by the perfect intellect of God himself. And since the relations we sustain were constituted by God, since he is the Judge of the affections and conduct which harmonize with these relations, — *that which appears right to him,*

*being right on that account, — rectitude may be regarded as conformity to the moral nature of God, the ultimate standard of virtue.” (Payne’s Elements of Mental and Moral Science.)*

To the revealed will of God we may now turn for information on the interesting subject of morals, and we shall find that the ethics of Christianity have a glory and perfection which philosophy has never heightened, and which its only true office is to display, and to keep before the attention of mankind.

## CHAPTER 2. — THE DUTIES WE OWE TO GOD.

THE duties we owe to God are in Scripture summed up in the word “godliness,” the foundation of which, and of duties of every other kind, is that entire

SUBMISSION TO GOD, which springs from a due sense of that relation in which we stand to him, as creatures.

We have just seen that the right of an absolute sovereignty over us must, in the reason of the case, exist exclusively in Him that made us; and it is the perception and recognition of this, as a practical habit of the mind, which renders outward acts of obedience sincere and religious. The will of God is the only rule to man, in every thing on which that will has declared itself; and as it lays its injunctions upon the heart as well as the life, the rule is equally in force when it directs our *opinions*, our *motives*, and *affections*, as when it enjoins or prohibits external acts. We are his because he made us; and to this is added the confirmation of this right by our redemption: “Ye are not your own, but bought with a price; wherefore glorify God in your *bodies* and *spirits* which are *his*.” These ideas of absolute right to command on the part of God, and of absolute obligation to universal obedience on the part of man, are united in the profession of St. Paul, “Whose I *am* and whom I *serve*;” and form the grand fundamental principle of “godliness” both in the Old and New Testament; the will of God being laid down in each, both as the highest *reason* and the most powerful motive to *obedience*. The application of this principle so established by the Scriptures will show how greatly superior is the ground on which Christianity places moral virtue to that of any other system. For,

1. The will of God, which is the rule of duty, is authenticated by the whole of that stupendous evidence which proves the Scriptures to be of Divine original.
2. That will at once defines and enforces every branch of inward and outward purity, rectitude, and benevolence.
3. It annuls by its authority every other rule of conduct contrary to itself, whether it arise from custom, or from the example, persuasion, or opinions of others.

4. It is a rule which admits not of being lowered to the weak and fallen state of human nature; but, connecting itself with a gracious dispensation of supernatural help, it directs the morally imbecile to that remedy, and holds every one guilty of the violation of all that he is by nature and habit unable to perform, if that remedy be neglected.
5. It accommodates not itself to the interests or even safety of men, but requires that interest, honour, liberty, and life, should be surrendered, rather than it should sustain any violation.
6. It admits no exceptions in obedience; but requires it *whole* and *entire*; so that outward virtue cannot be taken in the place of that which has its seat in the heart; and it allows no acts to be really virtuous, but those which spring from a willing and submissive mind, and are done upon the vital principle of a distinct recognition of our rightful subjection to God.

LOVE TO GOD. To serve and obey God on the conviction that it is *right* to serve and obey him, is in Christianity joined with that love to God which gives life and animation to service, and renders it the means of exalting our pleasures, at the same time that it accords with our convictions. The supreme love of God is the chief, therefore, of what have been called our *theopathic* affections. It is the sum and the end of law; and though lost by us in Adam, is restored to us by Christ. When it regards God absolutely, and in himself, as a being of infinite and harmonious perfections and moral beauties, it is that movement of the soul toward him which is produced by admiration, approval, and delight. When it regards him relatively, it fixes upon the ceaseless emanations of his goodness to us in the continuance of the existence which he at first bestowed; the circumstances which render that existence felicitous; and, above all, upon that “great love wherewith he loved us,” manifested in the gift of his Son for our redemption, and in saving us by his grace; or, in the forcible language of St. Paul, upon “the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness to us through Christ Jesus.” Under all these views an unbounded gratitude overflows the heart which is influenced by this spiritual affection. But the love of God is more than a sentiment of gratitude. It rejoices in his perfections and glories, and devoutly contemplates them as the highest and most interesting subjects of thought; it keeps the idea of this supremely beloved object constantly present to the mind; it turns to it with adoring ardour from the business and distractions of life; it connects it with every scene of majesty and beauty in nature, and with every event of general and particular providence; it brings

the soul into fellowship with God, real and sensible, because vital; it moulds the other affections into conformity with what God himself wills or prohibits, loves or hates; it produces an unbounded desire to please him, and to be accepted of him in all things; it is jealous of his honour, unwearied in his service, quick to prompt to every sacrifice in the cause of his truth and his Church; and it renders all such sacrifices, even when carried to the extent of suffering and death, unreluctant and cheerful. It chooses God as the chief good of the soul, the enjoyment of which assures its perfect and eternal interest and happiness. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee," is the language of every heart, when its love of God is true in principle and supreme in degree.

If, then, the will of God is the perfect rule of morals; and if supreme and perfect love to God must produce a prompt, an unwearied, a delightful subjection to his will, or rather, an entire and most free choice of it as the rule of all our principles, affections, and actions; the importance of this affection in securing that obedience to the law of God in which true morality consists, is manifest; and we clearly perceive the reason why an inspired writer has affirmed, that "love is the fulfilling of the law." The necessity of keeping this subject before us under those views in which it is placed in the Christian system, and of not surrendering it to mere philosophy, is, however, an important consideration. With the philosopher the love of God may be the mere approval of the intellect; or a sentiment which results from the contemplation of infinite perfection, manifesting itself in acts of power and goodness. In the Scriptures it is much more than either, and is produced and maintained by a different process. We are there taught that "the carnal mind is enmity to God;" and is not of course capable of loving God. Yet this carnal mind may consist with deep attainments in philosophy, and with strongly impassioned poetic sentiment. The mere approval of the understanding; and the susceptibility of being impressed with feelings of admiration, awe, and even pleasure, when the character of God is manifested in his works, as both may be found in the carnal mind which is enmity to God, are not therefore the love of God. They are principles which enter into that love, since it cannot exist without them; but they may exist without this affection itself, and be found in a vicious and unchanged nature. The love of God is a fruit of the Holy Spirit; that is, it is implanted by him only in the souls which he has regenerated; and, as that which excites its exercise is chiefly, and in the first place, a

sense of the benefits bestowed by the grace of God in our redemption, and a well-grounded persuasion of our personal interest in those benefits, it necessarily presupposes our personal reconciliation to God through faith in the atonement of Christ, and that attestation of it to the heart by the Spirit of adoption of which we have before spoken. We here see, then, another proof of the necessary connection of Christian morals with Christian doctrine, and how imperfect and deceptive every system must be which separates them. Love is essential to true obedience; for when the apostle declares love to be “the fulfilling of the law,” he declares, in effect, that the law cannot be fulfilled without love; and that every action which has not this for its principle, however virtuous in its show, fails of accomplishing the precepts which are obligatory upon us. But this love to God cannot be felt so long as we are sensible of his wrath, and are in dread of his judgments. These feelings are incompatible with each other, and we must be assured of his reconciliation to us, before we are capable of loving him. Thus the very existence of the love of God implies the doctrines of the atonement, repentance, faith, and the gift of the Spirit of adoption to believers; and unless it be taught in this connection, and through this process of experience, it will be exhibited only as a bright and beautiful object to which man has no access; or a fictitious and imitative sentimentalism will be substituted for it, to the delusion of the souls of men.

A third leading duty is,

**TRUST IN GOD.** All creatures are dependent upon God for being and for well being. Inanimate and irrational beings hold their existence, and the benefits which may accompany it, independently of any conditions to be performed on their part. Rational creatures are placed under another rule, and their felicity rests only upon their obedience. Whether, as to those intelligences who have never sinned, specific exercises of trust are required as a duty comprehended in their general obedience, we know not. But as to men, the whole Scripture shows, that faith or trust is a duty of the first class, and that they “stand only by faith.” Whether the reason of this may be the importance to themselves of being continually impressed with their dependence upon God, so that they may fly to him at all times, and escape the disappointments of self-confidence, and creature reliances; or that as all good actually comes from God, he ought to be recognized as its source, so that all creatures may glorify him; or whether other and more secret reasons may also be included; the fact that this duty is solemnly enjoined as

an essential part of true religion, cannot be doubted. Nor can the connection of this habit of devoutly confiding in God with our peace of mind be overlooked. We have so many proofs of the weakness both of our intellectual and physical powers, and see ourselves so liable to the influence of combinations of circumstances which we cannot control, and of accidents which we cannot resist, that, unless we had assurances of being guided, upheld, and defended by a Supreme Power, we might become, and that not unreasonably, a prey to constant apprehensions, and the sport of the most saddening anticipations of the imagination. Our sole remedy from these would, in fact, only be found in insensibility and thoughtlessness; for to a reflecting and awakened mind, nothing can shut out uneasy fears but faith in God. In all ages therefore this has been the resource of devout men: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will we not fear,” &c, ~~<19401>~~ Psalm 46:1. “Our fathers trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver them; they cried unto thee, and were delivered; they trusted in thee and were not confounded.” And from our Lord’s sermon on the mount it is clear, that one end of his teaching was to deliver men from the piercing anxieties which the perplexities of this life are apt to produce, by encouraging them to confide in the care and bounty of their “heavenly Father.”

Our trust in God is enjoined in as many respects as he has been pleased to give us assurances of help, and promises of favour, in his own word. Beyond that, trust would be presumption, as not having authority; and to the full extent in which his gracious purposes toward us are manifested, it becomes a duty. And here too the same connection of this duty with the leading doctrines of our redemption, which we have remarked under the last particular, also displays itself. If morals be taught independent of religion, either affiance in God must be excluded from the list of duties toward God, or otherwise it will be inculcated without effect. A man who is conscious of unremitted sins, and who must therefore regard the administration of the Ruler of the world, as to him punitive and vengeful, can find no ground on which to rest his trust. All that he can do is to hope that his relations to this Being may in future become more favourable; but, for the present, his fears must prevent the exercise of his faith. What course then lies before him, but in the first instance to seek the restoration of the favour of his offended God, in that method which he has prescribed, namely by repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ? Till a Scriptural assurance is obtained of that change in his relations to God

which is effected by the free and gracious act of forgiveness, all the reasons of general trust in the care, benediction, and guidance of God, are vain as to him, because they are not applicable to his case. But when friendship is restored between the parties, faith, however unlimited, has the highest reason. It is then “a sure confidence in the mercy of God through Christ,” as that mercy manifests itself in all the promises which God has been pleased to make to his children, and in all those condescending relations with which he has been pleased to invest himself, that under such manifestations he might win and secure our reliance. It is then the confidence not merely of creatures in a beneficent Creator, or of subjects in a gracious Sovereign, but of children in a Parent. It respects the supply of every want, temporal and eternal; the wise and gracious ordering of our concerns; the warding off, or the mitigation of calamities and afflictions; our preservation from all that can *upon the whole* be injurious to us; our guidance through life; our hope in death; and our future felicity in another world. This trust is a *duty* because it is a subject of command; and also because, after such demonstrations of kindness, distrust would imply a dishonourable denial of the love and faithfulness of God, and often also a criminal dependence upon the creature. It is a habit essential to piety. On that condition we “obtain promises,” by making them the subjects of prayer; by its influence anxieties destructive to that calm contemplative habit of which true religion is both the offspring and the nurse, are expelled from the heart; a spiritual character is thus given to man, who walks as seeing “Him who is invisible;” and a noble and cheerful courage is infused into the soul, which elevates it above all cowardly shrinking from difficulty, suffering, pain, and death, and affords a practical exemplification of the exhortation of one who had tried the value of this grace in a great variety of exigencies: “Wait upon the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, upon the Lord.”

THE FEAR OF GOD is associated with love, and trust, in every part of Holy Scripture: and is enjoined upon us as another of our leading duties.

This, however, is not a servile passion; for then it could not consist with love to God, and with delight and affiance in him. It is true that “the fear which hath torment;” that which is accompanied with painful apprehensions of his displeasure arising from a just conviction of our personal liability to it, is enjoined upon the careless and the impious. To produce this, the word of God fulminates in threatenings, and his judgments march through the earth exhibiting terrible examples of

vengeance against one nation or individual for the admonition of others. But, that fear of God which arises from apprehension of personal punishment, is not designed to be the habit of the mind; nor is it included in the frequent phrase, “the fear of the Lord,” when that is used to express the whole of practical religion, or its leading principles. In that case its nature is, in part, expressed by the term “reverence,” which is a due and humbling sense of the Divine majesty, produced and maintained in a mind regenerated by the Holy Spirit, by devout meditations upon the perfections of his infinite nature, his eternity and omniscience, his constant presence with us in every place, the depths of his counsels, the might of his power, the holiness, truth, and justice of his moral character; and on the manifestations of these glories in the works of that mighty visible nature with which we are surrounded, in the government of angels, devils, and men, and in the revelations of his inspired word.

With this deeply reverential awe of God, is, however, constantly joined in Scripture, a persuasion of our *conditional* liability to his displeasure. For since all who have obtained his mercy and favour by Christ, receive those blessings through an atonement, which itself demonstrates that we are under a righteous administration, and that neither is the law of God repealed, nor does his justice sleep; and farther, since the saving benefits of that atonement are conditional, and we ourselves have the power to turn aside the benefit of its interposition from us, or to forfeit it when once received, in whole or in part, it is clear that while there is a full provision for our deliverance from the “spirit of bondage unto fear;” there is sufficient reason why we ought to be so impressed with our spiritual dangers, as to produce in us that cautionary fear of the holiness, justice, and power of God, which shall deter us from offending, and lead us often to view, with a restraining and salutary dread, those consequences of unfaithfulness and disobedience to which, at least while we remain on earth, we are liable. Powerful, therefore, as are the reasons by which the Scriptural revelation of the mercy and benevolence of God enforces a firm affiance in him, it exhorts us not to be “high-minded,” but to “fear;” to “fear” lest we “come short” of the “promise” of entering “into his rest;” to be in “the fear of the Lord all the day long;” and to pass the whole time of our “sojourning” here “in fear.”

This Scriptural view of the fear of God, as combining both reverence of the Divine majesty, and a suitable apprehension of our *conditional* liability to his displeasure, is of large practical influence.

It restrains our faith from degenerating into presumption; our love into familiarity; our joy into carelessness. It nurtures humility, watchfulness, and the spirit of prayer. It induces a reverent habit of thinking and speaking of God, and gives solemnity to the exercises of devotion. It presents sin to us under its true aspect, as dangerous, as well as corrupting to the soul; as darkening our prospects in a future life, as well as injurious to our peace in the present: and it gives strength and efficacy to that most important practical moral principle, the constant reference of our inward habits of thought and feeling, and our outward actions, to the approbation of God.

Upon these internal principles that moral habit and state, which is often expressed by the term HOLINESS, rests. Separate from these principles, it can only consist in visible acts, imperfect in themselves, because not vital, and however commended by men, abominable to God who trieth the heart. But when such acts proceed from these sources, they are proportioned to the strength and purity of the principle which originates them, except as in some cases they may be influenced and deteriorated by an uninformed or weak judgment. An entire submission to God; a “perfect love” to him; firm affiance in his covenant engagements; and that fear which abases the spirit before God, and departs even from “the appearance of evil,” when joined with a right understanding of the word of God, render “the man of God perfect,” and “thoroughly furnish him to every good work.”

Beside these inward principles and affections, there are, however, several other habits and acts, a public performance of which, as well as their more secret exercises, have been termed by divines our EXTERNAL DUTIES toward God; the term “external” being, however, so used as not to exclude those exercises of the heart from which they must all spring if acceptable to God. The first is,

PRAYER, which is a solemn addressing of our minds to God, as the Fountain of being and happiness, the Ruler of the world, and the Father of the family of man. It includes in it the acknowledgment of the Divine perfections and sovereignty; thankfulness for the mercies we have received; penitential confession of our sins; and an earnest entreaty of blessings, both for ourselves and others. When vocal it is an external act, but supposes the correspondence of the will and affection; yet it may be purely mental, all the acts of which it is composed being often conceived in the mind, when not clothed in words.

That the practice of prayer is enjoined upon us in Scripture, is sufficiently proved by a few quotations: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened,” <sup><007></sup>Matthew 7:7. “Watch ye therefore and pray always,” <sup><213></sup>Luke 21:36. “Be careful for nothing; but, in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God,” <sup><046></sup>Philippians 4:6. “Pray without ceasing,” <sup><17></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:17. That prayer necessarily includes earnestness, and that perseverance which is inspired by strong desire, is evident from the Jews being so severely reprov’d for “drawing near to God with their lips, while their *hearts* were far from him:” — from the general rule of our Lord laid down in his conversation with the woman of Sychar: “God is a Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in *spirit* and in *truth*,” <sup><424></sup>John 4:24, — and, from <sup><1212></sup>Romans 12:12, “Continuing instant in prayer.” Here the term, *ωροσκατερουντες*, is very energetic, and denotes, as Chrysostom observes, “fervent, persevering, and earnest prayer.” Our Lord also delivered a parable to teach us that we ought “to pray and not faint;” and we have examples of the success of reiterating our petitions, when for some time they appear disregarded. One of these is afforded in the case of the woman of Canaan, a first and a second time repuls’d by our Lord; and another occurs in 2 Corinthians 12. 8, 9, “For this I besought the Lord *thrice* that it might depart from me; and he said unto me. My grace is sufficient for thee,” &c. This passage also affords an instance of praying distinctly for particular blessings, a practice which accords also with the direction in <sup><046></sup>Philippians 4:6, to make our “requests known unto God,” which includes not only our desires for good generally; but also those particular requests which are suggested by special circumstances. Directions to pray for national and public blessings occur in <sup><926></sup>Psalms 122:6, “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee:” in <sup><8101></sup>Zechariah 10:1. “Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds,” (or lightnings,) “and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field:” in <sup><4101></sup>1 Timothy 2:1-3, “I exhort therefore that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour,” &c. More particular intercession for others is also authorized and enjoined: “Peter was therefore kept in prison; but prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him,” <sup><4126></sup>Acts 12:5. “Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of

the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea,” &c,  
<61530>Romans 15:30. “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed,” <90516>James 5:16.

It follows, therefore, from these Scriptural passages, that prayer is a duty; that it is made a condition of our receiving good at the hand of God; that every case of personal pressure, or need, may be made the subject of prayer; that we are to intercede for all immediately connected with us, for the Church, for our country, and for all mankind; that both temporal and spiritual blessings may be the subject of our supplications; and that these great and solemn exercises are to be accompanied with grateful thanksgivings to God as the author of all blessings already bestowed, and the benevolent object of our hope as to future interpositions and supplies. Prayer, in its particular Christian view, is briefly and well defined in the Westminster Catechism, — “Prayer is the offering of our desires to God for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and a thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.”

The REASON on which this great and efficacious duty rests has been a subject of some debate. On this point, however, we have nothing explicitly stated in the Scriptures. From them we learn only, that God has appointed it; that he enjoins it to be offered in faith, that is, faith in Christ, whose atonement is the meritorious and procuring cause of all the blessings to which our desires can be directed; and that prayer so offered is an indispensable condition of our obtaining the blessings for which we ask. As a matter of inference, however, we may discover some glimpses of the reason in the Divine mind on which its appointment rests. That reason has sometimes been said to be the moral preparation and state of fitness produced in the soul for the reception of the Divine mercies which the act, and, more especially, the habit of prayer, must induce. Against this stands the strong and, in a Scriptural view, the fatal objection, that an efficiency is thus ascribed to the mere act of a creature to produce those great, and in many respects, radical changes in the character of man, which we are taught, by inspired authority, to refer to the direct influences of the Holy Spirit. What is it that fits man for forgiveness, but simply repentance? Yet that is expressly said to be the “*gift*” of Christ, and supposes strong operations of the illuminating and convincing Spirit of truth, the Lord and Giver of spiritual life; and if the mere acts and habit of prayer had efficiency enough to produce a Scriptural repentance, then every formalist, attending

with ordinary seriousness to his devotions, must, in consequence, become a penitent. Again, if we pray for spiritual blessings aright, that is, with an earnestness of desire which arises from a due apprehension of their importance, and a preference of them to all earthly good, who does not see that this implies such a deliverance from the earthly and carnal disposition which characterizes our degenerate nature, that an agency far above our own, however we may employ it, must be supposed; or else, if our own prayers could be efficient up to this point, we might, by the continual application of this instrument, complete our regeneration, independent of that grace of God, which, after all, this theory brings in. It may indeed be said that the grace of God operates by our prayers to produce in us a state of moral fitness to receive the blessings we ask. But this gives up the point contended for, the moral efficiency of prayer; and refers the efficiency to another agent working by our prayers as an instrument. Still, however, it may be affirmed, that the Scriptures nowhere represent prayer as an instrument for improving our moral state, though in the hands of Divine grace, in any other way than as the means of bringing into the soul new supplies of spiritual life and strength. It is therefore more properly to be considered as a condition of our obtaining that grace by which such effects are wrought, than as the instrument by which it effects them. In fact, all genuine acts of prayer depend upon a grace previously bestowed, and from which alone the disposition and the power to pray proceed. So it was said of Saul of Tarsus, "Behold he prayeth!" He prayed in fact then for the first time; but that was in consequence of the illumination of his mind as to his spiritual danger effected by the miracle on the way to Damascus, and the grace of God which accompanied the miracle. Nor does the miraculous character of the means by which conviction was produced in his mind, affect the relevancy of this to ordinary cases. By whatever means God may be pleased to fasten the conviction of our spiritual danger upon our minds, and to awaken us out of the long sleep of sin, that conviction must precede real prayer, and comes from the influence of his grace, rendering the means of conviction effectual. Thus it is not the prayer which produces the conviction, but the conviction which gives birth to the prayer; and if we pursue the matter into its subsequent stages, we shall come to the same result. We pray for what we feel we want; that is, for something not in our possession; we obtain this either by impartation from God, to whom we look up as the only Being able to bestow the good for which we ask him; or else we obtain it, according to this theory, by some moral efficiency being given to the exercise of praying to work it in us. Now, the latter

hypothesis is in many cases manifestly absurd. We ask for pardon of sin, for instance; but that is an act of God done *for* us, quite distinct from any moral change which prayer may be said to produce in us, whatever efficiency we may ascribe to it; for no such change in us can be pardon, since that must proceed from the party offended. We ask for increase of spiritual strength; and prayer is the expression of that want. But if it supply this want by its own moral efficiency, it must supply it in proportion to its intensity and earnestness; which intensity and earnestness can only be called forth by the degree in which the want is felt, so that the case supposed is contradictory and absurd, as it makes the sense of want to be in proportion to the supply which ought to abate or remove it. And if it be urged, that prayer at least produces in us a fitness for the supply of spiritual strength, because it is excited by a sense of our wants, the answer is, that the fitness contended for consists in that sense of want itself, which must be produced in us by the *previous* agency of grace, or we should never pray for supplies. There is, in fact, nothing in prayer simply which appears to have any adaptation, as an *instrument*, to effect a moral change in man, although it should be supposed to be made use of by the influence of the Holy Spirit. The word of God is properly an instrument, because it contains the doctrine which that Spirit explains and applies, and the motives to faith and obedience which he enforces upon the conscience and affections; and though prayer brings these truths and motives before us, prayer cannot properly be said to be an instrument of our regeneration, because that which is thus brought by prayer to bear upon our case is the word of God itself introduced into our prayers, which derive their sole influence in that respect from that circumstance. Prayer simply is the application of an insufficient to a sufficient Being for the good which the former cannot otherwise obtain, and which the latter only can supply; and as that supply is dependent upon prayer, and in the nature of the thing consequent, prayer can in no good sense be said to be the instrument of supplying our wants, or fitting us for their supply, except relatively, as a mere condition appointed by the donor.

If we must inquire into the reason of the appointment of prayer, and it can scarcely be considered as a purely arbitrary institution, that reason seems to be, the preservation in the minds of men of a solemn and impressive sense of God's agency in the world, and the dependence of all creatures upon him. Perfectly pure and glorified beings, no longer in a state of probation, and therefore exposed to no temptations, may not need this restitution; but

men in their fallen state are constantly prone to forget God; to rest in the agency of second causes; and to build upon a sufficiency in themselves. This is at once a denial to God of the glory which he rightly claims, and a destructive delusion to creatures, who, in forsaking God as the object of their constant affiance, trust but in broken reeds, and attempt to drink from "broken cisterns which can hold no water." It is then equally in mercy to us, as in respect to his own honour and acknowledgment, that the Divine Being has suspended so many of his blessings, and those of the highest necessity to us, upon the exercise of prayer; an act which acknowledges his uncontrollable agency, and the dependence of all creatures upon him; our insufficiency, and his fulness; and lays the foundation of that habit of gratitude and thanksgiving, which is at once so ameliorating to our own feelings, and so conducive to a cheerful obedience to the will of God. And if this reason for the injunction of prayer is nowhere in Scripture stated in so many words, it is a principle uniformly supposed as the foundation of the whole scheme of religion which they have revealed.

To this duty objections have been sometimes offered, at which it may be well at least to glance.

One has been grounded upon a supposed predestination of all things which come to pass; and the argument is, that as this established pre-determination of all things cannot be altered, prayer, which supposes that God will depart from it, is vain and useless. The answer which a pious predestinarian would give to this objection is, That the argument drawn from the predestination of God lies with the same force against every other human effort, as against prayer; and that as God's predetermination to give food to man does not render the cultivation of the earth useless and impertinent, so neither does the predestination of things shut out the necessity and efficacy of prayer. It would also be urged, that God has ordained the means as well as the end; and although he is an unchangeable Being, it is a part of the unchangeable system which he has established, that prayer shall be heard and accepted.

Those who have not these views of predestination will answer the objection differently; for if the premises of such a predestination as is assumed by the objection, and conceded in the answer, be allowed, the answer is unsatisfactory. The Scriptures represent God, for instance, as *purposing* to inflict a judgment upon an individual or a nation, which purpose is often changed by prayer. In this case either God's *purpose* must

be denied, and then his threatenings are reduced to words without meaning; or the purpose must be allowed, in which case either prayer breaks in upon predestination, if understood absolutely, or it is vain and useless. To the objection so drawn out it is clear that no answer is given by saying that the means as well as the end are predestinated, since prayer in such cases is not a means to the end, but an instrument of thwarting it; or is a means to one end in opposition to another end, which, if equally predestinated with the same absoluteness, is a contradiction.

The true answer is, that although God has absolutely predetermined some things, there are others, which respect his government of free and accountable agents, which he has but conditionally predetermined. — The true immutability of God we have already showed, (part ii, chap. 28,) consists, not in his adherence to his *purposes*, but in his never changing the *principles* of his administration; and he may therefore in perfect accordance with his preordination of things, and the immutability of his nature, purpose to do. under certain conditions dependent upon the free agency of man, what he will not do under others; and for this reason, that an immutable adherence to the *principles* of a wise, just, and gracious government, requires it. Prayer is in Scripture made one of these conditions; and if God has established it as one of the principles of his moral government to accept prayer, in every case in which he has given us authority to ask, he has not, we may be assured, entangled his actual government of the world with the bonds of such an eternal predestination of particular events, as either to reduce prayer to a mere form of words, or not to be able himself, consistently with his decrees, to answer it, whenever it is encouraged by his express engagements.

A second objection is, that as God is infinitely wise and good, his wisdom and justice will lead him to bestow “whatever is fit for us without praying; and if any thing be not fit for us, we cannot obtain it by praying.” To this Dr. Paley very well replies, (*Moral Philosophy*), “That it may be agreeable to perfect wisdom to grant that to our prayers which it would not have been agreeable to the same wisdom to have given us without praying for.” This, independent of the question of the authority of the Scriptures which explicitly enjoin prayer, is the best answer which can be given to the objection; and it is no small confirmation of it, that it is obvious to every reflecting man, that for God to withhold favours till asked for, “tends,” as the same writer observes, “to encourage devotion among his rational

creatures, and to keep up and circulate a knowledge and sense of their dependency upon HIM.”

But it is urged, “God will always do what is *best* from the moral perfection of his nature, whether we pray or not.” This objection, however, supposes, that there is but one mode of acting for the best, and that the Divine will is necessarily determined to that mode only; “both which positions,” says Paley, “presume a knowledge of universal nature, much beyond what we are capable of attaining.” It is, indeed, a very unsatisfactory mode of speaking, to say, God will always do what is best; since we can conceive him capable in all cases of doing what is still better for the creature, and also that the creature is capable of receiving more and more from his infinite fulness for ever. All that can be rationally meant by such a phrase is, that in the *circumstances* of the case, God will always do what is most consistent with his own wisdom, holiness, and goodness; but then the disposition to pray, and the act of praying, add a new circumstance to every case, and often bring many other new circumstances along with them. It supposes humility, contrition, and trust, on the part of the creature; and an acknowledgment of the power and compassion of God, and of the merit of the atonement of Christ: all which are manifestly new positions, so to speak, of the circumstances of the creature, which, upon the very principle of the objection, rationally understood, must be taken into consideration.

But if the efficacy of prayer as to ourselves be granted, its influence upon the case of others is said to be more difficult to conceive. This may be allowed without at all affecting the duty. Those who bow to the authority of the Scriptures will see, that the duty of praying for ourselves and for others rests upon the same Divine appointment; and to those who ask for the reason of such intercession in behalf of others, it is sufficient to reply, that the efficacy of prayer being established in one case, there is the same reason to conclude that our prayers may benefit others, as any other effort we may use. It can only be by Divine appointment that one creature is made dependent upon another for any advantage, since it was doubtless in the power of the Creator to have rendered each independent of all but himself. Whatever, reason, therefore, might lead him to connect and interweave interests of the one man with the benevolence of another, will be the leading reason for that kind of mutual dependence which is implied in the benefit of mutual prayer. Were it only that a previous sympathy, charity, and good will, are implied in the duty, and must, indeed, be

cultivated in order to it, and be strengthened by it, the wisdom and benevolence of the institution would, it is presumed, be apparent to every well constituted mind. That all prayer for others must proceed upon a less perfect knowledge of them than we have of ourselves, is certain: that all our petitions must be, even in our own mind, more conditional than those which respect ourselves, though many of these must be subjected to the principles of a general administration, which we but partially apprehend; and that all spiritual influences upon others, when they are the subject of our prayers, will be understood by us as liable to the control of their free agency, must also be conceded; and, therefore, when others are concerned, our prayers may often be partially or wholly fruitless. He who believes the Scriptures will, however, be encouraged by the declaration, that “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man,” for his fellow creatures, “availeth *much*,” and he who demands something beyond mere authoritative declaration, as he cannot deny that prayer is one of those instruments by which another may be benefited, must acknowledge that, like the giving of counsel, it may be of great utility in some cases, although it should fail in others; and that as no man can tell how much good counsel may influence another, or in many cases say whether it has ultimately failed or not, so it is with prayer. It is a part of the Divine plan, as revealed in his word, to give many blessings to man independent of his own prayers, leaving the subsequent improvement of them to himself. They are given in honour of the intercession of Christ, man’s great “Advocate;” and they are given, subordinately, in acceptance of the prayers of Christ’s Church, and of righteous individuals. And when many, or few, devout individuals become thus the instruments of good to communities, or to whole nations, there is no greater mystery in this than in the obvious fact, that the happiness or misery of large masses of mankind is often greatly affected by the wisdom or the errors, the skill or the incompetence, the good or the bad conduct of a few persons, and often of one.

The general duty of prayer is usually distributed into four branches, — *Ejaculatory, private, social, and public*; each of which is of such importance as to require a separate consideration.

EJACULATORY PRAYER is the term given to those secret and frequent aspirations of the heart to God for general or particular blessings, by which a just sense of our habitual dependence upon God, and of our wants and dangers, may be expressed, at those intervals when the thoughts can detach themselves from the affairs of life, though but for a moment, while we are

still employed in them. It includes, too, all those short and occasional effusions of gratitude, and silent ascriptions of praise, which the remembrance of God's mercies will excite in a devotional spirit, under the same circumstances. Both, however, presuppose what divines have called, "the spirit of prayer," which springs from a sense of our dependence upon God, and is a breathing of the desires after intercourse of thought and affection with him, accompanied with a reverential and encouraging sense of his constant presence with us. The cultivation of this spirit is clearly enjoined upon us as a duty by the Apostle Paul, who exhorts us to "pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks;" and also to "set our affections upon things above;" — exhortations which imply a holy and devotional frame and temper of mind, and not merely acts of prayer performed at intervals. The high and unspeakable advantages of this habit, are, that it induces a watchful and guarded mind; prevents religion from deteriorating into form without life; unites the soul to God, its light and strength; induces continual supplies of Divine influence; and opposes an effectual barrier, by the grace thus acquired, against the encroachments of worldly anxieties, and the force of temptations. The existence of this spirit of prayer and thanksgiving is one of the grand distinctions between nominal and real Christians; and by it the measure of vital and effective Christianity enjoyed by any individual may ordinarily be determined.

PRIVATE PRAYER. This, as a duty, rests upon the examples of good men in Scripture; upon several passages of an injunctive character in the Old Testament; and, in the New, upon the express words of our Lord, which, while they suppose the practice of individual prayer to have been generally acknowledged as obligatory, enjoin that it should be strictly *private*. "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet,<sup>f2</sup> and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." In this respect, also, Christ has himself placed us under the obligation of his own example; the evangelists having been inspired to put on record several instances of his retirement into absolute privacy that he might "pray." The reason for this institution of private devotion appears to have been to incite us to a friendly and confiding intercourse with God in all those particular cases which most concern our feelings and our interests; and it is a most affecting instance of the condescension and sympathy of God, that we are thus allowed to use a freedom with him, in "pouring out our hearts," which we could not do with our best and dearest friends. It is also most worthy of our notice, that when

this duty is enjoined upon us by our Lord, he presents the Divine Being before us under a relation most of all adapted to inspire that unlimited confidence with which he would have us to approach him: — “Pray to thy FATHER which is in secret.” Thus is the dread of his omniscience, indicated by his “seeing in secret,” and of those other overwhelming attributes which omnipresence and omniscience cannot fail to suggest, mitigated, or only employed to inspire greater freedom, and a stronger affiance.

FAMILY PRAYER. Paley states the peculiar use of family prayer to consist in its influence upon servants and children, whose attention may be more easily commanded by this than by public worship. “The example and authority of a master and father act, also in this way with greater force; and the ardour of devotion is better supported, and the sympathy more easily propagated through a small assembly, connected by the affections of domestic society, than in the presence of a mixed congregation.” There is, doubtless, weight in these remarks; but they are defective, both in not stating the *obligation* of this important duty, and in not fully exhibiting its *advantages*.

The absence of an express precept for family worship has, it is true, been urged against its obligation even by some who have still considered it as a prudential and useful ordinance. But the strict obligation of so important a duty is not to be conceded for a moment, since it so plainly arises out of the very constitution of a family; and is confirmed by the earliest examples of the Church of God. On the first of these points the following observations, from a very able and interesting work, (*Anderson on the Domestic Constitution*,) are of great weight: —

“The disposition of some men, professing Christianity, to ask peremptorily for a *particular precept* in all cases of incumbent moral duty, is one which every Christian would do well to examine; not only that he may never be troubled with it himself, but that he may be at no loss in answering such a man, if he is called to converse with him. The particular duty to which he refers, — say, for example, family worship, — is comparatively of small account. His question itself is indicative not merely of great ignorance; it is symptomatic of the want of religious principle. When a man says that he can *only* be bound to such a duty, a moral duty, by a positive and particular precept, I am satisfied that he could not perform it, in obedience to any precept whatever; nor could he even

now, though he were to try. The truth is, that this man has no disposition toward such worship, and he rather requires to be informed of the grounds of all such obligation.

“The duty of family devotion, therefore, let it be remembered, though it had been minutely enjoined as to both substance and season, would not, after all, have been founded only on such injunctions. I want the reader thoroughly to understand the *character* of a Christian, the *constitution* of the family; and out of this character and that constitution, he will find certain duties to arise *necessarily*; that is, they are essential to the continuance and well being of himself as a Christian parent, and of the constitution over which he is set. In this case there can be no question as to their obligation, and for a precept there is no necessity. The Almighty, in his word, has not only said nothing in vain, but nothing except what is necessary. Now, as to family worship, for a particular precept I have no wish; no, not even for the sake of *others*, because I am persuaded that the Christian, in his sober senses, *will* naturally obey and no other *can*.

“To apply, however, this request for a precise precept to some other branches of family duty: — What would be thought of me, were I to demand an express precept to enforce my obligation to feed my children, and another to oblige me to clothe them? one to express my obligation to teach them the use of letters, and another to secure my training them to lawful or creditable professions or employments? ‘All this,’ very properly you might reply, ‘is absurd in the highest degree; your obligation rests on much higher ground; nay, doth not *nature* itself teach you in this, and much more than this?’ ‘Very true,’ I reply, ‘and is *renewed nature*, then, not to teach me far more still? To what other nature are such words as these addressed? — *Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*’

“Independently, however, of all this evidence with any rational Christian parent, I may confirm and establish his mind on much higher ground than even that which these pointed examples afford.

To such a parent I might say, ‘Without hesitation, you will admit that your obligations to your family are to be measured now, and on the day of final account, by your *capacity*, — as a man by your natural, as a Christian by your spiritual capacity? and, however you may feel conscious of falling short daily, that you are under obligation to honour God to the utmost limit of this capacity? You will also allow that, standing where you do, you are not now, like a solitary orphan without relatives, to be regarded only as a single individual. God himself, your Creator, your Saviour, and your Judge, regards you as the *head* of a *family*; and, therefore, in possession of a sacred trust; you have the care of souls? Now if you really do measure obligation by capacity, then you will also at once allow, that you must do what you can, that he may, from your family, have as much honour as possible.

“Without hesitation you will also allow that God daily *preserves* you? And does he not also preserve your family? But if he preserves, he has a right of property in each and all under your roof. Shall he not, therefore, have from you acknowledgment of this? If daily he preserves, shall he not be daily acknowledged? And if acknowledged at all, how ought he to be so, if not upon your knees? And how can they know this if they do not *hear* it?

“Without hesitation you will also allow that you are a *social* as well its a reasonable being? And often have you, therefore, felt how much the soothing influence of their sweet society has sustained you under your cares and trials, and grief itself. O! surely then, as a social being, you owe to them social worship; nor should you ever forget, that, in ancient days, there *was* social worship here before it could be any where else.”

The same excellent writer has not, in his subsequent argument. given to the last remark in the above quotation all the force which it demands; for that social worship existed before worship more properly called public, that is worship in indiscriminate assemblies, is the point, which when followed out, most fully establishes the obligation. A great part, at least, of the worship of the patriarchal times was domestic. The worship of God was observed in the families of Abraham, Jacob, and Job; nay, the highest species of worship, the offering of sacrifices, which it could not have been without Divine appointment. It arose, therefore, out of the original

constitution of a family, that the father and natural head was invested with a sacred and religious character, and that with reference to his family; and if this has never been revoked by subsequent prohibition; but on the contrary, if its continuance has been subsequently recognized; then the family priesthood continues in force, and stands on the same ground as several other religious obligations, which have passed from one dispensation of revealed religion to another, without express re-enactment.

Let us then inquire, whether any such revocation of this office, as originally vested in the father of a family, took place after the appointment of a particular order of priests under the Mosaic economy. It is true that *national* sacrifices were offered by the Aaronical priests, and perhaps some of those consuetudinary sacrifices, which, in the patriarchal ages, were offered by the heads of families, and had reference specially to the general dispensation of religion under which every family was equally placed; yet the passover was a solemn religious act, the domestic nature of which is plainly marked, and it was to be an ordinance for ever, and therefore was not taken out of the hands of the heads of families by the institution of the Aaronical priesthood, although the ceremony comprehended several direct acts of worship. The solemn instruction of the family is also in the law of Moses enjoined upon the father, “Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children;” and he was also directed to teach them the import of the different festivals, and other commemorative institutions. Thus the original relation of the father to his family, which existed in the patriarchal age, is seen still in existence, though changed in some of its circumstances by the law. He is still the religious teacher; still he offers prayers for them to God; and still “blesses,” — an act which imports both prayer, praise, and *official* benediction. So the family of Jesse had a yearly sacrifice, <sup><0206></sup>1 Samuel 20:6. So David, although not a priest, returned to “bless his household;” and our Lord filled the office of the master of a family, as appears from his eating the passover with his disciples, and presiding as such over the whole rite: and although the passage, “Pour out thy fury upon the heathen, and upon the *families* which call not upon my name,” <sup><2405></sup>Jeremiah 10:25, does not perhaps decidedly refer to acts of domestic worship, yet it is probable that the phraseology was influenced by that practice among the pious Jews themselves; — neither did the heathen nationally, nor in their families, acknowledge God. Nor is it a trifling confirmation of the ancient practice of a formal and visible domestic religion, that in paganism, which corrupted the forms of the true religion, and especially those of the patriarchal

dispensation, we see the signs of a family as well as a public idolatry, as exhibited in their private “chambers of imagery,” their household deities; and the religious ceremonies which it was incumbent upon the head of every house to perform.

The sacred character and office of the father and master of a household passed from Judaism into Christianity; for here, also, we find nothing which revokes and repeals it. A duty so well understood both among Jews and even heathens, as that the head of the house ought to influence its religious character, needed no special injunction. The father or master who believed was baptized, and all his “house;” the first religious societies were chiefly domestic; and the antiquity of domestic religious services among Christians, leaves it unquestionable, that when the number of Christians increased so as to require a separate assembly in some common room or church, the domestic worship was not superseded. But for the division of verses in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians, it would scarcely have been suspected that the first and second verses contained two distinct and unconnected precepts, — “Masters give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven; continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;” a collocation of persons and duties which seems to intimate that the sense of the apostle was, that the “servant,” the slave should partake of the benefit of those continual prayers and daily thanksgivings which it is enjoined upon the master to offer.

As the *obligation* to this branch of devotion is passed over by Paley, so the *advantages* of family worship are but very imperfectly stated by him. The offering of prayer to God in a family cannot but lay the ground of a special regard to its interests and concerns on the part of him, who is thus constantly acknowledged; and the advantage, therefore, is more than a mere sentimental one; and more than that of giving effect to the “master’s example.” The blessings of providence and of grace; defence against evil, or peculiar supports under it, may thus be expected from Him, who has said, “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths;” and that when two or three are met in his name, he is “in the midst of them.” The family is a “Church in a house;” and its ministrations, as they are acceptable to God, cannot but be followed by his direct blessing.

PUBLIC PRAYER, under which we include the assembling of ourselves together for every branch of public worship.

The Scriptural obligation of this is partly founded upon example, and partly upon precept; so that no person who admits that authority, can question this great duty without manifest and criminal inconsistency. The institution of public worship under the law; the practice of synagogue worship among the Jews, from at least the time of Ezra,<sup>fs</sup> cannot be questioned; both which were sanctioned by the practice of our Lord and his apostles. The course of the synagogue worship became indeed the model of that of the Christian Church. It consisted in prayer, reading and explaining the Scriptures, and singing of psalms; and thus one of the most important means of instructing nations, and of spreading and maintaining the influence of morals and religion among a people, passed from the Jews into all Christian countries.

The preceptive authority for our regular attendance upon public worship, is either *inferential* or *direct*. The command to publish the Gospel includes the obligation of assembling to hear it; the name by which a Christian society is designated in Scripture, is a *Church*; which signifies an “assembly” for the transaction of some business; and, in the case of a Christian assembly, the business must be necessarily spiritual, and include the sacred exercises of prayer, praise, and hearing the Scriptures. But we have more *direct* precepts, although the practice was obviously continued from Judaism, and was therefore consuetudinary. Some of the epistles of Paul are commanded to be read in the Churches. The singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, is enjoined as an act of solemn worship, “to the Lord;” and St. Paul cautions the Hebrews that they “forsake not the assembling of themselves together.” The practice of the primitive age is also manifest from the epistles of St. Paul. The Lord’s Supper was celebrated by the body of believers collectively; and this apostle prescribes to the Corinthians regulations for the exercises of prayer and prophesyings, “when they came together in the Church,” — the assembly. The statedness and order of these “holy offices” in the primitive Church, appears also from the apostolical epistle of St. Clement: “We ought also, looking into the depths of the Divine knowledge, to do all things in order, whatsoever THE LORD hath *commanded* to be done. We ought to make our oblations, and perform our holy offices, at their appointed seasons; for these he hath *commanded* to be done, not irregularly or by chance, but at determinate times and hours; as he hath likewise *ordained* by his *supreme will*, where, and by what persons, they shall be performed; that so all things being done according to his pleasure, may be acceptable in his sight.” This passage is remarkable for urging a Divine authority for the public services of the

Church, by which St. Clement, no doubt, means the authority of the inspired directions of the apostles.

The ends of the institution of public worship are of such obvious importance, that it must ever be considered as one of the most condescending and gracious dispensations of God to man. By this his Church confesses his name before the world; by this the public teaching of his word is associated with acts calculated to affect the mind with that solemnity which is the best preparation for hearing it to edification. It is thus that the ignorant and vicious are collected together, and instructed and warned; the invitations of mercy are published to the guilty, and the sorrowful and afflicted are comforted. In these assemblies God, by his Holy Spirit, diffuses his vital and sanctifying influence, and takes the devout into a fellowship with himself, from which they derive strength to do and to suffer his will in the various scenes of life, while he thus affords them a foretaste of the deep and hallowed pleasures which are reserved for them at "his right hand for evermore." Prayers and intercessions are here heard for national and public interests; and while the benefit of these exercises descends upon a country, all are kept sensible of the dependence of every public and personal interest upon God. Praise calls forth the grateful emotions, and gives cheerfulness to piety; and that "instruction in righteousness," which is so perpetually repeated, diffuses the principles of morality and religion throughout society; enlightens and gives activity to conscience; raises the standard of morals; attaches shame to vice, and praise to virtue; and thus exerts a powerfully purifying influence upon mankind. Laws thus receive a force, which, in other circumstances, they could not acquire, even were they enacted in as great perfection; and the administration of justice is aided by the strongest possible obligation and sanction being given to legal oaths. The domestic relations are rendered more strong and interesting by the very habit of the attendance of families upon the sacred services of the sanctuary of the Lord; and the rich and the poor meeting together there, and standing on the same common ground of sinners before God, equally dependent upon him, and equally suing for his mercy, has a powerful, though often an insensible, influence in humbling the pride which is nourished by superior rank, and in raising the lower classes above abjectness of spirit, without injuring their humility. Piety, benevolence, and patriotism, are equally dependent for their purity and vigour upon the regular and devout worship of God in the simplicity of the Christian dispensation.

A few words on liturgies or forms of prayer may here have a proper place.

The necessity of adhering to the simplicity of the first age of the Church, as to worship, need scarcely be defended by argument. If no liberty were intended to be given to accommodate the modes of worship to the circumstances of different people and times, we should, no doubt, have had some express directory on the subject in Scripture; but in the exercise of this liberty steady regard is to be paid to the spirit and genius and simple character of Christianity, and a respectful deference to the practice of the apostles and their immediate successors. Without these, formality and superstition, to both of which human nature is very liable, are apt to be induced; and when once they enter they increase, as the history of the Church sufficiently shows, indefinitely, until true religion is buried beneath the mass of observances which have been introduced as her aids and handmaids. Our Lord's own words are here directly applicable and important: "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." The worship must be adapted in the spiritual nature of God, and to his revealed perfections. To such a Being the number of prayers, the quantity of worship so to speak, to which corrupt Churches have attached so much importance, can be of no value. As a Spirit, he seeks the worship of the spirit of man; and regards nothing external in that worship but as it is the expression of those emotions of humility, faith, gratitude, and hope, which are the principles he condescendingly approves in man. "True" worship, we are also taught by these words, is the worship of the heart; it springs from humility, faith, gratitude, and hope; and its final cause, or end, is to better man, by bringing upon his affections the sanctifying and comforting influence of grace. The modes of worship which best promote this end, and most effectually call these principles into exercise, are those therefore which best accord with our Lord's rule: and if in the apostolic age we see this end of worship most directly accomplished, and these emotions most vigorously and with greatest purity excited, the novelties of human invention can add nothing to the effect, and for that very reason have greatly diminished it. In the Latin and Greek Churches we see a striking conformity in the vestments, the processions, the pictures, and images, and other parts of a complex and gorgeous ceremonial, to the Jewish typical worship, and to that of the Gentiles, which was an imitation of it without typical meaning. But it is not even pretended that in these circumstances it is founded upon primitive practice; or, if pretended, this is obviously an impudent assumption.

‘Liturgies, or forms of *service*, do not certainly come under this censure, except when they contain superstitious acts of devotion to saints, or are so complicated, numerous, and lengthened, that the only principle to which they can be referred is the common, but unworthy notion, that the Divine Being is rendered placable by continued service; or that the wearisome exercise of vocal prayers, continued for long periods, and in painful postures, is a necessary penance to man, and, as such, acceptable to God. In those Reformed Churches of Christendom in which they are used, they have been greatly abridged, as well as purified from the corruptions of the middle ages. In some they are more copious than in others, while many religious societies have rejected their use altogether; and in a few they are so used as to afford competent space also for extempore devotion.

The advocates and opponents of the use of forms of prayer in public worship have both run into great extremes, and attempted generally to prove too much against each other.

If the use of forms of prayer in prose be objected to, their use in verse ought to be rejected on the same principle; and extemporaneous psalms and hymns must, for consistency’s sake, be required of a minister, as well as extemporaneous prayers; or the practice of singing, as a part of God’s worship, must be given up. Again: If the objection to the use of a form of prayer be not in its matter; but merely as it contains petitions not composed by ourselves, or by the officiating minister on the occasion; the same objection would lie to our using any petitions found in the Psalms or other devotional parts of Scripture, although adapted to our case, and expressed in words far more fitting than our own. If we think precomposed prayers incompatible with devotion, we make it essential to devotion that we should frame our desires into our own words; whereas nothing can be more plain, than that whoever has composed the words, if they correspond with our desires, they become the prayer of our hearts, and are, as such, acceptable to God. The objection to petitionary forms composed by others, supposes also that we know the things which it is proper for us to ask without the assistance of others. This may be sometimes the case; but as we must be taught what to pray for by the Holy Scriptures, so, in proportion as we understand what we are authorized to pray for by those Scriptures, our prayers become more varied, and distinct, and comprehensive, and, therefore, edifying. But all helps to the understanding of the Scriptures, as to what they encourage us to ask of God, is a help to us in prayer. Thus the exposition of Christian privileges and blessings from

the pulpit, affords us this assistance; thus the public extempore prayers we hear offered by ministers and enlightened Christians, assist us in the same respect; and the written and recorded prayers of the wise and pious in different ages, fulfil the same office, and to so great an extent, that, scarcely any who offer extempore prayer escape falling into phrases and terms of expression, or even entire petitions, which have been originally derived from liturgies. Even in extempore services, the child accustomer, to the modes of precatory expression used by the parent, and the people to those of their ministers, imitate them unconsciously; finding the desires of their hearts already embodied in suitable and impressive words.

The objection, therefore, to the use of forms of prayer, when absolute, is absurd, and involves principles which no one acts upon, or can act upon. It also disregards example and antiquity. The high priest of the Jews pronounced yearly a form of benediction. The Psalms of David, and other inspired Hebrew poets, whether chanted or read makes no difference, were composed for the use of the sanctuary, and formed a part of the regular devotions of the people. Forms of prayer were used in the synagogue service of the Jews, which, though multiplied in subsequent times, so as to render the service tedious and superstitious, had among them some that were in use between the return from the captivity and the Christian era, and were therefore sanctioned by the practice of our Lord and his apostles. (*Prideaux's Connection*. Fol. edit. vol. i, p. 304.) John Baptist appears also to have given a form of prayer to his disciples, in which he was followed by our Lord. The latter has indeed been questioned, and were it to be argued that our Lord intended that form of prayer alone to be used, too much would be proved by the advocates of forms. On the other hand, although the words, "after this *manner* pray ye," intimate that the Lord's prayer was given as a model of prayer, so the words in another evangelist, "when ye pray, say," as fully indicate an intention to prescribe a form. It seems, therefore, fair, to consider the Lord's prayer as intended both as a *model* and a *form*; and he must be very fastidious who, though he uses it as the model of his own prayers, by paraphrasing its petitions in his own words, should scruple to use it in its native simplicity and force as a form. That its use as a form, though not its exclusive use, was originally intended by our Lord, appears, I think, very clearly, from the disciples desiring to be taught to pray, "as John taught his disciples." If, as it has been alleged, the Jewish rabbins, at so early a period, were in the custom of giving short forms of prayer to their disciples, to be used in the form given, or to be enlarged

upon by the pupil at his pleasure, this would fully explain the request of the disciples. However, without laying much stress upon the antiquity of this practice, we may urge, that if John Baptist gave a form of prayer to his followers, the conduct of our Lord in teaching his disciples to pray, by what is manifestly a regularly connected series of petitions, is accordant with their request; but if the Baptist only taught what topics ought to be introduced in prayer, and the disciples of Jesus wished to be instructed in like manner, it is difficult to account for their request being granted, not by his giving directions as to the topics of prayer, but by his uttering a regular prayer itself. That our Lord intended that prayer to be used as adapted to that period of his dispensation; and that the petitions in that form are admirably applicable to every period of Christianity, and may be used profitably; and that its use implies a devout respect to the words of Him “who spake as never man spake;” are points from which there does not appear any reasonable ground of dissent.

The practice of the primitive Church may also be urged in favour of liturgies. Founded as the early worship of Christians was, upon the model of the synagogue, the use of short forms of prayer, or collects, by them, is at least probable. It must indeed be granted that extended and regular liturgies were of a later date; and that extempore prayers were constantly offered in their assemblies for public worship. This appears clear enough from several passages in St. Paul’s epistles, and the writings of the fathers; so that no liturgical service can be so framed as entirely to shut out, or not to leave convenient space for, extempore prayer by the minister without departing from the earliest models. But the Lord’s prayer appears to have been in frequent use in the earliest times, and a series of collects; which seems allowed even by Lord King, although he proves that the practice for the minister to pray “according to his ability,”<sup>f4</sup> that is, to use his gifts in extempore prayer, was a constant part of the public worship in the first ages.

Much, therefore, is evidently left to wisdom and prudence in a case where we have no explicit direction in the Scriptures; and as a general rule to be modified by circumstances, we may perhaps with safety affirm, that the best mode of public worship is that which unites a brief Scriptural liturgy with extempore prayers by the minister. This will more clearly appear if we consider the exceedingly futile character of those objections which have been reciprocally employed by the opponents and advocates of forms, when they have carried their views to an extreme.

To public liturgies it has been objected, that “forms of prayer composed in one age become unfit for another, by the unavoidable change of language, circumstances, and opinions.” To this it may be answered,

1. That whatever weight there may be in the objection, it can only apply to cases where the form is, in all its parts, made imperative upon the officiating minister; or where the Church imposing it, neglects to accommodate the liturgy to meet all such changes, when innocent.
2. That the general language of no form of prayer among ourselves, has become obsolete in point of fact; a few expressions only being, according to modern notions, uncouth, or unusual.
3. That the petitions they contain are suited, more or less, to all men at all times, whatever may be their “circumstances;” and that as to “opinions,” if they so change in a Church as to become unscriptural, it is an advantage arising out of a public form, that it is auxiliary to the Scriptures in bearing testimony against them; that a natural reverence for ancient forms tends to preserve their use, after opinions have become lax; and that they are sometimes the means of recovering a Church from error.

Another objection is, that the perpetual repetition of the same form of words produces weariness and inattentiveness in the congregation. There is some truth in this; but it is often carried much too far. A devotional mind will not weary in the repetition of a Scriptural and well arranged liturgy, if not too long to be sustained by the infirmity of the body. Whether forms are used, or extempore prayer be practised, effort and application of mind are necessary in the hearer to enter into the spirit of the words; and each mode is wearisome to the careless and indevout, though not, we grant, in equal degrees. The objection, as far as it has any weight, would be reduced to nothing, were the liturgy repeated only at one service on the Sabbath, so that at the others the minister might be left at liberty to pray with more direct reference to the special circumstances of the people, the Church, and the world.

The *general* character which all forms of prayer must take, is a third objection; but this is not true absolutely of any liturgy, and much less of that of the Church of England. All prayer must, and ought to be, general, because we ask for blessings which all others need as much as ourselves;

but that particularity which goes into the different parts of a Christian's religious experience and conflicts, dangers and duties, is found very forcibly and feelingly expressed in that liturgy. That greater particularity is often needed than this excellent form of prayer contains, must, however, be allowed; and this, as well as prayer suited to occasional circumstances, might be supplied by the more frequent use of extempore prayer, without displacing the liturgy itself. The objection, therefore, has no force, except when extempore prayer is excluded, or confined within too narrow a limit.

On the other hand, the indiscriminate advocates of liturgies have carried their objections to extempore prayer to a very absurd extreme. Without a liturgy the folly and enthusiasm of many, they say, is in danger of producing extravagant or impious addresses to God; that a congregation is confused between their attention to the minister, and their own devotion, being ignorant of each petition before they hear it; and to this they add the labouring recollection or tumultuous delivery of many extempore speakers. The first and third of these objections can have force only where foolish, enthusiastic, and incompetent ministers are employed; and so the evil, which can but rarely exist, is easily remedied. The second objection lay as forcibly against the inspired prayers of the Scriptures at the time they were first uttered, as against extempore prayers now; and it would lie against the use of the collects, and occasional unfamiliar forms of prayer introduced into the regular liturgy, in the case of all who are not able to read, or who happen not to have prayer books. We may also observe, that if evils of so serious a kind are the necessary results of extempore praying; if devotion is hindered, and pain and confusion of mind produced; and impiety and enthusiasm promoted; it is rather singular that extempore prayer should have been so constantly practised in the primitive Church, and that it should not have been wholly prohibited to the clergy on all occasions, in later times. The facts, however, of our own age prove that there is, to say the least, an equal degree of devotion, an equal absence of confusedness of thought in the worshippers, where no liturgy is used, as where extempore prayer is unknown. Instances of folly and enthusiasm are also but few in the ministry of such Churches; and when they occur they have a better remedy than entirely to exclude extempore prayers by liturgies, and thus to shut out the great benefits of that mode of worship, for the loss of which no exclusive form of service can atone.

The whole, we think, comes to this, — that there are advantages in each mode of worship; and that, when combined prudently, the public service of

the sanctuary has its most perfect constitution. Much, however, in the practice of Churches is to be regulated by due respect to differences of opinion, and even to prejudice, on a point upon which we are left at liberty by the Scriptures, and which must therefore be ranked among things prudential. Here, as in many other things, Christians must give place to each other, and do all things “in charity.”

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING are implied in prayer, and included indeed in our definition of that duty, as given above. But beside those ascriptions of praise and expressions of gratitude, which are to be mingled with the precatory part of our devotions, solemn psalms and hymns of praise, to be sung with the voice, and accompanied with the melody of the heart, are of apostolic injunction, and form an important and exhilarating part of the worship of God, whether public or social. It is thus that God is publicly acknowledged as the great source of all good, and the end to which all good ought again to tend in love and obedience; and the practice of stirring up our hearts to a thankful remembrance of his goodness, is equally important in its moral influence upon our feelings now, and as it tends to prepare us for our eternal enjoyment hereafter. “Prayer,” says a divine of the English Church, “awakens in us a sorrowful sense of wants and imperfections, and confession induces a sad remembrance of our guilt and miscarriages; but thanksgiving has nothing in it but a warm sense of the mightiest love, and the most endearing goodness, as it is the overflow of a heart full of love, the free sally and emission of soul, that is captivated and endeared by kindness. To laud and magnify the Lord is the end for which we were born, and the heaven for which we were designed; and when we are arrived to such a vigorous sense of Divine love as the blessed inhabitants of heaven have attained, we shall need no other pleasure or enjoyment to make us for ever happy, but only to sing eternal praises to God and the Lamb; the vigorous relish of whose unspeakable goodness to us will so inflame our love, and animate our gratitude, that for eternal ages we shall never be able to refrain from breaking out into new songs of praise, and then every new song will create a new pleasure, and every new pleasure create a new song.” (*Dr. Scott.*)

## CHAPTER 3. — THE DUTIES WE OWE TO GOD — THE LORD'S DAY.

As we have just been treating of the public worship of Almighty God, so we may fitly add some remarks upon the consecration of one day in seven for that service, that it may be longer continued than on days in which the business of life calls for our exertions, and our minds be kept free from its distractions.

The obligation of a Sabbatical institution upon Christians, as well as the extent of it, have been the subjects of much controversy. Christian Churches themselves have differed; and the theologians of the same Church. Much has been written upon the subject on each side, and much research and learning employed, sometimes to darken a very plain subject.

The circumstance, that the observance of a Sabbath is nowhere, *in so many words*, enjoined upon Christians, by our Lord and his apostles, has been assumed as the reason for so great a license of criticism and argument as that which has been often indulged in to unsettle the strictness of the obligation of this duty. Its obligation has been represented as standing upon the ground of inference only, and therefore of human opinion; and thus the opinion against Sabbatical institutions has been held up as equally weighty with the opinion in their favour; and the liberty which has been claimed, has been too often hastily concluded to be Christian liberty. This, however, is travelling much too fast; for if the case were as much a matter of inference, as such persons would have it, it does not follow that every inference is alike good; or that the opposing inferences have an equal force of truth, my more than of piety.

The question respects the will of God as to this particular point, — whether one day in seven is to be wholly devoted to religion, exclusive of worldly business and worldly pleasures? Now, there are but two ways in which the will of God can be collected from his word; either by some explicit injunction upon all, or by incidental circumstances. Let us then allow for a moment, that we have no such explicit injunction; yet we have certainly none to the contrary: let us allow that we have only for our guidance in inferring the will of God in this particular, certain circumstances declarative of his will; yet this important conclusion in

inevitable, that all such indicative circumstances are in favour of a Sabbatical institution, and that there is not one which exhibits any thing contrary to it. The seventh day was hallowed at the close of the creation; its sanctity was afterward marked by the withholding of the manna on that day, and the provision of a double supply on the sixth, and that *previous* to the giving of the law from Sinai: it was then made a part of that great epitome of religious and moral duty, which God wrote with his own finger on tables of stone; it was a part of the public political law of the only people to whom Almighty God ever made himself a political head and ruler; its observance is connected throughout the prophetic age with the highest promises, its violations with the severest maledictions; it was among the Jews in our Lord's time a day of solemn religious assembling, and was so observed by him; when changed to the first day of the week, it was the day on which the first Christians assembled; it was called, by way of eminence, "the Lord's day;" and we have inspired authority to say, that, both under the Old and New Testament dispensations, it is used as an expressive type of the heavenly and eternal rest. Now, against all these circumstances so strongly declarative of the will of God, as to the observance of a Sabbatical institution, what circumstance or passage of Scripture can be opposed, as bearing upon it a contrary indication? Truly not one; except those passages in St. Paul in which he speaks of Jewish Sabbaths, with their Levitical rites, and of a distinction of days, both of which marked a weak or a criminal adherence to the abolished ceremonial dispensation; but which touch not the Sabbath as a branch of the moral law, or as it was changed, by the authority of the apostles, to the first day of the week.

If, then, we were left to determine the point by inference merely, how powerful is the inference as to what is the will of God with respect to the keeping of the Sabbath on the one hand, and how totally unsupported is the opposite inference on the other!

It may also be observed, that those who will so strenuously insist upon the absence of an express command as to the Sabbath in the writings of the evangelists and apostles, as explicit as that of the decalogue, assume, that the will of God is only obligatory when manifested in some one mode, which *they* judge to be most fit. But this is a monstrous hypothesis; for however the will of God may be manifested, if it is with such clearness as to exclude all reasonable doubt, it is equally obligatory as when it assumes the formality of legal promulgation. Thus the Bible is not all in the form of

express and authoritative command; it teaches by examples, by proverbs, by songs, by incidental allusions and occurrences; and yet is, throughout, a manifestation of the will of God as to morals and religion in their various branches, and if disregarded, it will be so at every man's peril.

But strong as this ground is, we quit it for a still stronger. It is wholly a mistake that the Sabbath, because not re-enacted with the formality of the decalogue, is not explicitly enjoined upon Christians, and that the testimony of Scripture to such an injunction is not unequivocal and irrefragable. We shall soon prove that the Sabbath was appointed at the creation of the world, and consequently for all men, and therefore for Christians; since there was never any repeal of the original institution. To this we add, that if the moral law be the law of Christians, then is the Sabbath as explicitly enjoined upon them as upon the Jews. But that the moral law is our law, as well as the law of the Jews, all but Antinomians must acknowledge; and few, we suppose, will be inclined to run into the fearful mazes of that error, in order to support lax notions as to the obligation of the Sabbath, into which, however, they must be plunged, if they deny the law of the decalogue to be binding upon us. That it is so bound upon us, a few passages of Scripture will prove as well as many.

Our Lord declares, that he came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil. Take it, that by the "law," he meant both the moral and the ceremonial; ceremonial law could only be fulfilled in him, by realizing its types; and moral law, by upholding its authority. For "the prophets," they admit of a similar distinction, they either enjoin morality, or utter prophecies of Christ; the latter of which were fulfilled in the sense of accomplishment, the former by being sanctioned and enforced. That the observance of the Sabbath is a part of the moral law, is clear from its being found in the decalogue, the doctrine of which our Lord sums up in the moral duties of loving God and our neighbour; and for this reason the injunctions of the prophets, on the subject of the Sabbath, are to be regarded as a part of their *moral* teaching. (See this stated more at large, part iii, chap. 1.) Some divines have, it is true, called the observance of the Sabbath a positive, and not a moral precept. If it were so, its obligation is precisely the same, in all cases where God himself has not relaxed it; and if a positive precept only, it has surely a special eminence given to it, by being placed in the list of the ten commandments, and being capable, with them, of an epitome which resolves them into the love of God and our neighbour. (See vol. ii, p. 5.) The truth seems to be, that it is a mixed

precept, and not wholly positive; but intimately, perhaps essentially, connected with several moral principles, of homage to God, and mercy to men; with the obligation of religious *worship*, of *public* religious worship, and of *undistracted* public worship: and this will account for its collocation in the decalogue with the highest duties of religion, and the leading rules of personal and social morality.

The passage from our Lord's sermon on the mount, with its context, is a sufficiently explicit enforcement of the moral law, generally, upon his followers; but when he says, "The Sabbath was made for man," he clearly refers to its original institution, as a universal law, and not to its obligation upon the Jews only, in consequence of the enactments of the law of Moses. It "was made for *man*," not as he may be a Jew or a Christian; but as man, a creature bound to love, worship, and obey his God and Maker, and on his trial for eternity.

Another explicit proof that the law of the ten commandments, and, consequently, the law of the Sabbath, is obligatory upon Christians, is found in the answer of the apostle to an objection to the doctrine of justification by faith, <sup><483></sup>Romans 3:31, "Do we then make void the law through faith?" which is equivalent to asking, Does Christianity teach, that the law is no longer obligatory on Christians, because it teaches that no man can be justified by it? To this he answers in the most solemn form of expression, "God forbid; yea, we establish the law." Now, the sense in which the apostle uses the term, "the law," in this argument, is indubitably marked in <sup><500></sup>Romans 7:7, "I had not known sin but by *the law*; for I had not known lust, except *the law* had said, Thou shalt not covet:" which being a plain reference to the tenth command of the decalogue, as plainly shows that the decalogue is "*the law*" of which he speaks. This, then, is the law which is "*established*" by the Gospel; and this can mean nothing else than the establishment and confirmation of its *authority*, as the rule of all inward and outward holiness. Whoever, therefore, denies the obligation of the Sabbath on Christians, denies the obligation of the whole decalogue; and there is no real medium between the acknowledgment of the Divine authority of this sacred institution, as a universal law, and that gross corruption of Christianity, generally designated Antinomianism.

Nor is there any force in the dilemma into which the anti-Sabbatarians would push us, when they argue, that, if the case be so, then are we bound to the same circumstantial exactitude of obedience as to this command, as

to the other precepts of the decalogue; and, therefore, that we are bound to observe the seventh day, reckoning from Saturday, as the Sabbath day. But, as the command is partly positive, and partly moral, it may have circumstances which are capable of being altered in perfect accordance with the moral principles on which it rests, and the moral ends which it proposes. Such circumstances are not indeed to be judged of on our own authority. We must either have such general principles for our guidance as have been revealed by God, and cannot therefore be questioned, or some special authority from which there can be no just appeal. Now, though there is not on record any Divine command issued to the apostles, to change the Sabbath from the day on which it was held by the Jews, to the first day of the week; yet, when we see that this was done in the apostolic age, and that St. Paul speaks of the Jewish Sabbaths as not being obligatory upon Christians, while he yet contends that the whole moral law is obligatory upon them, the fair inference is, that this change of the day was made by Divine direction. It is at least more than inference, that the change was made under the sanction of inspired men; and those men, the appointed rulers in the Church of Christ; whose business it was to “set all things in order,” which pertained to its worship and moral government. We may rest well enough, therefore, satisfied with this, — that as a Sabbath is obligatory upon us. we act under apostolic authority for observing, it on the first day of the week, and thus commemorate at once the creation and the redemption of the world.

Thus, even if it were conceded, that the change of the day was made by the agreement of the apostles, without express directions from Christ (which is not probable,) it is certain that it was not done without *express authority* confided to them by Christ; but it would not even follow from this change that they did in reality make any alteration in the law of the Sabbath, either as it stood at the time of its original institution at the close of the creation, or in the decalogue of Moses. The same portion of time which constituted the seventh day from the creation, could not be observed in all parts of the earth; and it is not probable, therefore, that the original law expresses more, than that a seventh day, or one day in seven, the seventh day after six days of labour, should be thus appropriated, from whatever point the enumeration might set out, or the hebdomadal cycle begin. For if more had been intended, then it would have been necessary to establish a rule for the reckoning of days themselves, which has been different in different nations; some reckoning from evening to evening, as the Jews now do; others from

midnight to midnight, &c. So that those persons in this country and in America, who hold their Sabbath on Saturday, under the notion of exactly conforming to the Old Testament, and yet calculate the days from midnight to midnight, have no assurance at all that they do not desecrate a part of the original Sabbath, which might begin, as the Jewish Sabbath now, on Friday evening; and on the contrary, hallow a portion of a common day, by extending the Sabbath beyond Saturday evening. Even if this were ascertained, the differences of latitude and longitude would throw the whole into disorder; and it is not probable that a universal law should have been fettered with that circumstantial exactness, which would have rendered difficult, and sometimes doubtful, astronomical calculations necessary in order to its being obeyed according to the intention of the Lawgiver. Accordingly we find, says Mr. Holden, that

“In the original institution it is stated in general terms, that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day, which must undoubtedly imply the sanctity of every seventh day; but not that it is to be subsequently reckoned from the first demiurgic day. Had this been included in the command of the Almighty, something, it is probable, would have been added declaratory of the intention; whereas expressions the most undefined are employed; not a syllable is uttered concerning the order and number of the days; and it cannot reasonably be disputed that the command is truly obeyed by the separation of every seventh day, from common to sacred purposes, at whatever given time the cycle may commence. The difference in the mode of expression here from that which the sacred historian has used in the first chapter, is very remarkable. At the conclusion of each division of the work of creation, he says, ‘The evening and the morning were the first day,’ and so on; but at the termination of the whole, he merely calls it the seventh day; a diversity of phrase, which, as it would be inconsistent with every idea of inspiration to suppose it *undesigned*, must have been intended to denote *a day*, leaving it to each people as to what manner it is to be reckoned. The term obviously imports the period of the earth’s rotation round its axis, while it is left undetermined, whether it shall be counted from evening or morning, from noon or midnight. The terms of the law are, ‘Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. For in six days the Lord made heaven and

earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.' With respect to time, it is here mentioned in the same indefinite manner as at its primeval institution, nothing more being expressly required than to observe a day of sacred rest after every six days of labour. The seventh day is to be kept holy; but not a word is said as to what epoch the commencement of the series is to be referred; nor could the Hebrews have determined from the decalogue what day of the week was to be kept as their Sabbath. The precept is not, Remember the seventh day of the week, to keep it holy, but 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep *it* holy;' and in the following explication of these expressions, it is not said that the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath, but without restriction, 'The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God;' not the seventh according to any particular method of computing the septenary cycle; but, in reference to the six before mentioned, every seventh day in rotation after six of labour.'" (*Holden on the Sabbath.*)

Thus that part of the Jewish law, the decalogue, which, on the authority of the New Testament, we have shown to be obligatory upon Christians, leaves the computation of the hebdomadal cycle undetermined; and, after six days of labour, enjoins the seventh as the Sabbath, to which the Christian practice as exactly conforms as the Jewish. It is not, however, left to every individual to determine which day should be his Sabbath, though he should fulfil the law so far as to abstract the seventh part of his time from labour. It was ordained for worship, for *public* worship; and it is therefore necessary that the Sabbath should be uniformly observed by a whole community at the same time. The Divine Legislator of the Jews interposed for this end, by special direction, as to his people. The first Sabbath kept in the wilderness was calculated from the first day in which the manna fell; and with no apparent reference to the creation of the world. By apostolic authority, it is now fixed to be held on the first day of the week; and thus one of the great ends for which it was established, that it should be a day of "holy convocation," is secured.

The above observations proceed upon the ground, that the Sabbath, according to the fair interpretation of the words of Moses, was instituted upon the creation of the world. But we have had divines of considerable eminence in the English Church, who have attempted to disprove this. The

reason of the zeal displayed by some of them on this question may be easily explained.

All the Churches of the reformation did not indeed agree in their views of the Sabbath; but the reformers of England and Scotland generally adopted the strict and Scriptural view; and after them the Puritans. The opponents of the Puritans, in their controversies with them, and especially after the restoration, associated a strict observance of the Sabbath with hypocrisy and disaffection; and no small degree of ingenuity and learning was employed to prove, that, in the intervals of public worship, pleasure or business might be lawfully pursued; and that this Christian festival stands on entirely different grounds from that of the Jewish Sabbath. The appointment of a Sabbath for man, at the close of the creation, was unfriendly to this notion; and an effort therefore was made to explain away the testimony of Moses in the book of Genesis, by alleging that the Sabbath is there mentioned by *prolepsis* or anticipation. Of the arguments of this class of divines, Paley availed himself in his "Moral Philosophy," and has become the most popular authority on this side of the question.

Paley's argument is well summed up, and satisfactorily answered, in the able work which has been above quoted.

"Among those who have held that the Pentateuchal record, above cited, is proleptical, and that the Sabbath is to be considered a part of the peculiar laws of the Jewish polity, no one has displayed more ability than Dr. Paley. Others on the same side have exhibited far more extensive learning, and have exercised much more patient research; but for acuteness of intellect, for coolness of judgment, and a habit of perspicacious reasoning, he has been rarely, if ever, excelled. The arguments which he has approved, must be allowed to be the chief strength of the cause; and, as he is at once the most judicious and most popular of its advocates, all that he has advanced demands a careful and candid examination. The doctrine which he maintains is, that the Sabbath was not instituted at the creation; that it was designed for the Jews only; that the *assembling* upon the first day of the week for the purpose of public worship, is a law of Christianity, of Divine appointment; but that the *resting* on it longer than is necessary for attendance on these assemblies, is an ordinance of human institution; binding, nevertheless, upon the conscience of every individual of a country in which a weekly

Sabbath is established, for the sake of the beneficial purposes which the public and regular observance of it promotes, and recommended perhaps, in some degree, to the Divine approbation, by the resemblance it bears to what God was pleased to make a solemn part of the law which he delivered to the people of Israel, and by its subserviency to many of the same uses. Such is the doctrine of this very able writer in his *Moral and Political Philosophy*; a doctrine which places the Sabbath on the footing of civil laws, recommended by their expediency, and which, being sanctioned by so high an authority, has probably given great encouragement to the lax notions concerning the Sabbath which unhappily prevail.

“Dr. Paley’s principal argument is, that the first institution of the Sabbath took place during the sojourning of the Jews in the wilderness. Upon the complaint of the people for want of food, God was pleased to provide for their relief by a miraculous supply of manna, which was found every morning upon the ground about the camp: ‘And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating; and when the sun waxed hot, it melted. And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man; and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, *To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord*: bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you, to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade; and it did not stink, (as it had done before, when some of them left it till the morning,) neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that to-day; *for to-day is a Sabbath unto the Lord*; to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments, and my laws? See, *for that the Lord hath given you, the Sabbath*, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place;

let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day.'

“From this passage, Dr. Paley infers that the Sabbath was first instituted in the wilderness; but to preclude the possibility of misrepresenting his argument, I will quote his own words: ‘Now, in my opinion, the transaction in the wilderness above recited, was the first actual institution of the Sabbath. For if the Sabbath had been instituted at the time of the creation, as the words in Genesis may seem at first sight to import; and if it had been observed all along from that time to the departure of the Jews out of Egypt, a period of about two thousand five hundred years; it appears unaccountable that no mention of it, no occasion of even the obscurest allusion to it, should occur, either in the general history of the world before the call of Abraham, which contains, we admit, only a few memoirs of its early ages, and those extremely abridged; or, which is more to be wondered at, in that of the lives of the first three Jewish patriarchs, which, in many parts of the account, is sufficiently circumstantial and domestic. Nor is there, in the passage above quoted from the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, any intimation that the Sabbath, when appointed to be observed, was only the revival of an ancient institution, which had been neglected, forgotten, or suspended; nor is any such neglect imputed either to the inhabitants of the old world, or to any part of the family of Noah; nor, lastly, is any permission recorded to dispense with the institution during the captivity of the Jews in Egypt, or on any other public emergency.’

“As to the first part of this reasoning, if it were granted that in the history of the patriarchal ages no mention is made of the Sabbath, nor even the obscurest allusion to it, it would be unfair to conclude that it was not appointed previous to the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt. If instituted at the creation, the memory of it might have been forgotten in the lapse of time and the growing corruption of the world; or, what is more probable, it might have been observed by the patriarchs, though no mention is made of it in the narrative of their lives, which, however circumstantial in some particulars, is, upon the whole, very brief and compendious. There are omissions in the sacred history much more extraordinary. Excepting Jacob’s supplication at Bethel, scarcely a single allusion to prayer is to be found in all the Pentateuch; yet considering the

eminent piety of the worthies recorded in it, we cannot doubt the frequency of their devotional exercises. Circumcision being the sign of God's covenant with Abraham, was beyond all question punctually observed by the Israelites, yet, from their settlement in Canaan, no particular instance is recorded of it till the circumcision of Christ, comprehending a period of about one thousand five hundred years. No express mention of the Sabbath occurs in the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the first and second of Samuel: or the first of Kings, though it was, doubtless, regularly observed all the time included in these histories. In the second book of Kings, and the first and second of Chronicles, it is mentioned only twelve times, and some of them are merely repetitions of the same instance. If the Sabbath is so seldom spoken of in this long historical series, it can be nothing wonderful if it should not be mentioned in the summary account of the patriarchal ages.

“But though the Sabbath is not expressly mentioned in the history of the antediluvian and patriarchal ages, the observance of it seems to be intimated by the division of time into weeks. In relating the catastrophe of the flood, the historian informs us, that Noah, at the end of forty days opened the window of the ark; ‘and he stayed yet other seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; and the dove came in to him in the evening, and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf, plucked off. So Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. And he stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove, which returned not again unto him any more.’ The term ‘week’ is used by Laban in reference to the nuptials of Leah, when he says, ‘Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also, for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.’ A week of days is here plainly signified, the same portion of time which, in succeeding ages, was set apart for nuptial festivities, as appears from the book of Esther, where the marriage feast of Vashti lasted seven days, and more particularly from the account of Samson's marriage feast. Joseph and his brethren mourned for their father Jacob seven days.

“That the computation of time by weeks obtained from the most remote antiquity, appears from the traditionary and written records of all nations, the numerous and undeniable testimonies of which

have been so often collected and displayed, that it would be worse than useless to repeat them.

“Combining all these testimonies together, they fully establish the primitive custom of measuring time by the division of weeks; and prevailing as it did among nations separated by distance, having no mutual intercourse, and wholly distinct in manners, it must have originated from one common source, which cannot reasonably be supposed any other than the memory of the creation preserved in the Noahic family, and handed down to their posterities. The computation by days, months, and years, arises from obvious causes, the revolution of the moon, and the annual and diurnal revolutions of the sun; but the division of time by periods of seven days, has no foundation in any natural or visible septenary change; it must, therefore, have originated from some positive appointment, or some tradition anterior to the dispersion of mankind, which cannot well be any other than the memory of the creation and primeval blessing of the seventh day.

“Dr. Paley’s next argument is, that ‘there is not in the sixteenth chapter of Exodus any intimation that the Sabbath, when appointed to be observed, was only the revival of an ancient institution which had been neglected, forgotten, or suspended.’ The contrary, however, seems the more natural inference from the narrative. It is mentioned exactly in the way an historian would, who had occasion to speak of a well-known institution. For instance, when the people were astonished at the double supply of manna on the sixth day, Moses observes, ‘This is that which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord;’ which, as far as we know, was never said previously to this transaction, but at the close of the creation. This, surely, is the language of a man referring to a matter with which the people were already acquainted, and recalling it to their remembrance. In the fifth verse, God promises on the sixth day twice as much as they gather daily. For this no reason is given, which seems to imply that it was already known to the children of Israel. Such a promise, without some cause being assigned for so extraordinary a circumstance, would have been strange indeed; and if the reason had been, that the seventh day was now for the first time to be appointed a festival, in which no work was to be done, would not the author have stated this

circumstance? Again, it is said, ‘Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none;’ and ‘for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days.’ Here the Sabbath is spoken of as an ordinance with which the people were familiar. A double quantity of manna was given on the sixth day, *because* the following day, as they well knew, was the Sabbath in which God rested from his work, and which was to be kept as a day of rest, and holy to the Lord. It is likewise mentioned incidentally, as it were, in the recital of the miraculous supply of manna, without any notice of its being enjoined upon that occasion for the first time; which would be a very surprising circumstance, had it been the original establishment of the Sabbath. In short, the entire phraseology in the account of this remarkable transaction accords with the supposition, and with it alone, that the Sabbath had been long established, and was well known to the Israelites.

“That no neglect of the Sabbath is ‘imputed either to the inhabitants of the old world, or to any of the family of Noah,’ is very true; but, so far from there being any proof of such negligence, there is, on the contrary, as we have seen, much reason for believing that it was duly observed by the pious Sethites of the old world, and after the deluge, by the virtuous line of Shem. True, likewise, it is, that there is not ‘any permission recorded to dispense with the institution during the captivity of the Jews in Egypt, or on any other public emergency. But where is the evidence that such a permission would be consistent with the Divine wisdom? And if not, none such would either be given or recorded. At any rate, it is difficult to see how the silence of Scripture concerning such a circumstance, can furnish an argument in vindication of the opinion, that the Sabbath was first appointed in the wilderness. — To allege it for this purpose, is just as inconclusive as it would be to argue that the Sabbath was instituted subsequent to the return of the Jews from Babylonia, because neither the observance of it, nor any permission to dispense with it, during the captivity, is recorded in Scripture.

“The passage in the second chapter of Genesis is next adduced by Dr. Paley, and he pronounces it not inconsistent with his opinion; ‘for as the seventh day was erected into a Sabbath, on account of God’s resting upon that day from the work of creation, it was

natural enough in the historian, when he had related the history of the creation, and of God's ceasing from it on the seventh day, to add, 'and God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that on it he had rested from all his work which God had created and made;' although the blessing and sanctification, that is, the religious distinction and appropriation of that day, were not actually made till many ages afterward. The words do not assert, that God *then* 'blessed' and 'sanctified' the seventh day, but that he blessed and sanctified it *for that reason*; and if any ask, why the Sabbath, or sanctification of the seventh day, was *then* mentioned, if it were not *then* appointed, the answer is at hand, the order of connection, and not of time, introduced the mention of the Sabbath in the history of the subject which it was ordained to commemorate.'

“That the Hebrew historian, in the passage here referred to, uses a prolepsis or anticipation, and alludes to the Mosaical institution of the Sabbath, is maintained by some of the ancient fathers, by Waehner, Heidegger, Beausobre, by Le Clerc, Rosenmuller, Geddes, Dawson, and other commentators, and by the general stream of those writers who regard the Sabbath as peculiar to the Jews. Yet this opinion is built upon the assumption, that the book of Genesis was not written till after the giving of the law, which *may* be the fact, but of which most unquestionably there is no proof. But waiving this consideration, it is scarcely possible to conceive a greater violence to the sacred text, than is offered by this interpretation. It attributes to the inspired author the absurd assertion, that God rested on the seventh day from all his works which he had made, and THEREFORE about two thousand five hundred years after, God blessed and sanctified the seventh day. It may be as well imagined that God had finished his work on the seventh day, but rested on some other seventh day, as that he rested the day following the work of creation, and afterward blessed and sanctified another. Not the slightest evidence appears for believing that Moses followed 'the order of connection, and not of time,' for no reasonable motive can be assigned for *then* introducing the mention of it, if it was not *then* appointed. The design of the sacred historian clearly is, to give a faithful account of the origin of the world; and both the *resting* on the seventh day, and the *blessing* it, have too close a connection to be separated: if the one took place

immediately after the work of creation, as concluded, so did the other. To the account of the production of the universe, the whole narrative is confined; there is no intimation of subsequent events, nor the most distant allusion to Jewish ceremonies; and it would be most astonishing if the writer deserted his grand object to mention one of the Hebrew ordinances which was not appointed till ages afterward.

“But according to Dr. Geddes, the opinion of a prolepsis derives some confirmation from the original Hebrew, which he renders, ‘On the sixth day God completed all the work which he had to do; and on the SEVENTH day, ceased from doing any of his works. God, therefore, blessed the seventh day, and made it holy, because on it he ceased from all his works, which he had ordained to do.’ This version, he says, is ‘in the supposition that the writer refers to the Jewish Sabbath:’ of course it was designedly adapted to an hypothesis; but, notwithstanding this suspicious circumstance, it is not easy to determine how it differs in sense from the received translation, as it leaves the question entirely undecided *when* this blessing and sanctification took place. — The proposed version, however, is opposed by those in the Polyglott, and by the generality of translators, who render the particle *vau* at the beginning of the third verse, as a copulative, not as an illative; and it is surprising how a sound Hebrew scholar can translate it otherwise. In short, nothing can be more violent and unnatural than the proleptical interpretation; and if we add, that it rests upon the unproved assumption, that the record in question was written *after* the delivery of the law, it must appear so devoid of critical support, as not to require a moment’s hesitation in rejecting it.” (*Holden on the Sabbath.*)

So satisfactorily does it appear that the institution of the Sabbath is historically narrated in Genesis: and it follows from thence, that the law of the Sabbath is universal, and not peculiar to the Jews. God blessed and sanctified it, not certainly for himself, but for his creatures; that it might be a day of special *blessing* to them, and be *set apart*, not only from unholy acts, for they are forbidden on every day; but from *common* uses. It was thus stamped with a hallowed character from the commencement, and in works of a hallowed character ought it therefore to be employed.

The obligation of a Sabbatical observance upon Christians being thus established, the inquiry which naturally follows, is, In what manner is this great festival, at once so ancient and so venerable, and intended to commemorate events so illustrious and so important to mankind, to be celebrated? Many have spoken of the difficulty of settling rules of this kind; but this will ordinarily vanish, if we consent to be guided fully by the principles of Scripture.

We allow that it requires judgment, and prudence, and charity, and above all, a mind *well disposed* to the spiritual employment of the Sabbath, to make a right application of the law. But this is the case with other precepts also; such, for instance, as the loving our neighbour as ourselves: with respect to which we seldom hear any complaint of difficulty in the application. But, even if some want of special direction should be felt, this can only affect minor details; and probably the matter has been so left by the Lawgiver, to “try us, and prove us, and to know what is in our heart.” Something may have been reserved, in this case, for the exercise of spontaneous obedience; for that generous construction of the precept which will be dictated by devotion and gratitude; and for the operation of a feeling of indignant shame, that the only day which God has reserved to himself, should be grudged to him, and trenched upon by every petty excuse of convenience, interest, or sloth, and pared down, and negotiated for, in the spirit of one who seeks to overreach another. Of this we may be assured, that he who is most anxious to find exceptions to the general rule, will, in most cases, be a defaulter upon even his own estimate of the general duty.

The only real difficulties with which men have entangled themselves, have arisen from the want of clear and decided views of the law of the Sabbath as it is a matter of express revelation. There are two extremes, either of which must be fertile of perplexity. The first is, to regard the Sabbath as a prudential institution, adopted by the primitive Church, and resting upon civil and ecclesiastical authority; a notion which has been above refuted. For if this theory be adopted, it is impossible to find satisfactory rules, either in the Old or New Testament, applicable to the subject; and we may therefore cease to wonder at that variety of opinions, and those vacillations between duty and license, which have been found in different Churches, and among their theological writers. The difficulty of establishing any rule at all, to which conscience is strictly amenable, is then evident, and indeed entirely insuperable; and men in vain attempt to make a partial Sabbath by

their own authority, when they reject “the day which the Lord hath made.” If, on the other hand, a proper distinction is not preserved between the moral law of the Jews, which re-enacts the still more ancient institution of the Sabbath, (a law we have seen to be obligatory upon all Christians, to the end of time,) and the political and ceremonial law of that people, which contains particular rules as to the observance of the Sabbath; fixing both the day on which it was to be held, viz. the seventh of the week, and issuing certain prohibitions not applicable to all people; which branch of the Mosaic law was brought to an end by Christ, — difficulties will arise from this quarter. One difficulty will respect the day; another the hour of the diurnal circle from which the Sabbath must commence. Other difficulties will arise from the inconvenience or impossibility of accommodating the Judaical precepts to countries and manners totally dissimilar; and others, from the degree of civil delinquency and punitiveness with which violations of the Sabbath ought to be marked in a Christian state. The kindling of fires, for instance, in their dwellings was forbidden to the Jews; but for extending this to harsher climates there is no authority. This rule would make the Sabbath a day of bodily suffering, and, in some cases, of danger to health, which is inconsistent with that merciful and festival character which the Sabbath was designed every where to bear. The same observation may apply to the cooking of victuals, which was also prohibited to the Jews by express command. To the gathering of sticks on the Sabbath the penalty of death was assigned, on one occasion, for reasons probably arising out of the theocratical government of the Jews; but surely this is no precedent for making the violation of the Sabbath a capital crime in the code of a Christian country.

Between the decalogue, and the political and ceremonial laws which followed, there is a marked distinction. They were given at two different times, and in a different manner; and, above all, the former is referred to in the New Testament, as of perpetual obligation; the other as peculiar, and as abolished by Christ. It does not follow, however, from this, that those precepts in the Levitical code, which relate to the Sabbath, are of no use to us. They show us how the general law was carried into its detail of application by the great Legislator, who condescended to be at once a civil and an ecclesiastical Governor of a chosen people; and though they are not in all respects binding upon us, in their full form, they all embody general interpretations of the fourth command of the decalogue, to which, as far as they are applicable to a people otherwise circumstanced, respect is

reverently and devoutly to be had. The prohibition to buy and sell on the Sabbath is as applicable to us as to the Jews; so is that against travelling on the Sabbath, except for purposes of religion, which was allowed to them also. If we may lawfully kindle fires in our dwellings, yet we may learn from the law peculiar to the Jews, to keep domestic services under restraint; if we may cook victuals for necessity and comfort, we are to be restrained from feasting; if violations of the Sabbath are not to be made capital crimes by Christian governors, the enforcement of a decent external observance of the rest of the Sabbath is a lawful use of power, and a part of the duty of a Christian magistrate.

But the rules by which the observance of the Sabbath is clearly explained, will be found in abundant copiousness and evidence in the original command; in the decalogue; in incidental passages of Scripture, which refer not so much to the political law of the Jews, as to the universal moral code; and in the discourses and acts of Christ, and his apostles: so that, independent of the Levitical code, we have abundant guidance. It is a day of *rest* from worldly pursuits; a day *sanctified*, that is, set apart for holy uses, which are the proper and the only lawful occupations of the day; it is a day of *public worship*, or, as it is expressed in the Mosaic law, “of holy convocation,” or assembly; — a day for *the exercise of mercy* to man and beast; — a day for the *devout commemoration*, by religious acts and meditations, of the creation and redemption of the world; and, consequently, for the cultivation of that *spirit* which is suitable to such exercises, by laying aside all worldly *cares* and *pleasures*; to which holy exercises there is to be a full appropriation of the *seventh part of our time*; necessary sleep, and engagements of real necessity, as explained by our Saviour, only being excluded.

Works of charity and mercy were not excluded by the rigour of the Mosaic law, much less by the Christian dispensation. The rule of doing good on the Sabbath day has, however, sometimes been interpreted with too much laxity, without considering that such acts form no part of the *reason* for which that day was sanctified, and that they are therefore to be grounded upon the necessity of *immediate* exertion. The secularity connected with certain public charities has often been pushed beyond this rule of necessity, and as such has become unlawful.

The reason generally given for this, is, that men cannot be found to give time on the week day to the management of such charities: and they will

never be found, while the rule is brought down to convenience. Men's principles are to be raised, and not the command lowered. And when ministers perseveringly do their duty, and but a few conscientious persons support them, the whole will be found practicable and easy. Charities are pressed either upon our feelings or our interests, and sometimes on both; and when they become really urgent, time will be found for their management, without "robbing God," and laying down that most debasing of all principles, that our sacrifices are to cost us nothing. The teaching of writing in Sunday schools has been pleaded for on the same assumed ground of necessity; but in all well and religiously conducted institutions of this kind it has been found quite practicable to accomplish the object in a lawful manner; and even if it had not, there was no obligation binding as to that practice, equal to that which binds us to obey the law of God. It is a work which comes not under any of our Lord's exceptions: it may be a benevolent thing; but it has in it no character of *mercy*, either to the bodies or to the souls of men.

As to amusements and recreations, which, when "*innocent*," that is, we suppose, not "*immoral*," are sometimes pleaded for, by persons who advocate the serious observance of the Lord's day, but a few words are necessary. If to public worship we are to add a more than ordinary attention to the duties of the family and the closet, which all such persons allow, then there is little time for recreation and amusement; and if there were, the heart which is truly impressed with duties so sacred, and has entered into their spirit, can have no relish for them. Against every temptation of this kind, the words of the pious Archbishop Dawes may serve as a salutary admonition: —

"Dost thou require of me, O Lord, but one day in seven for thy more especial service, when as all my times, all my days, are thy due tribute and shall I grudge thee that one day? Have I but one day in the week a peculiar season of nurturing and training up my soul for heavenly happiness, and shall I think the whole of this too much, and judge my duties at an end, when the public offices of the Church are only ended? Ah! where, in such a case, is my zeal, my sincerity, my constancy, and perseverance of holy obedience? Where my love unto, my delight and relish in, pious performances? Would those that are thus but half Christians be content to be half saved? Would those who are thus not far from the kingdom of heaven, be willing to be utterly excluded thence for arriving no

nearer to a due observance of the Lord's day? Am I so afraid of sabbatizing with the Jews, that I carelessly omit keeping the day as a good Christian? Where can be the harm of overdoing in God's worship, suppose I could overdo? But when my Saviour has told me, after I have done all, I am still an unprofitable servant, where is the hazard, where the possibility, of doing too much; whereas in doing too little, in falling short of performing a due obedience on the Sabbath, I may also fall short of eternal life?"

## CHAPTER 4. — MORALS — DUTIES TO OUR NEIGHBOUR.

WHEN our duty to others is summed up in the general epitome of the second table, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;” although love must be so taken as to include many other principles and acts, yet we are thereby taught the source from which they truly spring, when performed evangelically, and also that UNIVERSAL CHARITY is to be the habitual and reigning affection of the heart, in all our relations to our fellow creatures.

This affection is to be considered in its SOURCE.

That source is a regenerated state of mind. We have shown that the love of God springs from the gift of the Holy Ghost to those who are justified by faith in Christ, and that every sentiment which, in any other circumstances, assumes this designation, is imperfect or simulated. We make the same remark as to the love of our neighbour. It is an imperfect or simulated sentiment, if it flow not from the love of God, the sure mark of a regenerate nature. We here also see the superior character of *Christian* morals, and of morals when kept in connection, as they ought always to be, with the doctrines of the Gospel, and their operation in the heart. There may, indeed, be a degree of natural benevolence; the indirect influence of a benevolent nature may counteract the selfish and the malevolent feelings; and education when well directed, will come in to the aid of nature. Yet the principle, as a religious one, and in its full operation, can only result from a supernatural change of our nature, because that only can subdue those affections which counteract benevolence and charity in their efficient and habitual manifestations.

This affection is also to be considered in respect of what it EXCLUDES.

It excludes all *anger* beyond that degree of resentment which a culpable action in another may call forth, in order to mark the sense we entertain of its evil, and to impress that evil upon the offender, so that we may lead him to repent of it, and forsake it. This seems the proper rule by which to distinguish lawful anger from that which is contrary to charity, and therefore malevolent and sinful. It excludes *implacability*; for if we do not promptly and generously forgive others their trespasses, this is deemed to be so great a violation of that law of love which ought to bind men

together, that our heavenly Father will not forgive us. It excludes all *revenge*; so that we are to exact no punishment of another for offences against ourselves: and though it be lawful to call in the penalties of the laws for crimes against society, yet this is never to be done on the principle of private revenge; but on the public ground, that law and government are ordained of God, which produces a case that comes under the inspired rule, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." It excludes all *prejudice*; by which is meant a harsh construction of men's motives and characters upon surmise, or partial knowledge of the facts, accompanied with an inclination to form an ill opinion of them in the absence of proper evidence. This appears to be what the Apostle Paul means, when he says, "Charity thinketh no evil." It excludes all *ensoriousness* or *evil speaking*, when the end is not the correction of the offender, or when a declaration of the truth as to one person is not required by our love and duty to another; for whenever the end is merely to lower a person in the estimation of others, it is resolvable solely into a splenetic and immoral feeling. It excludes all those *aggressions*, whether petty or more weighty, which may be made upon the interests of another, when the law of the case, or even the abstract right, might not be against our claim. These are always complex cases, and can but occasionally occur; but the rule which binds us to do unto others as we would they should do unto us, binds us to act upon the benevolent view of the case; and to forego the rigidity of right. Finally, it excludes, as limitations to its exercise, all those *artificial distinctions* which have been created by men, or by providential arrangements, or by accidental circumstances. Men of all nations, of all colours, of all conditions, are the objects of the unlimited precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Kind feelings produced by natural instincts, by intercourse, by country, may call the love of our neighbour into warmer exercise as to individuals or classes of men, or these may be considered as distinct and special, though similar affections superadded to this universal charity; but as to all men, this charity is an efficient affection, excluding all ill will, and all injury.

But its ACTIVE EXPRESSION remains to be considered.

It is not a merely negative affection; but it brings forth rich and varied fruits. It produces a feeling of *delight* in the happiness of others, and thus destroys envy; it is the source of *sympathy* and *compassion*; it opens the hand in *liberality* for the supply of the wants of others; it gives *cheerfulness* to every service undertaken in the cause of others; it resists

the wrong which may be inflicted upon them; and it will run hazards of health and life for their sakes. It has special respect to the *spiritual interests and salvation* of men; and thus it instructs, persuades, reproves the ignorant and vicious; counsels the simple; comforts the doubting and perplexed; and rejoices in those gifts and graces of others, by which society may be enlightened and purified. The zeal of apostles, the patience of martyrs, the travels and labours of evangelists in the first ages, were all animated by this affection; and the earnestness of preachers in all ages, and the more private labours of Christians for the benefit of the souls of men, with the operations of those voluntary associations which send forth missionaries to the heathen, or distributes Bibles and tracts, or conduct schools, are all its visible expressions before the world. A principle of philanthropy may be conceived to exist independent of the influence of active and efficient Christianity; but it has always expended itself either in good wishes, or, at most, in feeble efforts, chiefly directed to the mitigation of a little temporary external evil. Except in connection with faith religion, and that the religion of the heart, wrought and maintained there by the acknowledged influences of the Holy Spirit, the love of mankind has never exhibited itself under such views and acts as those we have just referred to. It has never been found in characters *naturally* selfish and obdurate; has never disposed men to make great and painful sacrifices for others; never sympathized with spiritual wretchedness; never been called forth into its highest exercises by considerations drawn from the immortal relations of man to eternity; never originated large plans for the illumination and moral culture of society; never fixed upon the grand object to which it is now bending the hearts, the interests, and hopes of the universal Church, the conversion of the world. Philanthropy, in systems of mere ethics, like their love of God, is a greatly *inferior* principle to that which is enjoined by Christianity, and infused by its influence; — another proof of the folly of separating morals from revealed truth, and of the necessity of cultivating them upon evangelical principles.

The same conclusion will be established, if we consider those WORKS OF MERCY which the principle of universal philanthropy will dictate, and which form a large portion of our “duty to our neighbour.” It is more the design of this part of the present work, to exhibit the peculiar nature and perfection of the morals of Christianity, than to consider moral duties in detail; and, therefore, it is only necessary to assume what is obvious to all, that the exercise of practical mercy to the needy and miserable, is a moral

duty clearly revealed, including also the application of a part of our property to benefit mankind in other respects, as we have opportunity. But let us ask, under what rules can the *quantum* of our exertions in doing good to others be determined, except by the authority of revealed religion? It is clear that there is an antagonist principle of selfishness in man, which counteracts our charities; and that the demands of personal gratification, and of family interests, and of show and expense in our modes of living, are apt to take up so large a share of what remains after our necessities, and the lawful demands of station, and a prudent provision for old age and for our families after our decease, are met, that a very small portion is wont to be considered as lawfully disposable, under all these considerations, for purposes of general beneficence. If we have no rules or principles, it is clear that the most limited efforts may pass for very meritorious acts; or that they will be left to be measured only by the different degrees of natural compassion in man, or by some immoral principle, such as the love of human praise. There is nothing in any mere system of morals to direct in such cases; certainly nothing to compel either the principles or the heart. Here then we shall see also in how different a predicament this interesting branch of morality stands, when kept in close and inseparable connection with Christianity. It is true, that we have no specific rule as to the quantum of our givings in the Scriptures; and the reason of this is not inapparent. Such a rule must have been branched out into an inconvenient number of detailed directions to meet every particular case; it must have respected the different and changing states of society and civilization; it must have controlled men's savings as well as givings, because the latter are dependent upon them; it must have prescribed modes of dress, and modes of living: all which would have left cases still partially touched or wholly unprovided for, and the multiplicity of rules might have been a trap to our consciences, rather than the means of directing them. There is also a more general reason for this omission. The exercise of mercy is a work of the affections; it must have, therefore, something free and spontaneous in it; and it was designed to be voluntary, that the moral effect produced upon society might be to bind men together in a softer bond, and to call forth reciprocally good affections. To this the stern character of particular laws would have been inimical. Christianity teaches mercy, by general principles which at once sufficiently direct and leave to the heart the free play of its affections.

The general LAW is express and unequivocal: "As ye have opportunity do good unto all men, and especially to them that are of the household of faith." "To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." A most important and influential principle, to be found in no mere system of ethics, is also contained in the revelation of a particular relation in which we all stand to God, and on which we must be judged at the last day. We are "stewards," "servants," to whom the great Master has committed his "goods," to be used according to his directions. We have nothing, therefore, of our own, no right in property, except under the conditions on which it is committed to us; and we must give an account for our use of it, according to the rule. A rule of proportion is also in various passages of Scripture expressly laid down: "Where little is given, little is required; where much is given much is required." "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not." It is a farther rule, that our charities should be both cheerful and abundant. "See that ye *abound* in this grace also," "not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver." These general rules and principles being laid down, the appeal is made to the heart, and men are left to the influence of the spiritual and grateful affections excited there. All the venerable examples of Scripture are brought to bear upon the free and liberal exercises of beneficence, crowned with the example of our Saviour: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich." An appeal is made to man's gratitude for the blessings of Providence to himself, and he is enjoined to give "as the Lord hath prospered him." Our fellow creatures are constantly presented to us under tender relations, as our "brethren;" or, more particularly, as "of the household of faith." Special promises are made of God's favour, and blessing, as the reward of such acts in the present life: "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work;" and finally, although every notion of merit is excluded: yet the rewards of eternity are represented as to be graciously dispensed, so as specially to distinguish and honour every "work of faith," and "labour of love." Under so powerful an *authority*, so explicit a general *directory*, and so effectual an *excitement*, is this branch of morality placed by the Gospel.

As our religion enjoins charity, so also it prescribes JUSTICE. As a mutual dependence has been established among men, so also there are mutual *rights*, in the rendering of which to each other, justice, when considered as a social virtue, consists.

Various definitions and descriptions of justice are found among moralists and jurists, of different degrees of importance and utility to those who write, and to those who study, formal treatises on its collective or separate branches. The distribution of justice into *ethical*, *economical*, and *political*, is more suited to our purpose, and is sufficiently comprehensive. The first considers all mankind as on a level; the second regards them as associated into families, under the several relations of husband and wife, parents and children, masters and servants; and the third comprehends them as united into public states, and obliged to certain duties, either as magistrates or people. On all these the rules of conduct in Scripture are explicit and forcible.

ETHICAL JUSTICE, as it considers mankind as on a level, chiefly therefore respects what are usually called men's *natural rights*, which are briefly summed up in three, — *life*, *property*, and *liberty*.

The natural right to *life* is guarded by the precept, "Thou shalt not kill;" and it is also limited by the more ancient injunction to the sons of Noah, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." In a state of society, indeed, this right may be farther limited by a government, and capital punishments be extended to other crimes, (as we see in the Mosaic law,) provided the law be equally binding on all offenders, and rest upon the necessity of the case, as determined by the good of the whole community; and also that in every country professing Christianity, the merciful as well as the righteous character of that religion be suffered to impress itself upon its legislation. But against all individual authority the life of man is absolutely secured, and not only so, but anger, which is the first principle of violence, and which proceeds first to malignity and revenge, and then to personal injuries, is prohibited, under the penalty of the Divine wrath; a lofty proof of the superior character of the Christian rule of justice.

In *property*, lawfully acquired, that is, acquired without injury, to others, every man has also a natural right. This right also may be restrained in society, without injustice, seeing it is but the price which every man pays for protection, and other advantages of the social state; but here also the

necessity of the case, resting upon the benefit of the community, is to be the rule of this modification of the natural claim. The law too must lie equally upon all, *cæteris paribus*; and every individual whose right of property is thus interfered with must have his due share of the common advantage. Against individual aggression the right of property is secured by the Divine law, “Thou shalt not steal;” and by another law which carries the restraint up to the very principle of justice in the heart, “Thou shalt not covet:” covetousness being that corrupt affection from which injuries done to others in their property arise. The Christian injunction, to be “*content* with such things as we have,” is another important security. The rule which binds rulers and governments in their interferences with this natural right of property, comes under the head of political justice.

*Liberty* is another natural right, which by individual authority, at least, cannot be interfered with. Hence “man stealing,” the object of which is to reduce another to slavery, by obtaining forcible possession of his person, and compelling his labour, is ranked with crimes of the greatest magnitude in the New Testament; and against it the special vengeance of God is threatened. By the Jewish law also, it was punished with death. How far the natural right which every man has to his own liberty may, like the natural right to property, be restrained by public authority, is a point on which different opinions have been held. Prisoners of war were formerly considered to be absolute *captives*, the right of which claim is involved in the question of the right of war. Where one can be justified, so may the other; since a surrender of the person in war is the commutation of liberty for life.<sup>15</sup> In the more humane practice of modern warfare, an exchange of prisoners is effected; but even this supposes an acquired right on each side in the prisoners, and a commutation by an exchange. Should the progeny of such prisoners of war, doomed, as by ancient custom, to perpetual servitude, be also kept in slavery, and the purchase of slaves also be practised, the question which then arises is one which tries the whole case of slavery, as far as public law is concerned. Among the patriarchs there was a mild species of domestic servitude, distinct from that of captives of war. Among the Jews, a Hebrew might be sold for debt, or sell himself when poor, but only till the year of release. After that, his continuation in a state of slavery was perfectly voluntary. The Jews might, however, hold foreigners as slaves for life. Michaelis has well observed, that, by the restrictions of his law, Moses remarkably mitigated the rigours of slavery. “This is, as it were, the spirit of his laws respecting it. He appears to have

regarded it as a hardship, and to have disapproved of its severities. Hence we find him, in <sup><182315></sup>Deuteronomy 23:15, 16, ordaining, that no foreign servant, who sought for refuge among the Israelites, should be delivered up to his master." (*Commentaries on the Laws of Moses.*) This view of the case, we may add, will probably afford the reason why slavery was at all allowed under the Jewish dispensation. The general state of society in the surrounding nations might perhaps render it a necessary evil; but in other countries it existed in forms harsh and oppressive, while the merciful nature of the Mosaic institute impresses upon it a mild and mitigated character, in recognition of man's natural rights, and as an example to other countries. And to show how great a contrast with our modern colonial slavery, the case of slaves among the Jews presented, we may remark, that all foreign slaves were circumcised, and therefore initiated into the true religion; that they had the full and strict advantage of the Sabbath confirmed to them by express statute; that they had access to the solemn religious festivals of the Jews, and partook of the feasts made upon the offerings; that they could possess property, as appears from <sup><182549></sup>Leviticus 25:49, and <sup><10910></sup>2 Samuel 9:10; and that all the fruits which grew spontaneously during the Sabbatical year were given to them, and to the indigent. Michaelis has also showed, that not only was the ox not muzzled when treading out the corn, but that the slaves and day labourers might eat without restraint of the fruits they were gathering in their master's service, and drink of the wine they pressed from the wine press. (*Commentaries on the Laws of Moses*, art. 130.) The Jewish law may therefore be considered not so much as controlling the natural right which man has to liberty, and so authorizing the infraction of that right under certain circumstances, but as coming in to regulate and to soften a state of things already existing, and grown into general practice. All, therefore, that can be fairly inferred from the existence of slavery under that law, is, that a legislature, in certain cases, may be justified in mitigating, rather than abolishing, that evil. But even here, since the Legislator was in fact God, whose right to dispose of his creatures cannot be questioned, and since also the nations neighbouring to the Jews were under a malediction because of their idolatries, the Jewish law can be no *rule* to a Christian state; and all arguments drawn from it in favour of perpetual slavery, suppose that a mere earthly legislature is invested with the powers and prerogatives of the Divine Legislator of the Jews, which of course vitiates the whole reasoning.

As to the existence of slavery in Christian states, every government, as soon as it professes to be Christian, binds itself to be regulated by the principles of the New Testament; and though a part of its subjects should at that time be in a state of servitude, and their sudden emancipation might be obviously an injury to society at large, it is bound to show that its spirit and tendency is as inimical to slavery as is the Christianity which it professes. All the injustice and oppression against which it can guard that condition, and all the mitigating regulations it can adopt, are obligatory upon it; and since also every Christian slave is enjoined by apostolic authority to choose freedom, when it is possible to attain it, as being a better state, and more befitting a Christian man, so is every Christian master bound, by the principle of loving his neighbour, and more especially his "brother in Christ," as himself, to promote his passing into that better and more Christian state. To the instruction of the slaves in religion would every such Christian government also be bound, and still farther to adopt measures for the final extinction of slavery; the rule of its proceeding in this case being the accomplishment of this object as soon as is compatible with the real welfare of the enslaved portion of its subjects themselves, and not the consideration of the losses which might be sustained by their proprietors, which, however, ought to be compensated by other means, as far as they are just, and equitably estimated.

If this be the mode of proceeding clearly pointed out by Christianity to a state on its first becoming Christian, when previously, and for ages, the practice of slavery had grown up with it; how much more forcibly does it impose its obligation upon nations involved in the guilt of the modern African slavery! They professed Christianity when they commenced the practice. They entered upon a traffic which *ab initio* was upon their own principles, unjust and cruel. They had no rights of war to plead against the natural rights of the first captives; who were in fact stolen, or purchased from the stealers, knowing them to be so. The governments themselves never acquired any right of property in the parents; they have none in their descendants, and can acquire none; as the thief who steals cattle cannot, should he feed and defend them, acquire any right of property, either in them or the stock they may produce, although he should be at the charge of rearing them. These governments not having a right of property in their colonial slaves, could not transfer any right of property in them to their present masters, for it could not give what it never had; nor, by its connivance at the robberies and purchases of stolen human beings alter the

essential injustice of the transaction. All such governments are therefore clearly bound, as they fear God and dread his displeasure, to restore all their slaves to the condition of free men. Restoration to their friends and country is now out of the question; they are bound to protect them where they are, and have the right to exact their obedience to good laws in return; but property in them they cannot obtain; — their natural right to liberty is untouched and inviolable. The manner in which this right is to be restored, we grant, is in the power of such governments to determine, provided that proceeding be regulated by the principles above laid down, — First, that the emancipation be sincerely determined upon, at some time future: Secondly, that it be not delayed beyond the period which the *general interest of the slaves themselves* prescribes, and which is to be judged of benevolently, and without any bias of judgment, giving the advantage of every doubt to the injured party. Thirdly, that all possible means be adopted to render freedom a good to them. it is only under such circumstances that the continuance of slavery among us can cease to be a national sin, calling down, as it has done, and must do until a process of emancipation be honestly commenced, the just displeasure of God. What compensations may be justly claimed from the governments, that is, the public of those countries who have entangled themselves in this species of unjust dealing, by those who have purchased men and women whom no one had the right to sell, and no one had the right to buy, is a perfectly distinct question, and ought not to turn repentance and justice out of their course, or delay their operations for a moment. Perhaps, such is the unfruitful nature of all wrong, that it may be found, that, as free labourers, the slaves would be of equal or more value to those who employ them, than at present. If otherwise, as in some degree “all have sinned,” the real loss ought to be borne by all, when that loss is fairly and impartially ascertained; but of which loss, the slave interest, if we may so call it, ought in justice to bear more than an equal share, as having had the greatest gain.<sup>66</sup> The rules of Christian justice thus secure the three great natural rights of man; but it may be inquired whether he has himself the power of surrendering them at his own option?

And first with respect to LIFE.

Since government is an institution of God, it seems obligatory upon all men to live in a social state; and if so, to each is conceded the right of putting his life to hazard, when called upon by his government to defend that state from domestic rebellion or foreign war. So also we have the power to

*hazard* our lives to save a fellow creature from perishing. In times of persecution for religion, we are enjoined by our Lord to flee from one city to another; but when flight is cut off, we have the power to surrender life rather than betray our allegiance to Christ. According to the apostle's rule, "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren;" that is, for the Church and the cause of religion. In this case, and in some others, accompanied with danger to life, when a plain rule of duty is seen to be binding upon us, we are not only at liberty to take the risk, but are bound to do it; since it is more our duty to obey God than to take care of our health and life. These instances of devotion have been by some writers called "suicides of duty," a phrase which may well be dispensed with, although the sentiment implied in it is correct.

On suicide, properly so called, that is self murder, our modern moralists have added little to what is advanced by the ethical writers of Greece and Rome, to prove its unlawfulness; for, though suicide was much practised in those ancient states, and sometimes commended, especially by the Stoics, it was occasionally condemned. "We men," says Plato, "are all by the appointment of God in a certain prison or custody, which we ought not to break out of, or run away." So likewise Cicero: "God, the supreme governor of all things, forbids us to depart hence without his order. All pious men ought to have patience to continue in the body, as long as God shall please, who sent us hither; and not force themselves out of the world before he calls for them, lest they be found deserters of the station appointed them by God."

This is the reasoning which has generally satisfied our moralists on this subject, with the exception of some infidel sophists, and two or three writers of paradoxes in the Established Church, who have defended suicide, or affected to do so. Paley has added some other considerations, drawn from his doctrine of general tendency, and from the duties which are deserted, the injuries brought upon others, &c; but the whole only shows, that merely ethical reasoning furnishes but a feeble barrier against this offence against God, against society, and against ourselves, independent of the Holy Scriptures. There the prohibitions of a Divine law lie directly against this act, and also the whole spirit of that economy under which we are placed by almighty God.

It is very true, that, in the Old Testament history, we have a few instances of suicide among the Jews, which were not marked by any penal visitation,

as among modern nations, upon the remains of the deceased; such as the denial of honourable sepulture, &c. But this arose from the absence of all penalty in such cases in the Mosaic law. In this there was great reason; for the subject himself is by his own direful act put beyond the reach of human visitation; and every dishonour done to the inanimate corse is only punishment inflicted upon the innocent survivors, who, in most cases, have a large measure of suffering already entailed upon them. This was probably the humane reason for the silence of the Mosaic law as to the punishment of suicide.

But as the law of the two tables is of general moral obligation, although a part also of the municipal law of the Jews; as it concerned them as creatures, as well as subjects of the theocracy; it takes cognizance of acts not merely as prejudicial to society, but as offensive to God, and in opposition to his will as the ruler of the world. The precept, therefore, “Thou shalt not kill,” must be taken to forbid, not only murder properly so called, which is a crime against society, to be reached by human penalties, but also self destruction, which, though a crime also in a lower degree against society, no human penalties can visit, but is left, since the offender is out of the reach of man, wholly to the retribution of God. The absence of all *post mortem* penalties against suicide in the Mosaic law, is no proof, therefore, that it is not included in the prohibition, “Thou shalt not kill,” any more than the absence of all penalties in the same law against a covetous disposition, proves any thing against the precept, “Thou shalt not covet,” being interpreted to extend to the heart of man, although violences, thefts, and ether instances of covetousness, in *action only*, are restrained in the Mosaic law by positive penalties. Some have urged it, however, as a great absurdity, to allege this commandment as a prohibition of suicide. “When a Christian moralist,” says Dr. Whately, “is called on for a direct Scriptural precept against suicide, instead of replying that the Bible is not meant for a complete code of *laws*, but for a system of *motives* and *principles*, the answer frequently given is, ‘Thou shalt do no murder.’ Suicide, if any one considers the nature, and not the name of it, (self murder,) evidently wants the essential characteristic of murder, viz. the *hurt* and injury done to one’s neighbour, in depriving him of life, as well as to others by the *insecurity* they are in consequence liable to feel.” (*Elements of Logic*.) All this might be correct enough, but for one error into which the writer has fallen, — that of assuming that the precept is, “Thou shalt do no *murder*;” for if that were the term used in the strict

sense, we need not be told that suicide is not murder, which is only saying, that the killing one's self is not the killing another. The authorized translation uses the word "*kill*," "thou shalt not *kill*," as better rendering the Hebrew word, which has a similar latitude of meaning, and is used to express fortuitous homicide, and the act of depriving of life generally, as well as murder, properly so called. That the prohibition respects the killing of others with criminal intent, all agree, and Moses describes, ~~Numbers~~ Numbers 1:35, the circumstances which make that killing so criminal as to be punishable with death; but that he included the different kinds of homicide within the prohibition, is equally certain, because the Mosaic law takes cognizance of homicide, and provides for the due examination of its circumstances by the judges, and recognizes the custom of the Goel, or avenging of blood, and provides cities of refuge for the homicide; a provision which, however merciful, left the incautious manslayer subject to risks and inconveniences which had the nature of penalties. So tender was this law of the life of man! Moses, however, as a legislator; applying this great moral table of laws to practical legislation, could not extend the penalties under this prohibition farther than to these two cases, because in cases of suicide the offender is out of the reach of human power; but, as we see the precept extended beyond the case of murder with criminal intention, to homicide, and that the word used in the prohibition, "Thou shalt not *kill*," is so indefinite as to comprehend every act by which man is deprived of life, when it has no authority from God; it has been very properly extended by divines and Scriptural moralists, not only to homicide, but from that to *suicide*. This, indeed, appears to be its import, that it prohibits the taking away of human life in all cases, without authority from God, which authority he has lodged with human governments, the "powers ordained by him" for the regulation of mankind, in what relates to the peace and welfare of society; and whenever the life of man is taken away, except in cases sanctioned by human governments, proceeding upon the rules and principle, of the word of God, then the precept, "Thou shalt not *kill*," is directly violated. Dr. Whately, in the passage above adverted to, objects to suicide being called *self murder*, because this criminal act has not the qualities of that by which the life of *another* is intentionally and maliciously taken away; but if the deliberate and intentional deprivation of another of life, without authority from the Divine law, and from human laws established upon them, be that which, in fact, constitutes "murder," then is suicide entitled to be branded with the same odious appellation. The *circumstances* must, of necessity, differ; but

the act itself has essentially the same criminality, though not in the same degree, — it is the taking away of the life of a human being, without the authority of God, the maker and proprietor of all, and therefore in opposition to, and defiance of, his authority. That suicide has very deservedly received the *morally descriptive* appellation of *self murder*, will also appear from the reason given, in the first prohibition against murder, for making this species of violence a capital crime. In the precepts delivered to the sons of Noah, and, therefore, through them, to all their descendants, that is, to all mankind, that against murder is thus delivered, <sup><0006></sup>Genesis 9:6, “Whose sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed, *for in the image of God made he man.*” There is in this reason a manifest reference to the dignity put upon human nature, by its being endowed with a *rational* and *immortal spirit*. The crime of murder is made to lie, therefore, not merely in the putting to death the animal part of man’s nature, for this is merged in a higher consideration, which seems to be, the indignity done to the noblest of the works of God; and particularly, the value of life to an *immortal* being, accountable in another state for the actions done in this, and which ought, for this very reason, to be specially guarded, since death introduces him into changeless and eternal relations, which were not to lie at the mercy of human passions. Such moralists as the writer above quoted, would restrain the essential characteristics of an act of murder to the “hurt done to a neighbour in depriving him of life,” and the “insecurity” inflicted upon society; but in this ancient and universal law, it is made eminently to consist in contempt of the *image* of God in man, and its interference with man’s *immortal* interests and relations as a deathless spirit; and if so, then suicide bears upon it these deep and awful characteristics of murder. It is much more wisely said by Bishop Kidder, in his remarks upon this passage, that the reason given, — “for in the image of God made he man,” — is a farther aggravation of the sin of murder. It is a great trespass upon God, as it destroys his likeness; and *self murder*, upon this account, is forbidden as well as the killing of others.

Whatever weight may be due to the considerations urged by the moralists above quoted against this crime, — and every motive which may deter men from listening to the first temptation to so direful an act, is important, — yet the guards of Christianity must be acknowledged to be of a more powerful kind. For the principles of our religion cannot be understood without our perceiving, that, of almost all other crimes, wilful suicide ought most to be dreaded. It is a sin against God’s *authority*. He is “the

God of our life;" in "his hand our breath is;" and we usurp his sovereignty when we presume to dispose of it. As resulting from the pressure of mortifications of spirit, or the troubles of life, it becomes a sin, as arraiging his providential wisdom and goodness. It implies either an Atheistic denial of God's government, or a rebellious opposition to his permissive acts or direct appointments; it cannot be committed, therefore, when the mind is sound, but in the absence of all the Christian virtues, of humility, self denial, patience, and the fear and love of God, and only under the influence of pride, worldliness, forgetfulness of God, and contempt of him. It hides from the mind the realities of a future judgment, or it defies them; and it is consummated by the character of *unpardonableness*, because it places the criminal at once beyond the reach of mercy.

If no man has the right, then, to dispose of his own life by suicide, he has no right to hazard it in duels. The silence of the pulpits in those quarters where only the warning voice of the Christian preacher can be heard by that class of persons most addicted to this crime, is exceedingly disgraceful; for there can be little doubt that the palliating views of this practice taken by some ethical writers of celebrity, together with the loose reasonings of men of the world, have, from this neglect, exercised much influence upon many minds; and the consequence has been that hundreds, in this professedly Christian country, have fallen victims to false notions of honour, and to imperfect notions of the obligations of their religion. Paley has the credit of dealing with this vice with greater decision than many of our moralists. He classes it very justly with *murder*. "Murder is forbidden; and wherever human life is deliberately taken away, otherwise than by public authority, there is murder." (*Moral and Political Philosophy*.) "If unauthorized laws of honour be allowed to create exceptions to Divine prohibitions, there is an end to all morality, as founded in the will of the Deity; and the obligation of every duty may, at one time or other, be discharged by the caprice and fluctuations of fashion." (*Moral and Political Philosophy*.) The fact is, that we must either renounce Christianity, or try all cases by its rule. The question of the lawfulness of duelling is thus promptly disposed of. If I have received a personal injury, I am bound to forgive it, unless it be of such a nature that it becomes a duty to punish it by due course of law; but even then not in the spirit of revenge, but out of respect to the peace and welfare of society. If I have given offence, I am bound to acknowledge it, and to make reparation; and if my adversary will not be satisfied, and insists upon my staking my life against

his own, no considerations of reputation or disgrace, the good or ill opinion of men, who form their judgments in utter disregard to the laws of God, can have any more weight in this, than in any other case of immorality. The sin of duelling unites, in fact, the two crimes of suicide and of murder. He who falls in a duel is guilty of suicide, by voluntarily exposing himself to be slain; he by whom he falls is guilty of murder, as having shed man's blood without authority. Nay, the guilt of the two crimes unites in the same person. He who falls is a suicide in fact, and the murderer of another in intention; he by whom he falls is a murderer in fact, and so far a suicide as to have put his own life into imminent peril, in contempt of God's authority over him. He has contemned the "image of God in man," both in himself and in his brother. And where duels are not fatal on either side, the whole guilt is chargeable upon the parties, as a sin *purposed in the heart*, although, in that case, there is space left for repentance.

Life, then, is not disposable at the option of man, nor is PROPERTY itself, without respect to the rules of the Divine law; and here, too, we shall perceive the feebleness of the considerations urged, in merely moral systems, to restrain prodigal and wasteful expenditure, hazardous speculations, and even the obvious evil of gambling. Many weighty arguments, we grant, may be drawn against all these from the claims of children, and near relations, whose interests we are bound to regard, and whom we can have no right to expose even to the chance of being involved in the same ruin with ourselves. But these reasons can have little sway with those who fancy that they can keep within the verge of extreme danger, and who will plead their "natural right" to do what they will with their own. In cases, too, where there may be no children or dependent relatives, the individual would feel less disposed to acknowledge the force of this class of reasons, or think them quite inapplicable to his case. But Christianity enjoins "moderation" of the desires, and temperance in the gratification of the appetites, and in the show and splendour of life, even where a state of opulence can command them. It has its admonitions against the "love of money;" against "*willing to be rich,*" except as "*the Lord may prosper a man*" in the usual track and course of honest industry, — authoritative cautions which lie directly against hazardous speculations; and it warns such as despise them of the consequent "temptations" and spiritual "snares," destructive to habits of piety, and ultimately to the soul, into which they must fall, — considerations of vast moment, but peculiar to

itself, and quite out of the range of those moral systems which have no respect to its authority. Against gambling, in its most innocent forms, it sets its injunction, "Redeeming the time;" and in its more aggravated cases, it opposes to it not only the above considerations, as it springs from an unhallowed "love of money;" but the whole of that spirit and temper which it makes to be obligatory upon us, and which those evil and often diabolical excitements, produced by this habit, so fearfully violate. Above all, it makes property a *trust*, to be employed under the rules prescribed by Him who, as sovereign proprietor, has deposited it with us, which rules require its *use* certainly; (for the covetous are excluded from the kingdom of God;) but its use, first, for the supply of our wants, according to our station, with moderation; then, as a provision for children, and dependent relatives; finally, for purposes of charity and religion, in which "grace," as before stated, it requires us "to abound;" — and it enforces all these by placing us under the responsibility of accounting to God himself, in person, for the abuse or neglect of this trust, at the general judgment.

With respect to the third natural right, that of LIBERTY, it is a question which can seldom or never occur in the present state of society, whether a man is free to part with it for a valuable consideration. Under the law of Moses, this was certainly allowed; but a Christian man stands on different ground. To a pagan he would not be at liberty to enslave himself, because he is not at liberty to put to hazard his soul's interests, which might be interfered with by the control given to a pagan over his time and conduct. To a Christian he could not be at liberty to alienate himself, because, the spirit of Christianity being opposed to slavery, the one is not at liberty to buy, nor the other to sell, for reasons before given. I conclude, therefore, that no man can lawfully divest himself absolutely of his personal liberty, for any consideration whatever.

To the natural rights of life, property and liberty, may be added the right of CONSCIENCE.

By this is meant the right which a man has to profess his own opinions on subjects of religion, and to worship God in the mode which he deems most acceptable to him. Whether this, however, be strictly a *natural* right, like the three above mentioned, may be a subject of dispute, for then it would be *universal*, which is, perhaps, carrying the point too far. The matter may best be determined by considering the ground of that right, which differs much from the others we have mentioned. The right to life results both

from the appointment of God, and the absence of a superior or countervailing right in another to deprive us of it, until, at least, we forfeit that right to some third party, by some voluntary act of our own. This also applies to the rights of property and liberty. The right of professing particular religious opinions, and practising a particular mode of worship, can only rest upon a conviction that these are duties enjoined upon us by God. For since religion is a matter which concerns man and God, a man must know that it is obligatory upon him as a duty, and under fear of God's displeasure, to profess his opinions openly, and to practise some particular mode of worship.

To apply this to the case of persons all sincerely receiving the Bible as a revelation from God. Unquestionably it is a part of that revelation, that those who receive its doctrines should profess and attempt to propagate them; nor can they profess them in any other way than they interpret the meaning of the book which contains them. Equally clear is it, that the worship of God is enjoined upon man, and that publicly, and in collective bodies. From these circumstances, therefore, it results, that it is a *duty* which man owes to God to profess and to endeavour to propagate his honest views of the meaning of the Scriptures, and to worship God in the mode which he sincerely conceives is made obligatory upon him, by the same sacred volume. It is from this *duty* that the *right* of conscience flows, and from this alone; and it thus becomes a right of that nature which no earthly power has any authority to obstruct, because it can have no power to alter or to destroy the obligations which almighty God, the supreme governor, has laid upon his creatures.

It does not, however, follow from this statement, that human governments, professing to be regulated themselves by the principles of Christianity, have no authority to take cognizance of the *manner* in which this right of conscience is exercised. They are "ordained of God" to uphold their subjects in the exercise of their just rights respectively, and that without partiality. If, therefore, under a plea of conscience, one sect should interfere to obstruct others in a peaceable profession of their opinions, and a peaceable exercise of their worship; or should exercise its own so as to be vexatiously intrusive upon others, and in defiance of some rival sect; as for instance, in a Protestant country, if Roman Catholics were to carry the objects of their idolatry about the streets, instead of contenting themselves with worshipping in their own way, in their own chapels. In all such cases the government might be bound, in respect of the rights of other classes of

its subjects, to interfere by restraint, nor would it then trespass upon the rights of conscience, justly interpreted. Again, since “the powers that be are ordained of God,” for “a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well;” which evil doing and well doing are to be interpreted according to the common sense and agreement of mankind, and plainly refer to moral actions only; should any sect or individual, ignorantly, fanatically, or corruptly, so interpret the Scriptures as to suppose themselves free from moral obligation, and then proceed to practise their tenets by any such acts as violate the laws of well-ordered society, or by admitting indecencies into their modes of worship, as some fanatics in former times who used to strip themselves naked in their assemblies; here too a government would have the right to disregard the plea of conscience if set up, and to restrain such acts, and the teachers of them, as pernicious to society. But if the opinions professed by any sect, however erroneous they may be, and however zealously a sound and faithful Christian might be called by a sense of duty to denounce them as involving a corrupt conscience, or no conscience at all, and as dangerous or fatal to the salvation of those that hold them, do not interfere with the peace, the morals, and good order of society; it is not within the province of a government to animadvert upon them by force of law; since it was not established to judge of men’s sincerity in religion, nor of the tendency of opinions as they affect their salvation, but only to uphold the morals and good order of the community. So, likewise, what has been called by some worship, has been sometimes marked with great excesses of enthusiasm, and with even ridiculous follies; but if the peace of others, and the morals of society, are not thereby endangered, it is not the part of the magistracy to interfere, at least by authority.

In cases, however, where political opinions are connected with religious notions, and the plea of conscience is set up as an “unalienable right,” to sanction their propagation, a government may be justified in interposing, not indeed on the ground that it judges the conscience to be erring and corrupt, but for its own just support when endangered by such opinions. Sects of religious republicans have sometimes appeared under a monarchical government, — the Fifth Monarchy Fanatics, for instance, who, according to their interpretation of the kingdom of Christ, regarded the existence of all earthly monarchies as inimical to it, and believing that the period of its establishment was come, thought it impiety to acknowledge any earthly sovereign, as being contrary to their allegiance to Christ. When such notions are confined to a few persons it is wise in a

government to leave them to their own absurdities as their most potent cure; but should a fanaticism of this kind seize upon a multitude, and render them restless and seditious, the state would be justifiable in restraining them by force, although a mistaken conscience might be mixed up with the error. We may therefore conclude, that as to religious sects, the plea of conscience does not take their conduct out of the cognizance of the civil magistrate when the peace, the morality, and safety of society are infringed upon; but that otherwise, the rights of conscience are inviolable, even when it is obviously erroneous, and, religiously considered, as to the individual, dangerous. The case then is one which is to be dealt with by instruction, and moral suasion. It belongs to public instructors, and to all well-informed persons, to correct an ignorant and perverse conscience, by friendly and compassionate admonition; and the power of the magistrate is only lawfully interposed, when the effect complained of so falls upon society as to infringe upon the rights of others, or upon the public morals and peace; but even then the facts ought to be obvious, and not constructive.

The case of those who reject the revelation of the Scriptures must be considered on its own merits.

Simple Deism, in a Christian country, may lay a foundation for such a plea of conscience as the *state* ought to admit, although it should be rejected by a sound theologian. The Deist derives his religion by inference from what he supposes discoverable of the attributes and will of God from nature, and the course of the Divine government. Should he conclude that among such indications of the will of God there are those which make it his *duty* to profess his opinions, to attack the evidences of our Divine revelation as of insufficient proof, and to worship God in a manner more agreeable to his system, it would be too delicate an interference of a government with a question of conscience, to be allowed to make itself the judge whether any such conviction could be conscientiously entertained; although by divines, in their character of public instructors, this would properly be denied. Absolutely to shut out, by penal laws, all discussion on the evidences of Divine revelation, would probably make secret infidels in such numbers as would more than counterbalance the advantage which would be gained, and that by the suspicion which it would excite. But this principle would not extend to the protection of any doctrine directly subversive of justice, chastity, or humanity; for then society would be attacked, and the natural as well as civil rights of man invaded. Nor can opprobrious and

blasphemous attacks upon Christianity be covered by a plea of conscience and right, since these are not necessary to argument. It is evident that conscience, in the most liberal construction of the term, cannot be pleaded in their behalf; and they are not innocent even as to society.

To those systems which deny the immortality of the soul, and consequently, a state of future retribution, and which assume any of the forms of Atheism, no toleration can, consistently with duty, be extended by a Christian government. The reasons of this exception are,

1. That the very basis of its jurisprudence, which is founded upon a belief in God, the sanctity of oaths, and a future state, is assaulted by such doctrines, and that it cannot co-exist with them:
2. That they are subversive of the morals of the people: and,
3. That no conscience can be pleaded by their votaries for the avowal of such tenets. When the existence of a God and his moral government are denied, no conscience can exist to require the publication of such tenets; for this cannot be a duty imposed upon them by God, since they deny his existence. No right of conscience is therefore violated when they are restrained by civil penalties. Such persons cannot have the advantages of society, without submitting to the principles on which it is founded; and as they profess to believe that they are not accountable beings, their silence cannot be a guilt to them; they give up the argument drawn from conscience, and from its rights, which have no existence at all but as founded upon REVEALED DUTY.

The second branch of justice we have denominated **ECONOMICAL**. It respects those relations which grow out of the existence of men in *families*.

The first is that of *husband* and *wife*, and arises out of the institution of marriage.

The foundation of the marriage union is the will of God that the human race should “increase and multiply,” but only through a chaste and restricted conjunction of one man and one woman, united by their free vows in a bond made by the Divine law indissoluble, except by death or by adultery. The will of God as to marriage is, however, general, and is not so expressed as to lay an imperative obligation to marry upon every one, in all circumstances. There was no need of the law being directed to each

individual as such, since the instincts of nature, and the affection of love planted in human beings, were sufficient to guarantee its general observance. The very bond of marriage too being the preference founded upon love, rendered the act one in which choice and feeling were to have great influence; nor could a prudent regard to circumstances be excluded. Cases were possible in which such a preference as is essential to the felicity and advantages of that state might not be excited, nor the due degree of affection to warrant the union called forth. There might be cases in which circumstances might be inimical to the full discharge of some of the duties of that state; as the comfortable maintenance of a wife, and a proper provision for children. Some individuals would also be called by Providence to duties in the Church and in the world, which might better be performed in a single and unfettered life; and seasons of persecution, as we are taught by St. Paul, have rendered it an act of Christian prudence to abstain even from this honourable estate. The general rule, however, is in favour of marriage; and all exceptions seem to require justification on some principle grounded upon an *equal* or a *paramount* obligation.

One intention of marriage in its original institution was the production of the greatest number of healthy children; and that it secures this object is proved from the universal fact, that population increases more, and is of better quality, where marriage is established, and its sacred laws are observed, than where the intercourse of the sexes is promiscuous. A second end was the establishment of the interesting and influential relations of acknowledged children and parents, from which the most endearing, meliorating, and pure affections result, and which could not exist without marriage. It is indeed scarcely possible even to sketch the numerous and important effects of this sacred institution, which at once displays in the most affecting manner, the Divine benevolence and the Divine wisdom. It secures the preservation and tender nurture of children, by concentrating an affection upon them, which is dissipated and lost wherever fornication prevails. It creates conjugal tenderness, filial piety, the attachment of brothers and sisters, and of collateral relations. It softens the feelings, and increases the benevolence of society at large, by bringing all these affections to operate powerfully within each of those domestic and family circles of which society is composed. It excites industry and economy; and secures the communication of moral knowledge, and the inculcation of civility, and early habits of submission to authority, by which men are fitted to become the subjects of a public government, and without which,

perhaps, no government could be sustained but by brute force, or, it may be, not sustained at all. These are some of the innumerable benefits by which marriage promotes human happiness, and the peace and strength of the community at large.

The institution of marriage not only excludes the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, but polygamy also; a practice almost equally fatal to the kind affections, to education, to morals, and to purity. The argument of our Lord with the Pharisees, on the subject of divorce, Matthew xix, assumes it as even acknowledged by the Jews, that marriage was not only of Divine institution, but that it consisted in the union of two only, — “*they twain shall be one flesh.*” This was the law of marriage given at first, not to Adam and Eve only, but prospectively to all their descendants. The first instance of polygamy was that of Lamech, and this has no *sanction* from the Scripture; which may be observed of other instances in the Old Testament. They were opposed to the original law, and in all cases appear to have been punished with many afflictive visitations. The Mosaic law, although polygamy appears to have been practised under it, gives no direct countenance to the practice; which intimates that, as in the case of divorce, the connivance was not intended to displace the original institution. Hence, in the language of the Old Testament, as well as of the New, the terms husband and wife in the singular number continually occur; and a passage in the Prophet Malachi is so remarkable as to warrant the conclusion, that among the pious Jews, the original law was never wholly out of sight. “Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee, and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously, yet she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one?” — (one woman) — “Yet had he the residue of the spirit?” — (and therefore could have made more than one) — “And wherefore one?” “That he might seek a godly seed,” is the answer, which strongly shows how closely connected in the prophet’s mind were the circumstances of piety in the offspring and the restraint of marriage to one wife only, for he thus glances at one of the obvious evils of polygamy, its deteriorating moral influence upon children. If, however, in some instances the practice of the Jews fell short of the strictness of the original law of marriage, that law is now fully restored by Christ. In a discourse with the Pharisees, he not only re-enacts that law, but guards against its evasion by the practice of divorce; and asserts the marriage union to be indissoluble by any thing but adultery. The argument of our Lord in this discourse is, indeed, equally conclusive

against polygamy and against the practice of divorce; for “if,” says Dr. Paley, “whoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery, he who marrieth another, the first wife being living, is no less guilty of adultery; because the adultery does not consist in the repudiation of the first wife; for, however cruel and unjust that may be, it is not adultery; but in entering into a second marriage, during the legal existence and obligation of the first.”

Nature itself comes in also as a confirmation of this original law. — in births, there is a small surplusage of males over females; which, being reduced by the more precarious life of males, and by the accidents to which more than females they are exposed from wars and dangerous employments, brings the number of males and females to a par, and shows that in the order of Providence a man ought to have but one wife; and that where polygamy is not allowed, every woman may have a husband. This equality, too, is found in all countries; although some licentious writers have attempted to deny it upon unsound evidence.

Another end of marriage was, the prevention of fornication; and as this is done, not only by providing for a lawful gratification of the sexual appetite; but more especially by that mutual affection upon which marriages, when contracted according to the will of God, are founded, this conjunction necessarily requires that degree of love between the contracting parties which produces a preference of each other above every man or woman in the world. Wherever this degree of affection does not exist, it may therefore be concluded that the rite of marriage is profaned, and the greatest security for the accomplishment of its moral ends weakened or destroyed. Interest, compliance with the views of family connections, caprice, or corporal attractions, it may be therefore concluded, are not in themselves lawful grounds of marriage, as tending, without affection, to frustrate the intention of God in its institution; to which end all are bound to subject themselves. On the other hand, since love is often a delusive and sickly affection, exceedingly temporary and uncertain, when it is unconnected with judgment and prudence; and also because marriages are for the most part contracted by the young and inexperienced, whose passions are then strongest when their judgments are most immature; in no step in life is the counsel of others more necessary, and in no case ought it to be sought with greater docility than in this. A proper respect to the circumstances of age, fitness, &c, ought never to be superseded by the plea

of mere affection; although no circumstances can justify marriage without that degree of affection which produces an absolute preference.

Whether marriage be a civil or a religious contract has been a subject of dispute. The truth seems to be that it is both. It has its engagements to men and its vows to God. A Christian state recognizes marriage as a branch of public morality, and a source of civil peace and strength. It is connected with the peace of society by assigning one woman to one man, and the state protects him, therefore, in her exclusive possession. Christianity, by allowing divorce in the event of adultery, supposes, also, that the crime must be proved by proper evidence before the civil magistrate; and lest divorce should be the result of unfounded suspicion, or be made a cover for license, the decision of the case could safely be lodged nowhere else. Marriage, too, as placing one human being more completely under the power of another than any other relation, requires laws for the protection of those who are thus so exposed to injury. The distribution of society into families, also, can only be an instrument for promoting the order of the community, by the cognizance which the law takes of the head of a family and by making him responsible, to a certain extent, for the conduct of those under his influence. Questions of property are also involved in marriage and its issue. The law must, therefore, for these and many other weighty reasons, be cognizant of marriage; must prescribe various regulations respecting it; require publicity of the contract; and guard some of the great injunctions of religion in the matter by penalties. In no well ordered state can marriage, therefore, be so exclusively left to religion as to shut out the cognizance and control of the state. But then those who would have the whole matter to lie between the parties themselves, and the civil magistrate, appear wholly to forget that marriage is a solemn religious act, in which vows are made to God by both persons, who, when the rite is properly understood, engage to abide by all those laws with which he has guarded the institution; to love and cherish each other; and to remain faithful to each other until death. For if, at least, they profess belief in Christianity, whatever duties are laid upon husbands and wives in Holy Scripture, they engage to obey, by the very act of their contracting marriage. The question, then, is whether such vows to God as are necessarily involved in marriage, are to be left between the parties and God privately, or whether they ought to be publicly made before his ministers and the Church. On this the Scriptures are silent; but though Michaelis has showed, (*Commentaries on the Laws of Moses*,) that the priests under the

law were not appointed to celebrate marriage; yet in the practice of the modern Jews. it is a religious ceremony, the chief rabbi of the synagogue being present, and prayers being appointed for the occasion. (*Allen's Modern Judaism.*) This renders it probable that the character of the ceremony under the law, from the most ancient times, was a religious one. The more direct connection of marriage with religion in Christian states, by assigning its celebration to the ministers of religion, appears to be a very beneficial custom, and one which the state has a right to enjoy. For since the welfare and morals of society are so much interested in the performance of the mutual duties of the married state; and since those duties have a religious as well as civil character, it is most proper that some provision should be made for explaining those duties; and for this a standing form of marriage is best adapted. By acts of religion, also, they are more solemnly impressed upon the parties. — When this is prescribed in any state, it becomes a Christian cheerfully, and even thankfully, to comply with a custom of so important a tendency, as matter of conscientious subjection to lawful authority, although no Scriptural precept can be pleaded for it. That the ceremony should be confined to the clergy of an established Church is a different consideration. We are inclined to think that the religious effect would be greater, were the ministers of each religious body to be authorized by the state to celebrate marriages among their own people, due provision being made for the regular and secure registry of them, and to prevent the civil laws respecting marriage from being evaded.

When this important contract is once made, then certain *rights* are acquired by the parties mutually, who are also bound by reciprocal *duties*, in the fulfilment of which the practical “righteousness” of each consists. Here, also, the superior character of the morals of the New Testament, as well as their higher authority, is illustrated. It may, indeed, be within the scope of mere moralists to show that fidelity, and affection, and all the courtesies necessary to maintain affection, are rationally obligatory upon those who are connected by the nuptial bond; but in Christianity that fidelity is guarded by the express law, “Thou shalt not commit adultery;” and by our Lord’s exposition of the spirit of that law, which forbids the indulgence of loose thoughts and desires, and places the purity of the heart under the guardianship of that hallowed fear which his authority tends to inspire. Affection, too, is made a matter of diligent cultivation upon considerations, and by a standard, peculiar to our religion. Husbands are placed in a

relation to their wives, similar to that which Christ bears to his Church, and his example is thus made their rule: as Christ “gave himself,” his life, “for the Church,” ~~4025~~ Ephesians 5:25, so are they to hazard life for their wives. As Christ saves his Church, so is it the bounden duty of husbands to endeavour, by every possible means, to promote the religious edification and salvation of their wives. The connection is thus exalted into a religious one; and when love which knows no abatement, protection at the hazard of life, and a tender and constant solicitude for the salvation of a wife are thus enjoined, the greatest possible security is established for the exercise of kindness and fidelity. The *oneness* of this union is also more forcibly stated in Scripture than any where beside: “They twain shall be one flesh.” “So ought men to love their wives as *their own bodies*; he that loveth his wife *loveth himself*. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church.” Precept and illustration can go no higher than this; and nothing evidently is wanting either of direction or authority to raise the state of marriage into the highest, most endearing, and sanctified relation in which two human beings can stand to each other. The duties of wives are reciprocal to those of husbands. The outline in the note below<sup>7</sup> comprises both: it presents a series of obligations which are obviously drawn from the New Testament; but which nothing except that could furnish. The extract is made from an old writer, and although expressed in homely phrase will be admired for discrimination and comprehensiveness.

THE DUTIES OF CHILDREN is a branch of Christian morality which receives both illustration and authority in a very remarkable and peculiar manner from the Scriptures. “*Honour* thy father and thy mother,” is a precept which occupies a place in those tables of law which were written at first by the finger of God; and is, as the Apostle Paul notes, “the first commandment with promise.” The meaning of the term *honour* is comprehensive, and imports, as appears from various passages in which it occurs, reverence, affection, and grateful obedience. It expresses at once a *principle* and a *feeling*, each of which must influence the practice; one binding obedience upon the conscience, the other rendering it the free effusion of the heart; one securing the great points of duty, and the other giving rise to a thousand tender sentiments and courtesies which mutually meliorate the temper, and open one of the richest sources of domestic felicity.

The honouring of parents is likewise enforced in Scripture, by a temporal promise. This is not peculiar to the law; for when the apostle refers to this “as the first commandment with promise,” and adds, “that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth,” ~~ROM~~ Ephesians 6:3, 4, he clearly intimates that this promise is carried forward into the Christian dispensation; and though it is undoubtedly modified by the circumstances of an economy which is not so much founded upon temporal promises as the law, it retains its full force as a general declaration of special favour on the part of God. This duty also derives a most influential and affecting illustration from the conduct of our Lord, who was himself an instance of subjection to parents; of the kindest behaviour to them; and who, amidst his agonies on the cross, commended his weeping mother to the special regard of the beloved disciple, John, charging him with her care and support as a “son,” in his own stead. In no system of mere ethics, certainly, is this great duty, on which so much of human interest and felicity depends, and which exerts so much influence upon society, thus illustrated, and thus enforced.

The duties of children may be thus sketched.

LOVE, which is founded upon esteem and reverence, comprises gratitude also; no small degree of which is obligatory upon every child for the unwearied cares, labours, and kindness of parental affection. In the few unhappy instances in which esteem for a parent can have little place, gratitude, at least, ought to remain; nor can any case arise in which the obligation of *filial love* can be cancelled.

REVERENCE, which consists in that honourable esteem of parents which children ought to cherish in their hearts, and from which springs on the one hand the desire to please, and on the other the fear to offend. The fear of a child is, however, opposed to the fear of a slave; the latter has respect chiefly to the *punishment* which may be inflicted; but the other being mixed with love, and the desire to be loved, has respect to the *offence* which may be taken by a parent, his grief, and his displeasure. Hence the fear of God, as a grace of the Spirit in the regenerate, is compared to the fear of children. This reverential regard due to parents has its external expression in all honour and civility, whether in words or actions. The behaviour is to be submissive, the speech respectful, reproof is to be borne by them with meekness, and the impatience of parents sustained in silence. Children are bound to close their eyes as much as possible upon the failings and

infirmities of the authors of their being, and always to speak of them honourably among themselves, and in the presence of others. “The hearts of all men go along with Noah in laying punishment upon Ham for his unnatural and profane derision, and love the memory of those sons that would not see themselves, nor suffer others to be the witnesses of the miscarriages of their father.” In the duty of “honouring” parents, is also included their support when in necessity. This appears from our Lord’s application of this commandment of the law in his reproof of the Pharisees, who, if they had made a vow of their property, thought it then lawful to withhold assistance from their parents, ~~DISO~~ Matthew 15:4-6.

To affection and reverence, is to be added,

OBEDIENCE, which is universal: “Children, obey your parents *in all things*,” with only one restriction, which respects the consciences of children, when at age to judge for themselves. The apostle therefore adds, “*in the Lord*.” That this limits the obedience of children to the lawful commands of parents, is clear also from our Lord’s words, “If any love father or mother more than me he is not worthy of me.” God is to be loved and obeyed above all. In all lawful things the rule is absolute; and the obedience, like that we owe to God, ought to be cheerful and unwearied. Should it chance to cross our inclinations, this will be no excuse for hesitancy, much less for refusal.

One of the principal cases in which this principle is often most severely tried, in that of marriage. The general rule clearly is, that neither son nor daughter ought to marry against the command of a father, with whom the prime authority of the family is lodged; nor even without the consent of the mother, should the father be willing, if she can find any weighty reason for her objection; for, although the authority of the mother is subordinate and secondary, yet is she entitled to obedience from the child. There is, however, a considerable difference between marrying at the command of a parent, and marrying against his prohibition. In the first case, children are more at liberty than in the other; yet even here, the wishes of parents in this respect are to be taken into most serious consideration, with a preponderating desire to yield to them: but if a child feels that his affections still refuse to run in the course of the parents’ wishes; if he is conscious that he cannot love his intended wife “as himself,” as “his own flesh;” he is prohibited by a higher rule, which presents an insuperable barrier to his compliance. In this case the child is at liberty to refuse, if it is done

deliberately, and expressed with modesty and proper regret at not being able to comply, for the reasons stated; and every parent ought to dispense freely with the claim of obedience. But to marry in opposition to a parent's express prohibition, is a very grave case. The general rule lies directly against this act of disobedience, as against all others, and the violation of it is therefore *sin*. And what blessing can be expected to follow such marriages? or rather, what curse may not be feared to follow them? The law of God is transgressed, and the image of his authority in parents is despised. Those exceptions to this rule which can be justified, are very few.

In no case but where the parties have attained the full legal age of *twenty-one* years, ought an exception to be even considered; but it may perhaps be allowed,

1. When the sole objection of the parent is the marriage of his child with a person fearing God.
2. When the sole reason given is, a wish to keep a child unmarried from caprice, interest, or other motive, which no parent has a right to require, when the child is of legal age.
3. When the objections are simply those of prejudice, without reasonable ground; but in this case, the child ought not to assume to be the sole judge of the parent's reasons; and would not be at liberty to act, unless supported by the opinion of impartial and judicious friends, whose advice and mediation ought to be asked, in order that, in so delicate an affair, he or she may proceed with a clear conscience.

The persuading a daughter to elope from her parents' house, where the motive is no other than the wilful following of personal affection, which spurns at parental control and authority, must, therefore, be considered as a great crime. It induces the daughter to commit a very criminal act of disobedience; and, on the part of the man, it is a worse kind of felony than stealing the property of another. "For children are much more properly a man's own than his goods, and the more highly to be esteemed, by how much reasonable creatures are to be preferred before senseless things." (*Gouge on Relative Duties.*)

THE DUTIES OF PARENTS are exhibited with equal clearness in the Scriptures, and contain a body of most important practical instructions.

The first duty is LOVE, which, although a natural instinct, is yet to be cultivated and nourished by Christians under a sense of duty, and by frequent meditation upon all those important and interesting relations in which religion has placed them and their offspring. The duty of sustentation and care, therefore, under the most trying circumstances, is imperative upon parents; for, though this is not directly enjoined, it is supposed necessarily to follow from that parental love which the Scriptures inculcate; and also, because the denial of either to infants would destroy them, and thus the unnatural parent would be involved in the crime of murder.

To this follows INSTRUCTION, care for the mind succeeding the nourishment and care of the body. This relates to the providing such an education for children as is suited to their condition, and by which they may be fitted to gain a reputable livelihood when they are of age to apply themselves to business. But it specially relates to their instruction in the doctrines of Holy Writ. This is clearly what the Apostle Paul means, ~~<B004>~~Ephesians 6:4, by directing parents to “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” A parent is considered in Scripture as a PRIEST in his own family, which is a view of this relation not to be found in ethical writers, or deducible from any principles from which they would *infer* parental duties, independently of revelation; and from this it derives a most exalted character. The offices of sacrifice, intercession, and religious instruction, were all performed by the patriarchs; and, as we have already seen, although, under the law, the *offering* of sacrifices was restrained to the appointed priesthood, yet was it still the duty of the head of the family to bring his sacrifices for immolation in the prescribed manner; and so far was the institution of public teachers from being designed to supersede the father’s office, that the heads of the Jewish families were specially enjoined to teach the law to their children diligently, and daily, ~~<B007>~~Deuteronomy 6:7. Under the same view does Christianity regard the heads of its families, as priests in their houses, offering spiritual gifts and sacrifices, and as the religious instructors of their children. Hence it is, in the passage above quoted, that “fathers” are commanded “to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;” or, in other words, in the knowledge of the doctrines, duties, motives, and hopes of the Christian religion. This is a work, therefore, which belongs to the very office of a father as the priest of his household, and cannot be neglected by him, but at his own, and his children’s peril. Nor is it to be occasionally and cursorily

performed, but so that the object may be attained, namely, that they may “know the Scriptures from their childhood,” and have stored their minds with their laws, and doctrines, and promises, as their guide in future life; a work which will require, at least, as much attention from the Christian as from the Jewish parent, who was commanded on this wise, — “Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” The practice of the Jews in this respect, appears to have been adopted by the Christians of the primitive Churches, which were composed of both Jewish and Gentile converts in almost every place; and from them it is probable that the early customs of teaching children to commit portions of Scripture to memory, to repeat prayers night and morning, and to approach their parents for their blessing, might be derived. The last pleasing and impressive form, which contains a recognition of the domestic priesthood, as inherent in the head of any family, has in this country grown of late into disuse, which is much to be regretted.

It is also essential to the proper discharge of the parental duty of instructing children, that every means should be used to render what is taught influential upon the heart and conduct. It is, therefore, solemnly imperative upon parents to be “holy in all manner of conversation, and godliness,” and thus to enforce truth by example. It concerns them, as much as ministers, to be anxious for the success of their labours; and recognizing the same principle, that “God giveth the increase,” to be abundant in prayers for the gift of the Holy Spirit to their children. Both as a means of grace, and in recognition of God’s covenant of mercy with them and their seed after them, it behooves them also to bring their children to baptism in their infancy; to explain to them the baptismal covenant when they are able to understand it; and to habituate them from early years to the observance of the Sabbath, and to regular attendance on the public worship of God.

The GOVERNMENT of children is another great branch of parental duty, in which both the parents are bound cordially to unite. Like all other kinds of government appointed by God, the end is the good of those subject to it; and it therefore excludes all caprice, vexation, and tyranny. In the case of parents, it is eminently a government of LOVE, and therefore, although it includes strictness, it necessarily excludes severity. The mild and benevolent character of our Divine religion displays itself here, as in every

other instance where the heat of temper, the possession of power, or the ebullitions of passion, might be turned against the weak and unprotected. The civil laws of those countries in which Christianity was first promulgated, gave great power to parents<sup>68</sup> over their children, which, in the unfeeling spirit of paganism, was often harshly, and even cruelly, used. On the contrary, St. Paul enjoins, “And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath,” meaning plainly, by a rigorous severity, an overbearing and tyrannical behaviour, tending to exasperate angry passions in them. So again, “Fathers, provoke not your children, lest they be discouraged,” discouraged from all attempts at pleasing, as regarding it an impossible task,” and be un-fitted to pass through the world with advantage, when their spirits have been unreasonably broken under an oppressive yoke, in the earliest years of their life.” (*Doddridge on* <sup>51021</sup>Colossians 3:21.) But though the parental government is founded upon kindness, and can never be separated from it, when rightly understood and exercised, it is still government, and is a trust committed by God to the parent, which must be faithfully discharged. Corporal correction is not *only* allowed, but is made a duty in Scripture, where other means would be ineffectual. Yet it may be laid down as a certain principle, that, where the authority of a parent is exercised with constancy and discretion, and enforced by gravity, kindness, and character, this will seldom be found necessary; nor, when the steady resolution of the parent to inflict it when it is demanded by the case, is once known to the child, will it need often to be repeated. Parental government is also concerned in forming the manners of children; in inculcating civility, order, cleanliness, industry, and economy; in repressing extravagant desires and gratifications in dress and amusements; and in habituating the will to a ready submission to authority. It must be so supreme, whatever the age of children may be, as to control the whole order and habits of the family, and to exclude all licentiousness, riot, and unbecoming amusements from the house, lest the curse of Eli should fall upon those who imitate his example in not reproofing evil with sufficient earnestness, and not restraining it by the effectual exercise of authority.

Another duty of parents is the comfortable settlement of their children in the world, as far as their ability extends. This includes the discreet choosing of a calling, by which their children may “provide things honest in the sight of all men;” taking especial care, however, that their moral safety shall be consulted in the choice, — a consideration which too many disregard, under the influence of carelessness, or a vain ambition. The “laying up for

children” is also sanctioned both by nature, and by our religion; but this is not so to be understood as that the comforts of a parent, according to his rank in life, should be abridged; nor that it should interfere with those charities which Christianity has made his personal duty.

The next of these reciprocal duties, are those of SERVANT and MASTER.

This is a relation which will continue to the end of time. Equality of condition is alike contrary to the nature of things, and to the appointment of God. Some must toil, and others direct, some command, and others obey; nor is this order contrary to the real interest of the multitude, as at first sight it might appear. The acquisition of wealth by a few affords more abundant employment to the many; and in a well ordered, thriving, and industrious state, except in seasons of peculiar distress, it is evident, that the comforts of the lower classes are greater than could be attained were the land equally divided among them, and so left to their own cultivation that no one should be the servant of another. To preserve such a state of things would be impossible; and could it be done, no arts but of the rudest kind, no manufactures, and no commerce, could exist. The very first attempt to introduce these would necessarily create the two classes of workmen and employers; of the many who labour with the hands, and the few who labour with the mind, in directing the operations; and thus the equality would be destroyed.

It is not, however, to be denied, that through the bad principles and violent passions of man, the relations of servant and master have been a source of great evil and misery. The more, therefore, is that religion to be valued, which, since these relations must exist, restrains the evil that is incident to them, and shows how they may be made sources of mutual benevolence and happiness. Wherever the practical influence of religion has not been felt, servants have generally been more or less treated with contempt, contumely, harshness, and oppression. They, on the contrary, are, from their natural corruption, inclined to resent authority, to indulge selfishness, and to commit fraud, either by withholding the just quantum of labour, or by direct theft. From the conflict of these evils in servants and in masters, too often result suspicion, cunning, overreaching, malignant passions, contemptuous and irritating speeches, the loss of principle in the servant, and of kind and equitable feeling on the part of the master.

The direct manner in which the precepts of the New Testament tend to remedy these evils, cannot but be remarked. Government in masters, as

well as in fathers, is an appointment of God, though differing in circumstances; and it is, therefore, to be honoured. “Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all *honour*;” a direction which enjoins both respectful thoughts, and humility and propriety of external demeanour toward them. *Obedience* to their commands in all things lawful is next enforced; which obedience is to be grounded on principle and conscience; on “singleness of heart, as unto Christ;” thus serving a master with the same sincerity, the same desire to do the appointed work well, as is required of us by Christ. This service is also to be *cheerful*, and not wrung out merely by a sense of duty: “Not with eye service, as men pleasers;” not having respect simply to the approbation of the master, but “as the servants of Christ,” making profession of his religion, “doing the will of God,” in this branch of duty, “from the *heart*,” with alacrity and good feeling. The duties of servants, stated in these brief precepts, might easily be shown to comprehend every particular which can be justly required of persons in this station; and the whole is enforced by a sanction which could have no place but in a revelation from God, — “knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free,” <005Ephesians 6:5. In other words, even the common duties of servants, when faithfully, cheerfully, and piously performed, are by Christianity made rewardable actions: “Of the Lord ye shall receive a reward.”

The duties of servants and masters are, however, strictly reciprocal. Hence the apostle continues his injunctions as to the right discharge of these relations, by saying, immediately after he had prescribed the conduct of servants, “And ye, masters, do *the same things* unto them;” that is, act toward them upon the same equitable, conscientious, and benevolent principles, as you exact from them. He then grounds his rules, as to masters, upon the great and influential principle, “Knowing that your Master is in heaven;” that you are under authority, and are accountable to him for your conduct to your servants. Thus masters are put under the eye of God, who not only maintains their authority, when properly exercised, by making their servants accountable for any contempt of it, and for every other failure of duty, but also holds the master himself responsible for its just and mild exercise. A solemn and religious aspect is thus at once given to a relation, which by many is considered as one merely of interest. When the apostle enjoins it on masters to “forbear threatening,” he inculcates the treatment of servants with kindness of manner, with humanity, and good

nature; and, by consequence also, the cultivation of that benevolent feeling toward persons in this condition, which, in all rightly influenced minds, will flow from the consideration of their equality with themselves in the sight of God; their equal share in the benefits of redemption; their relation to us as brethren in Christ, if they are “partakers of like precious faith;” and their title to the common inheritance of heaven, where all those temporary distinctions on which human vanity is so apt to fasten, shall be done away. There will also not be wanting in such minds, a consideration of the service rendered; (for the benefit is mutual;) and a feeling of gratitude for service faithfully performed, although it is compensated by wages or hire.

To benevolent sentiment the apostle, however, adds the principles of justice and equity: “Masters, give to your servants that which is *just* and *equal*, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven,” who is the avenger of injustice. The terms *just* and *equal*, though terms of near affinity, have a somewhat different signification. To give that which is *just* to a servant, is to deal with him according to an agreement made; but to give him what is *equal*, is to deal fairly and honestly with him, and to return what is his due in reason and conscience, even when there are circumstances in the case which strict law would not oblige us to take into the account. “Justice makes our *contracts* the measure of our dealings with others, and equity our *consciences*.” (*Fleetwood’s Relative Duties*.) Equity here may also have respect particularly to that important rule which obliges us to do to others what we would, in the same circumstances, have them to do to us. This rule of equity has a large range in the treatment of servants, it excludes all arbitrary and tyrannical government; it teaches masters to respect the strength and capacity of their servants; it represses rage and passion, contumely and insult; and it directs that their labour shall not be so extended as not to leave proper time for rest, for attendance on God’s worship, and, at proper seasons, for recreation.

The *religious* duties of masters are also of great importance.

Under the Old Testament the servants of a house partook of the common benefit of the true religion, as appears from the case of the servants of Abraham, who were all brought into the covenant of circumcision; and from the early prohibition of idolatrous practices in families, and, consequently, the maintenance of the common worship of God. The same consecration of whole families to God we see in the New Testament; in the baptism of “houses,” and the existence of domestic Churches. The practice

of inculcating the true religion upon servants, passed from the Jews to the first Christians, and followed indeed from the conscientious employment of the master's *influence* in favour of piety; a point to which we shall again advert.

From all this arises the duty of instructing servants in the principles of religion; of teaching them to read, and furnishing them with the Scriptures; of having them present at family worship; and of conversing with them faithfully and affectionately respecting their best interests. In particular, it is to be observed, that servants have by the law of God a right to the Sabbath, of which no master can, without sin, deprive them. They are entitled under that law to rest on that day; and that not only for the recreation of their strength and spirits, but, especially, to enable them to attend public worship, and to read the Scriptures, and pray in private. Against this duty all those offend who employ servants in works of gain; and also those who do not so arrange the affairs of their households, that domestic servants may be as little occupied as possible with the affairs of the house, in order that they may be able religiously to use a day which is made as much theirs as their masters', by the express letter of the law of God; nor can the blessing of God be expected to rest upon families where this shocking indifference to the religious interests of domestics, and this open disregard of the Divine command prevail. A Jewish strictness in some particulars is not bound upon Christians; as, for example, the prohibition against lighting fires. These were parts of the municipal, not the moral law of the Jews; and they have respect to a people living in a certain climate, and in peculiar circumstances. But even these prohibitions are of use as teaching us self denial, and that in all cases we ought to keep within the rules of necessity. Unnecessary occupations are clearly forbidden even when they do not come under the description of *work* for gain; and when they are avoided, there will be sufficient leisure for every part of a family to enjoy the Sabbath as a day of rest, and as a day of undistracted devotion. We may here also advert to that heavy national offence which still hangs upon us, the denying to the great majority of our bond slaves in the West Indies, those Sabbath rights which are secured to them by the very religion we profess. Neither as a day of *rest*, nor as a day of *worship*, is this sacred day granted to them; and for this our insolent and contemptuous defiance of God's holy law, we must be held accountable. This is a consideration which ought to induce that part of the community who retain any fear of God, to be unwearied in their applications to the legislature, until this great

reproach, this weight of offence against religion and humanity, shall be taken away from us.

The employment of *influence* for the religious benefit of servants, forms another part of the duty of every Christian master. This appears to be obligatory upon the general principle, that every thing which can be used by us to promote the will of God, and to benefit others, is “a talent” committed to us, which we are required by our Lord to “occupy.” It is greatly to be feared, that this duty is much neglected among professedly religious masters; that even domestic servants are suffered to live in a state of spiritual danger, without any means being regularly and affectionately used to bring them to the practical knowledge of the truth; means which, if used with judgment and perseverance, and enforced by the natural influence of a superior, might prove in many instances both corrective and saving. But if this duty be much neglected in households, it is much more disregarded as to that class of servants who are employed as day labourers by the farmer, as journeymen by the master artisan, and as workmen by the manufacturer. More or less the master comes into immediate connection with this class of servants; and although they are not so directly under his control as those of his household, nor within reach of the same instruction, yet is he bound to discountenance vice among them; to recommend their attendance on public worship; to see that their children are sent to schools; to provide religious help for them when sick; to prefer sober and religious men to others; and to pay them their wages in due time for market, and so early on the Saturday, or on the Friday, that their families may not be obstructed in their preparations for attending the house of God on the Lord’s day morning, If the religious character and bias of the master were thus *felt* by his whole establishment, and a due regard paid uniformly to justice and benevolence in the treatment of all in his employ, not only would great moral good be the result, but there would be reason to hope that the relation between employers and their workmen, which, in consequence of frequent disputes respecting wages and combinations, has been rendered suspicious and vexatious, would assume a character of mutual confidence and reciprocal good will.

POLITICAL JUSTICE respects chiefly the relation of *subject* and *sovereign*, a delicate branch of morals in a religious system introduced into the world under such circumstances as Christianity, and which in its wisdom it has resolved into general principles of easy application, in ordinary circumstances. With equal wisdom it has left extraordinary emergencies

unprovided for by special directions; though even in such cases the path of duty is not without light reflected upon it from the whole genius and spirit of the institution.

On the origin of power, and other questions of government, endless controversies have been held, and very different theories adopted, which, so happily is the world exchanging government by force for government by public opinion, have now lost much of their interest, and require not, therefore, a particular examination.

On this branch of morals, as on the others we have already considered, the Scriptures throw a light peculiar to themselves; and the theory of government which they contain will be found perfectly accordant with the experience of the present and best age of the world as to practical government, and exhibits a perfect harmony with that still more improved civil condition which it must ultimately assume in consequence of the diffusion of knowledge, freedom, and virtue.

The leading doctrine of Scripture is, that government is an ordinance of God. It was manifestly his will that men should live in society; this cannot be doubted. The very laws he has given to men, prescribing their relative duties, assume the permanent existence of social relations, and therefore place them under regulation. From this fact the Divine appointment of government flows as a necessary consequence. A society cannot exist without rules or laws; and it therefore follows that such laws must be upheld by enforcement. Hence an *executive* power in some form must arise, to guard, to judge, to reward, to punish. For if there were no executors of laws, the laws would become a dead letter, which would be the same thing as having none at all; and where there are no laws, there can be no society. But we are not left to inference. In the first ages of the world government was paternal, and the power of government was vested in parents by the express appointment of God. Among the Jews, rulers, judges, kings, were also appointed by God himself; and as for all other nations, the New Testament expressly declares, that “the powers which be are ordained of God.”

The origin of power is not, therefore, from man, but from God. It is not left as a matter of choice to men, whether they will submit to be governed or not; it is God’s appointment that they should be subject to those powers whom he, in his government of the world, has placed over them, in all things for which he has instituted government, that is, that it should be “a

terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well.” Nor are they at liberty “to resist the power,” when employed in accomplishing such legitimate ends of government; nor to deny the right, nor to refuse the means, even when they have the power to do so, by which the supreme power may restrain evil, and enforce truth, righteousness, and peace. Every supreme power, we may therefore conclude, is invested with full and unalienable authority to govern well; and the people of every state are bound, by the institution of God, cheerfully and thankfully to submit to be so governed.

There can, therefore, be no such compact between any parties as shall originate the right of government, or the duty of being governed; nor can any compact annul, in the least, the rightful authority of the supreme power to govern efficiently for the full accomplishment of the ends for which government was divinely appointed; nor can it place any limit upon the duty of subjects to be governed accordingly.

We may conclude, therefore, with Paley and others, that what is called “the social compact,” the theory of Locke and his followers on government, is a pure fiction. In point of fact, men never did originate government by mutual agreement; and men are all born under some government, and become its subjects, without having any terms of compact proposed to them, or giving any consent to understood terms, or being conscious at all that their assent is necessary to convey the right to govern them, or to impose upon themselves the obligation of subjection. The absurdities which Paley has pointed out as necessarily following from the theory of the social compact, appear to be sufficiently well founded; but the fatal objection is, that it makes government a mere creation of man, whereas Scripture makes it an ordinance of God: it supposes no obligation anterior to human consent; whereas the appointment of God constitutes the obligation, and is wholly independent of human choice and arrangement.

The matter of government, however, does not appear to be left so loose as it is represented by the author of the *Moral and Political Philosophy*.

The ground of the subject’s obligation which he assigns is “the will of God as collected from expediency.” We prefer to assign the will of God as announced in the public law of the Scriptures; and which manifestly establishes two points as general rules:

1. The positive obligation of men to submit to government:
2. Their obligation to yield obedience, in all things lawful, to the governments under which they live, as appointed by God in the order of his providence, — “the powers that be,” the powers which actually exist, “are ordained of God.”

From these two principles it will follow, that in the case of any number of men and women being thrown together in some desert part of the world, it would be their duty to marry, to institute paternal government in their families and to submit to a common government, in obedience to the declared will of God; and in the case of persons born under any established government, that they are required to yield submission to it as an ordinance of God, “a power” already appointed, and under which they are placed in the order of Divine providence.

Evident, however, as these principles are, they can never be pleaded in favour of oppression and wrong; since it is always to be remembered that the same Scriptures which establish these principles have set a sufficient number of guards and limits about them, and that the rights and duties of sovereign and subject are reciprocal. The manner in which they are made to harmonize with public interest and liberty will appear after these reciprocal duties and rights are explained.

The duties of the sovereign power, whatever its form may be, are, the enactment of just and equal laws; the impartial execution of those laws in mercy; the encouragement of religion, morality, learning, and industry; the protection and sustenance of the poor and helpless; the maintenance of domestic peace, and, as far as the interests of the community will allow, of peace with all nations; the faithful observance of all treaties; an incessant application to the cares of government, without exacting more tribute from the people than is necessary for the real wants of the state, and the honourable maintenance of its officers; the appointment of inferior magistrates of probity and fitness, with a diligent and strict oversight of them; and finally, the making provision for the continued instruction of the people in the religion of the Scriptures which it professes to receive as a revelation from God, and that with such a respect to the rights of conscience, as shall leave all men free to discharge their duties to Him who is “higher than the highest.”

All these obligations are either plainly expressed, or are to be inferred from such passages as the following: “The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel

spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be *just*, ruling in the fear of God; and he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springeth out of the earth by clear shining after rain;” images which join to the attribute of justice a constant and diffusive beneficence. “Mercy and truth preserve the king.” “Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty; but in righteousness thou shalt judge.” He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous,” that is, acquits the guilty in judgment, “him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him.” “Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men; such as fear God; men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, and let them judge the people at all seasons.” “Him that hath a high look and a proud heart I will not suffer. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell in my house, he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.” To these and many similar passages in the Old Testament may be added, as so many intimations of the *Divine will* as to rulers, those patriotic and pious practices of such of the judges and kings of Israel as had the express approbation of God; for although they may not apply as particular rules in all cases, they have to all succeeding ages the force of the general principles which are implied in them. The New Testament directions, although expressed generally, are equally comprehensive; and it is worthy of remark, that while they assert the Divine ordination of “the powers that be,” they explicitly mark out for what *ends* they were thus appointed, and allow, therefore, of no plea of Divine right in rulers for any thing contrary to them. “Render unto Cesar the things that are Cesar’s,” that is, things which are Cesar’s by public law and customary impost. “For rulers are not a terror to *good works*, but to *the evil*. Wilt thou not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have *praise* of the same; for he is the minister of God to thee *for good*. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath *upon him that doeth evil*.” “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord’s sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of *evil doers*, and for the praise of them that *do well*.”

In these passages, which state the legitimate ends of government, and limit God's ordination of government to them, the duties of subjects are partially anticipated; but they are capable of a fuller enumeration.

*Subjection* and *obedience* are the first; qualified, however, as we know from the example of the apostles, with exceptions as to what is contrary to conscience and morality. In such cases they obeyed not, but suffered rather. Otherwise the rule is, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers;" and that not merely "for wrath," fear of punishment, but "for conscience' sake," from a conviction that it is right. "For this cause pay ye *tribute* also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render, therefore, to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour." Supplies for the necessities of government are therefore to be willingly and faithfully furnished. Rulers are also to be treated with *respect* and *reverence*: "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." They are to be honoured both by external marks of respect, and by being maintained in dignity; their actions are to be judged of with candour and charity, and when questioned or blamed, this is to be done with moderation, and not with invective or ridicule, a mode of "speaking evil of dignities," which grossly offends against the Christian rule. This branch of our duties is greatly strengthened by the enjoined duty of praying for rulers, a circumstance which gives an efficacy to it which no uninspired system can furnish. "I exhort, therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." This holy and salutary practice is founded upon a recognition of the ordinance of God as to government; it recognizes, also, the existing powers in every place as God's "ministers;" it supposes that all public affairs are under Divine control; it reminds men of the arduous duties and responsibility of governors; it promotes a benevolent, grateful, and respectful feeling toward them; and it is a powerful guard against the factious and seditious spirit. These are so evidently the principles and tendencies of this sacred custom, that when prayer has been used, as it sometimes has, to convey the feelings of a malignant, factious, or light spirit, every well-disposed mind must have been shocked at so profane a mockery, and must have felt that such prayers "for all that are in

authority,” were any thing but “good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.”

Connected as these reciprocal rights and duties of rulers, and of their subjects, are with the peace, order, liberty, and welfare of society so that were they universally acted upon, nothing would remain to be desired for the promotion of its peace and welfare; it is also evident that in no part of the world have they been fully observed, and, indeed, in most countries they are, to this day, grossly trampled upon. A question then arises, How far does it consist with Christian submission to endeavour to remedy the evils of a government?

On this difficult and often controverted point we must proceed with caution, and with steady respect to the principles above drawn from the word of God; and that the subject may be less entangled, it may be proper to leave out of our consideration, for the present, all questions relating to rival supreme powers, as in the case of a usurpation, and those which respect the duty of subjects, when persecuted by their government on account of their religion.

Although government is enjoined by God, it appears to be left to men to judge in what FORM its purposes may, in certain circumstances, be most effectually accomplished. No direction is given on this subject in the Scriptures. The patriarchal or family governments of the most ancient times were founded upon nature; but when two or more families were joined under one head, either for mutual defence, or for aggression, the [government] was one of choice, or it resulted from a submission effected by conquest. Here in many cases, a *compact* might, and in some instances did, come in, though differing in principle from “the social compact” of theoretical writers; and this affords the only rational way of interpreting that real social compact which in some degree or other exists in all nations. In all cases where the patriarchal government was to be raised into a government common to many families, some considerable number of persons must have determined its form, and they would have the right to place it upon such fundamental principles as might seem best, provided that such principles did not interfere with the duties made obligatory by God upon every sovereign power, and with the obligations of the subject to be governed by justice in mercy, and to be controlled from injuring others. Equally clear would be the right of the community, either *en masse*, or by their natural heads or representatives, to agree upon a body of laws, which

should be the standing and published expression of the will of the supreme power, that so the sovereign will on all main questions might not be subject to constant changes and the caprice of an individual; and to oblige the sovereign, as the condition of his office, to bind himself to observe these fundamental principles and laws of the state by solemn oath, which has been the practice among many nations, and especially those of the Gothic stock. It follows from hence, that while there is an ordination of God as to government, prior to the establishment of all governments, there is no ordination of a particular man or men to govern, nor any investment of families with hereditary right. There is no such ordination in Scripture, and we know that none takes place by particular revelation. God “setteth up one, and putteth down another,” in virtue of his dominion over all things; but he does this through men themselves, as his controlled and often unconscious instruments. Hence, by St. Peter, in perfect consistency with St. Paul, the existing governments of the world are called “ordinances of men.” — “Submit to every ordinance of *man*,” or to every human creation or constitution, “for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme,” &c. Again as the wisdom to govern with absolute truth and justice, is not to be presumed to dwell in one man, however virtuous, so, in this state of things, the better to secure a salutary administration, there would be a right to make provision for this also, by councils, senates, parliaments, cortes, or similar institutions, vested with suitable powers, to forward, but not to obstruct, the exercise of good government. And accordingly, we can trace the rudiments of these institutions in the earliest stages of most regular governments. These and similar arrangements, are left to human care, prudence, and patriotism; and they are in perfect accordance with the principles of sovereign right as laid down in Scripture.

It is not, however, in the forming of a new state, that any great difficulty in morals arises. It comes in when either old states, originally ill constituted, become inadapted to the purposes of good government in a new and altered condition of society, and the supreme power refuses to adapt itself to this new state of affairs; or when in states originally well constituted, encroachments upon the public liberties take place, and great misrule or neglect is chargeable upon the executive. The question in such cases is, whether resistance to the will of the supreme power is consistent with the subjects’ duty?

To answer this, resistance must be divided into two kinds, — *the resistance of opinion*, and *the resistance of force*.

As to the first, the lawfulness, nay, even the duty of it must often be allowed; but under certain qualifying circumstances. As,

1. That this resistance of opposing and inculcating opinion is not directed against government, as such, however strict, provided it be just and impartial.
2. That it is not personal against the supreme magistrate himself, or his delegated authorities, but relates to public acts only.
3. That it springs not from mere theoretical preference of some new form of government to that actually existing, so that it has in it nothing practical.
4. That it proceeds not from a hasty, prejudiced, or malignant interpretation of the character, designs, and acts of a government.
5. That it is not factious; that is, not the result of attachment to parties, and of zeal to effect mere party objects, instead of the general good.
6. That it does not respect the interests of a few only, or of a part of the community, or the mere local interests of some places in opposition to the just interests of other places.

Under such guards as these, the respectful, but firm expression of opinion, by speech, writing, petition, or remonstrance, is not only lawful, but is often an imperative duty, a duty for which hazards even must be run by those who endeavour to lead up public opinion to place itself against real encroachments upon the fundamental laws of a state, or any serious maladministration of its affairs. The same conclusion may be maintained under similar reserves, when the object is to improve a deficient and inadequate state of the supreme government. It is indeed especially requisite here, that the case should be a clear one; that it should be felt to be so by the great mass of those who with any propriety can be called *the public*; that it should not be urged beyond the necessity of the case; that the discussion of it should be temperate; that the change should be directly connected with an obvious public good, not otherwise to be accomplished. When these circumstances meet, there is manifestly no opposition to government as an ordinance of God; no blamable resistance “to the powers that be,” since it is only proposed to place them in circumstances the more effectually to fulfil the duties of their office; nothing contrary, in fact, to the

original compact, the object of which was the public benefit, by rendering its government as efficient to promote the good of the state as possible, and which therefore necessarily supposed a liability to future modifications, when the fairly collected public sentiment, through the organs by which it usually expresses itself as to the public weal, required it. The least equivocal time, however, for proposing any change in what might be regarded as fundamental or constitutional in a form of government originally ill settled, would be on the demise of the sovereign, when the new stipulations might be offered to his successor, and very lawfully be imposed upon him.

Resistance by *force* may be divided into two kinds. The first is that milder one which belongs to constitutional states, that is, to those in which the compact between the supreme power and the people has been drawn out into express articles, or is found in well understood and received principles and ancient customs, imposing checks upon the sovereign will, and surrounding with guards the public liberty. The application of this controlling power, which, in this country, is placed in a parliament, may have in it much of compulsion and force; as when parliament rejects measures proposed by the ministry, who are the organs of the will of the sovereign; or when it refuses the usual supplies for the army and navy, until grievances are redressed. The proper or improper use of this power depends on the circumstances; but when not employed factiously, nor under the influence of private feelings, nor in subservience to unjustifiable popular clamour, or to popular demagogues; but advisedly and patriotically, in order to maintain the laws and customs of the kingdom, there is in it no infringement of the laws of Scripture as to the subjects' obedience. A compact exists; these are the established means of enforcing it; and to them the sovereign has consented in his coronation oath.

The second kind is resistance *by force of arms*, and this at least must be established before its lawfulness, in any case, however extreme, can be proved, that it is so necessary to remedy some great public evil that milder means are totally inadequate, — a point which can very seldom be made out so clearly as to satisfy conscientious men. One of three cases must be supposed: — either that the nation enjoys good institutions which it is enlightened enough to value: — or that public liberty and other civil blessings are in gradual progress; but that a part only of the people are interested in maintaining and advancing them, while a great body of ignorant, prejudiced, and corrupt persons are on the side of the supreme

power, and ready to lend themselves as instruments of its misrule and despotism: — or, thirdly, that although the majority of the public are opposed to infringements on the constitution, yet the sovereign, in attempting to change the fundamental principles of his compact, employs his mercenary troops against his subjects, or is aided and abetted by some foreign influence or power.

In the first case we have supposed, it does not seem possible for unjust aggressions to be successful. The people are enlightened, and attached to their institutions; and a prompt resistance of public opinion to the very first attempt of the supreme power must, in that case, be excited, and will be sufficient to arrest the evil. Accordingly, we find no instance of such a people being bereft of their liberty by their rulers. The danger in that state of society often lies on the other side. For as there is a natural inclination in men in power to extend their authority, so in subjects there is a strong disposition to resist or evade it; and when the strength of public opinion is known in any country, there are never wanting persons, who, from vanity, faction, or interest, are ready to excite the passions, and to corrupt the feelings of the populace, and to render them suspicious and unruly; so that the difficulty which a true patriotism will often have to contend with, is, not to repress but to support a just authority. Licentiousness in the people has often, by a reaction, destroyed liberty, overthrowing the powers by which alone it is supported.

The second case supposes just opinions and feelings on the necessity of improving the civil institutions of a country to be in some progress; that the evils of bad government are not only beginning to be felt, but to be extensively reflected upon; and that the circumstances of a country are such that these considerations must force themselves upon the public mind, and advance the influence of public opinion in favour of beneficial changes. When this is the case, the existing evils must be gradually counteracted, and ultimately subdued by the natural operation of all these circumstances. But if little impression has been made upon the public mind, resistance would be hopeless, and, even if not condemned by a higher principle, impolitic. The elements of society are not capable of being formed into a better system, or, if formed into it, cannot sustain it, since no form of government, however good in theory, is reducible to beneficial practice, without a considerable degree of public intelligence and public virtue. Even where society is partially prepared for beneficial changes, they may be hurried on too rapidly, that is, before sufficient previous impression has

been made upon the public mind and character, and then nothing but mischief could result from a contest of force with a bad government. The effect would be that the leaders of each party would appeal to an ignorant and bad populace, and the issue on either side would prove injurious to the advancement of civil improvement. If the despotic party should triumph, then, of course, all patriotism would be confounded with rebellion, and the efforts of moderate men to benefit their country be rendered for a long time hopeless. If the party seeking just reforms should triumph, they could only do so by the aid of those whose bad passions they had inflamed, as was the case in the French revolution; and then the result would be a violence which, it is true, overthrows one form of tyranny, but sets up another under which the best men perish. It cannot be doubted but that the sound public opinion in France, independent of all the theories in favour of republicanism which had been circulated among a people previously unprepared for political discussions, was sufficient to have effected, gradually, the most beneficial changes in its government; and that the violence which was excited by blind passions threw back the real liberties of that country for many years. The same effect followed the parliamentary war, excited in our own country in the reign of Charles the First. The resistance of arms was in neither case to be justified, and it led to the worst crimes. The extreme case of necessity was not made out in either instance; and the duty of subjects to their sovereigns was grossly violated.

The third case supposed appears to be the only one in which the renunciation of allegiance is clearly justifiable; because when the contract of a king with his people is not only violated obviously, repeatedly, and in opposition to petition and remonstrance, but a mercenary soldiery is employed against those whom he is bound to protect, and the fear of foreign force and compulsion is also suspended over them to compel the surrender of those rights which are accorded to them both by the laws of God, and the fundamental laws of the kingdom, the resistance of public feeling and sentiment, and that of the constitutional authorities, is no longer available; and such a sovereign does, in fact, lose his rights by a hostile denial of his duties, in opposition to his contract with his people. Such a case arose in this country at the revolution of 1688; it was one so clear and indubitable, as to carry with it the calm and deliberate sense of the vast majority of all ranks of society; and the whole was stamped with the character of a deliberate national act, not that of a faction. This resistance was doubtless justifiable. It involved no opposition to government as such,

but was made for the purpose of serving the ends of good government, and the preservation of the very principles of the constitution. Nor did it imply any resistance to the existing power in any respect in which it was invested with any right, either by the laws of God, or those of the realm. It will, however, appear that here was a concurrence of circumstances which rendered the case one which can very rarely occur. It was not the act of a few individuals; nor of mere theorists in forms of government; nor was it the result of unfounded jealousy or alarm; nor was it the work of either the populace on the one hand, or of all aristocratic faction on the other; but of the people under their natural guides and leaders, — the nobility and gentry of the land: nor were any private interests involved, the sole object being the public weal, and the maintenance of the laws. When such circumstances and principles meet, similar acts may be justified; but in no instance of an equivocal character.

The question of a subject's duty in case of the existence of rival supreme powers, is generally a very difficult one, at least for some time. When the question of *right* which lies between them divides a nation, he who follows his conscientious opinion as to this point is doubtless morally safe, and he ought to follow it at the expense of any inconvenience. But when a power is settled *de facto* in the possession of the government, although the right of its claim should remain questionable in the minds of any, there appears a limit beyond which no man can be fairly required to withhold his full allegiance. Where that limit lies it is difficult to say, and individual conscience must have considerable latitude; but perhaps the general rule may be, that when continued resistance would be manifestly contrary to the general welfare of the whole, it is safe to conclude that He who changes the "powers that be" at his sovereign pleasure, has in his providence permitted or established a new order of things to which men are bound to conform.

Whether men are at liberty to resist their lawful princes when persecuted by them for conscience' sake, is a question which brings in additional considerations; because of that patience and meekness which Christ has enjoined upon his followers when they suffer for his religion. When persecution falls upon a portion only of the subjects of a country, it appears their clear duty to submit, rather than to engage in plots and conspiracies against the persecuting power; practices which never can consist with Christian moderation and truth. But when it should fall upon a people constituting a distinct state, though united politically with some other, as in

the case of the Waldenses, then the persecution, if carried to the violation of liberty, life, and property, would involve the violation of political rights also, and so nullify the compact which has guaranteed protection to all innocent subjects. A *national* resistance on these grounds would, for the foregoing reasons, stand on a very different basis.

No questions of this kind can come before a Christian man, however, without placing him under the necessity of considering the obligation of many duties of a much clearer character than, in almost any case, the duty of resistance to the government under which he lives, can be. He is bound to avoid all intemperance and uncharitableness, and he is not, therefore, at liberty to become a factious man; he is forbidden to indulge malignity, and is restrained therefore from revenge; he is taught to be distrustful of his own judgment, and must only admit that of the wise and good to be influential with him; he must therefore avoid all association with low and violent men, the rabble of a state, and their designing leaders; he is bound to submission to rulers in all cases where a *superior duty* cannot be fairly established; and he is warned of the danger of resistance “to the power,” as bringing after it Divine “condemnation,” wherever the case is not clear, and not fully within the principles of the word of God. So circumstanced, the allegiance of a Christian people is secured to all governors, and to all governments, except in very extreme cases which can very seldom arise in the judgment of any who respect the authority of the word of God; and thus this branch of Christian morality is established upon principles which at once uphold the majesty of [government,] and throw their shield over the liberties of the people; principles which in the wisdom of God beautifully entwine [*fidelity,*] *freedom,* and *peace*.

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>ft1</sup> M. le Feore, preceptor of Louis XIII, not inaptly called casuistry, “the art of quibbling with God.”
- <sup>ft2</sup> **ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΤΑΜΕΙΟΝ**. Kuinoel observes, that the word “answers to the Hebrew **hyl** [ ], an upper room set apart for retirement and prayer, among the orientals.”
- <sup>ft3</sup> Some writers contend that synagogues were as old as the ceremonial law That they were *ancient* is proved from ~~<41521>~~Acts 15:21, — “Moses of *old time* hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day.”
- <sup>ft4</sup> This expression occurs in Justin Martyr’s Second Apology, where he particularly describes the mode of primitive worship.
- <sup>ft5</sup> Montesquieu says, “It is false that killing in war is lawful, unless in a case of absolute necessity: but when a man has made another his slave, he cannot be said to have been under a necessity of taking away his life, since he actually did not take it away. War gives no other right over prisoners than to disable them from doing any farther harm, by securing their persons.” And “if a prisoner of war is not to be reduced to slavery, much less are his children.” This reason therefore with others, assigned by the civilians in justification of slavery, he concludes is “false.” (*Spirit of Laws*, book xv, chap. 2.) — AMERICAN EDITORS.
- <sup>ft6</sup> The above paragraphs, under the last head, were obviously written with a view to states in which Christianity, as a system, is formally established by law and in which the acts of the government are officially based on this principle. — AMERICAN EDITORS.

<p><sup>ft7</sup> <b>PARTICULAR DUTIES OF WIVES.</b> <i>Subjection</i>, the generall head of all wives duties. Acknowledgment of an</p>	<p><b>PARTICULAR DUTIES OF HUSBANDS.</b> <i>Wisdom and love</i>, the generall heads of all husbands duties.</p>
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husbands superioritie.

A due esteeme of her owne husband as the best for her, and worthy of honour on her part.

An inward wive-like fear.

An outward reverend carriage toward her husband, which consisteth in a wive-like sobrietie, mildnesse, curtissie, and modestie in apparel.

Reverend speech to and of her husband.

Obedience.

Forbearing to do without, or against her husbands consent, such things as he hath power to order, as, to dispose and order the common goods of the familie, and the allowance for it, or children, servants, cattell, guests, journies, &c.

A ready yielding to what her husband would have done. This is manifested by a willingnesse to dwell where he will, to come when he calls, and to do what he requireth.

A patient bearing of any reproofe, and a ready redressing of that for which she is justly reprov'd.

Contentment with her husbands

Acknowledgment of a wives neere conjunction and fellowship with her husband.

A good esteeme of his owne wife as the best for him, and worthy of love on his part.

An inward intire affection.

An outward amiable carriage toward his wife, which consisteth in an husband-like gravity, mildnesse, courteous acceptance of her curtissie, and allowing her to wear fit apparel.

Mild and loving speech to and of his wife.

A wise maintaining his authority, and forbearing to exact all that is in his power.

A ready yielding to his wives request, and giving a generall consent and libertie unto her to order the affaires of the house, children, servants, &c. And a free allowing her something to bestow as she seeth occasion.

A forbearing to exact more than his wife is willing to doe, or to force her to dwell where it is not meet,

present estate.

Such a subjection as may stand with her subjection to Christ.

Such a subjection as the Church yieldeth to Christ, which is sincere, pure, cheerful, constant, for conscience sake.

or to enjoyne her to do things that are unmeet in themselves, or against her mind.

A wise ordering of reproofe, not using it without just and weighty cause, and then privately and meekly.

A provident care for his wife, according to his abilities.

A forbearing to exact any thing which stands not with a good conscience.

Such a love as Christ beareth to the Church, and man to himselfe, which is first free, in deed and truth, pure, chaste, constant.

**ABERRATIONS OF WIVES FROM THEIR PARTICULAR DUTIES.**

*Ambition*, the generall ground of the aberrations of wives.

A conceit that wives are their husbands equals.

A conceit that she could better subject herselfe to any other man than to her own husband.

An inward despising of her husband.

Unreverend behaviour

**ABERRATIONS OF HUSBANDS FROM THEIR PARTICULAR DUTIES.**

*Want of wisdom and love*, the generall grounds of the aberrations of husbands.

Too mean account of wives.

A preposterous conceit of his owne wife to be the worst of all, and that he could love any but her.

A stoicall disposition, without all heat of affection.

An unbecoming carriage toward his wife, manifested by

toward her husband,  
manifested by lightnesse,  
sullenness, and vanity  
in her attire.

Unreverend speech to and  
of her husband.

A stout standing on her  
owne will.

A peremptory undertaking  
to do things as she list,  
without and against her  
husbands consent. This is  
manifested by privy  
purloyning his goods,  
taking allowance, ordering  
children, servants, and  
cattell, feasting strangers,  
making journies and vows,  
as herselfe listeth.

An obstinate standing upon  
her owne will, making her  
husband dwell where she  
will, and refusing to goe  
when he calls, or to doe  
any thing upon his  
command.

Disdaine at reproofe:  
giving word for word: and  
waxing worse for being  
reproved.

Discontent at her husbands  
estate.

his baseness, tyrannicall usage  
of her loftinesse, rashnesse, and  
niggardlinesse.

Harsh, proud, and bitter  
speeches to and of his wife.

Losing of his authority.

Too much strictnesse over his  
wife. — This is manifested by  
restraining her from doing any  
thing without particular and  
expresse consent, taking too  
strict account of her, and  
allowing her no more than is  
needful for her owne private  
use.

Too lordly a standing upon the  
highest step of his authority:  
being too frequent insolent, and  
peremptory in commanding  
things frivolous, unmeet, and  
against his wiles minde and  
conscience.

Rashnesse and bitterness in  
reproving: and that too  
frequently on slight occasions,  
and disgracefully before  
children, servants, and  
strangers.

A carelesse neglect of his wife.  
and niggardly dealing with her,  
and that in her weaknesse.

A commanding of unlawful  
things.

Such a disposition as is most  
unlike to Christ's, and to that

<p>Such a pleasing of her husband as offendeth Christ.</p> <p>Such a subjection as is most unlike to the Church's, viz. fained, forced, fickle, &amp;c.</p>	<p>which a man beareth to himselfe, viz. compliment, impure, for by respects, inconstant, &amp;c.</p>
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<sup>ft8</sup> By the old Roman law, the father had the power of life and death, as to his children.