

cases the prophets were enabled to know, for which, therefore, the prayer of *faith* was not offered, but the patients were left to languish under the judicial stroke of a jealous God.

"*Governments*," came next; and as the things performed are put for the persons performing them, the word undoubtedly means *governors*. But of what sort? *Kuberneesis* literally signifies directors or managers. The original word—*kuberneesis*, from *kubernetees*, signifies a person who sits at the helm, gives orders to the crew, and has the care of the ship.³² From which it may be

³² Potter's *Antiquities of Greece*, vol. ii. b. 3. c. 19.
Act xxvii. 2. Rev. xviii. 7.

they were enabled by the Spirit of God to discover. The method used on these occasions was this: when any were sick the elders of the church, possessed of the gift of healing, were sent for; the patient confessed the justice of his punishment, and his sorrow for the sin which caused it. This repentance being discovered to be genuine, he was anointed with oil in the name of the Lord, in conformity with an ancient usage. (Mark vi. 13.) A prayer was then offered for his life, which being the inworking prayer of faith, was called the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man, availing much to the restoration of the invalid. The prayer of faith was thus said to "save the sick;" the Lord was said to "raise him up," and as the recovery of health exemplified the mercy of God, restoration was made to imply absolution: Matt. ix. 2—5; Psalm ciii. 2—5. Hence said James "confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be *healed*;" and I doubt not but it was in reference to these miraculous gifts, especially the gifts of healing, that Christ said "whatever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son:" (see John xiv. 12, 13, 14, and xvi, 23, 24.) It was in reference principally to this subject, that the disciples were told to ask and receive that their joy might be full, and that the joy which Christ had in them as his apostles, attesting by miracles his character and doctrine, might *abide*. These declarations, so often repeated by the Saviour, were the grounds of that confidence which the apostles had with the Father, in asking anything according to his will; and which those who had received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, had in asking life for those who had not sinned unto death, which was granted in answer to the prayer of faith.

inferred these were inspired persons who managed the affairs of the brethren, and who were a kind of executive class, directing the distributors of the funds, and the shewers of mercy.³³ This gift was called the "discerning of spirits," and must have been of great service to those who directed the worship, discipline, and alms-giving of the church: For (1) it enabled them to detect those impostures which were practised by persons pretendedly inspired, and who were called "false prophets," "false spirits," "false teachers," "antichrists," and "deceivers." The gift itself was called an "unction from the Holy One;" it *abode* with the church in the apostle John's time, and probably till copies of the inspired writings were in the possession of all the churches. By this gift Peter knew the fraudulent intentions of Ananias and Sapphira; Paul recognized the state of Elymas; and idolatrous spies upon the worship of God's house were detected, examined, and judged.³⁴ By this gift the directors determined, on some occasions, the fitness of persons to be employed in particular ministrations; they prevented litigation, and by their inspiration acted infallibly. He that is spiritual judgeth (discerneth) all things, yet he himself is judged (discerned) of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him, (give him discernment?) But we (spiritual men) have the mind of Christ—the spirit of inspiration,³⁵ which enables us to judge infallibly.

Lastly; *tongues* are enumerated. A gift ostentatiously paraded by members of the Corinthian church, but placed by the apostle at the foot of the catalogue. The case was this: The Jews had for ages been the depositories of revelation, and they held the land of Canaan as a grant from God, the fief remaining in his own hands. Determined upon wresting the Holy Land from the custody of the Jews, and publishing the gospel to the ends of the earth, he long foretold that he would proclaim

³³ Rom. xii. 11.³⁴ Rom. xiv. 24.³⁵ 1 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

his grace in other languages than the Hebrew, and by other lips. That the people to whom the proclamation should be made would be as simple, teachable, and obedient as little children; and like children, "weaned from the milk and drawn from the breast," and requiring another diet, would gladly accept the new provision, imitate the language of their foster parents, and yield to himself a willing homage.³⁶ In unison with this design he sent the rod of his strength out of Zion, and made a Gentile people willing in the day of his power. The day on which the law was published from Mount Sinai, on that very day he virtually wrested the land of Canaan from the holding of the Jews, transferring at the same time the institutions of religion to the custody of a spiritual people. One hundred and twenty Galileans on the one part, and three thousand converts, who, on the other part, meekly receiving the yoke of Christ in baptism, and becoming chartered in spiritual freedom, attested the important transfer. The divine agent, effecting this change and fulfilling this design was the Holy Ghost, who appeared in cloven tongues of fire and sat upon the twelve apostles. The qualification in foreign tongues was instantaneous; for they spake as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The style of speaking was by apothegms, afterwards called "spiritual sayings," which were select sentences, sometimes serving as texts. Foreigners understood the language, but comprehended not the meaning of the doctrine, as may be inferred from inquiries at the day of pentecost. These languages the apostles and others could speak, when in the presence of foreigners, or when foreigners were present at their meetings. By this miraculous gift, they were qualified, at least so far as language was concerned, to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. The interpretation of tongues was a gift for translating the foreign languages, miraculously spoken, which gift

³⁶ Isa. xxvii. 10, 11.

was sometimes possessed by the speakers, and sometimes not.

Such were the distinctions in primitive times, and such the honours conferred upon those honoured men who were not only separated from the world, but distinguished from one another. For to one was given the word of wisdom ; to another the word of *knowledge* ; to another *faith* ; to another the gifts of healing ; to another the working of miracles ; to another prophecy ; to another discerning of spirits ; to another divers kinds of tongues ; to another the interpretation of tongues. Honourable and beneficial distinctions, truly. Who made them ? Where shall we look for their source ? To what attribute their origin ? All the members of the body, vitally considered, were believers. But were all apostles ? Were all prophets ? Were all teachers ? Were all workers of powers ? Had all the gifts of healing ? Did all speak with tongues ? Did all interpret ? How could they ? The body was not one member, but many ; and every member had its peculiar function.

In relation to these gifts, the exercise of which is called the "powers of the world to come," "the heavenly gift," &c., and the subjects of them "partakers of the Holy Ghost ;"³⁷ it must be remembered (1) that these gifts were *extraordinary*. (2) That they differed from the *sanctification* of the Spirit. (3) That they were sometimes possessed by persons who were utterly *destitute* of grace. (4) That they were not exercised by *habit*, but by *impulse*. (5) That they were not for *show*, but for *usefulness* ; for the Spirit was given to every man to profit equally the whole body. And (6) they were never intended to be *permanent*. The promise of grace to the Gentiles, the state of the world, the condition of the church, and many other things seemed to have created the necessity for extraordinary powers ; but that necessity having ceased, those powers were withdrawn, and the ordinary course of things succeeded.

³⁷ Heb. vi. 4, 5,

When nations were to be convulsed, an hierarchy overthrown, the institutions of religion changed and transferred, the powers of the heavens shaken, the sun and the moon turned to blood, and new heavens and a new earth created—new powers were required ; but these ends accomplished there is an end to the necessity.

Thus we are told, “He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, and the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” ³⁸ *

³⁸ Eph. iv. 11—13.

* The word here rendered *perfecting* is *katarlismos*, from *katartizo* compounded of *kata* with, and *artizo* to adjust, to fit, to finish, from *artios*, fit, complete. Literally it signifies fitting the parts of a machine, or of a body, in their proper places. In Heb. ii. 3, it points out the adjustment of all the parts of the material universe; and in chap. x. 5, it denotes the incarnate body of Christ. In Rom. ix. 22, it signifies the relation between guilt and punishment, and the adjustment of all the parts of moral character to the retributive anger of God. Sometimes it marks the orderly connexion of religious dispositions, doctrines, and duties of christians, as in 1 Cor. i. 10, where the members of that church were beseechingly entreated to be “perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” But in the passage to which this note refers, it suggests the benevolent design of that ample distribution of pentecostal gifts; namely, the adjustment, or fitting together of all the members of the christian church. For these supernatural gifts were as joints and sinews, by virtue of which the whole body was rendered compact; and as every member supplied a certain amount of influence, the entire body was not only vigorous, but progressive. These extraordinary gifts were for extraordinary times, and were intended to continue no longer than the infancy of the church—“till they all came to the unity of the faith,” &c. That point attained, those extraordinary gifts and extraordinary offices ceased. This fact established, we may infer (1) the imposture which lurks beneath the pretence of working miracles—as in the Romish church. (2) The necessary failure of a late attempt in London, and in some parts of the

What, to churchmen, must be somewhat remarkable, are the following facts. (1) In the enumeration of extraordinary gifts, no mention is made of either baptismal regeneration or eucharistical absolution. How is this? Had these powers existed, would they not most certainly have been mentioned? (2) In all the lists of extraordinary officers we find nothing of archbishops, diocesan bishops, rectors, vicars, or curates,—nothing of archdeacons, churchwardens, deans—metropolitan or rural—chancellors, proctors, and other ecclesiastics contained in the State-church of this realm. How is this to be explained?—How will churchmen explain it? (3) In the catalogue of ecclesiastical names, we no where meet with “My Lord,” “Your Grace,” “The right reverend Father in God,” the “right reverend,” the “very reverend,” nor even the “Rev. Mr. Barnabas.” How is this to be accounted for? How will churchmen—and how will some dissenters, account for it? Had ecclesiastical titles existed, would they not have been used? Had they been in use would they not have occurred in the scriptures? But they have *not* occurred—therefore they were *not* in use—therefore they did not exist—therefore they are the inventions of uninspired men. (4) In making temporal provision for religious necessities, we hear nothing of tithes, small or great,—nothing of tithe-commissioners, tithe-collectors, or tithe-assessors,—nothing of tithe-barns, tithe-lands, or tithe-commutations,—nothing of selling tithes, buying tithes, letting tithes, or hiring tithes,—nothing of church-glebes, church-rates, church-cess, or church-fees,—nothing of surplice-fees, marriage-fees, burial-fees, or any other

country, to restore those extraordinary gifts to the christian church. (3) The fallacy, and bewitching tendencies of modern impulses, as exemplified particularly in the Irvingites and Mormonites. (4) The extreme folly of “trying the spirits,” setting aside the use of the understanding in religion, trusting to impressions, becoming religious fortune-tellers, and substituting for the “sure word of prophecy,” the heterogeneous workings of a mysterious compound, described by inspiration as “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.”

fees,—nothing of Easter dues, warrants, fines, distrainments, imprisonments, and murderous affrays—as at Rothcor-mac—in collecting monies for the clergy,—nothing about any one of these particulars—not a syllable—not a breath. How is *this* to be accounted for? How will the *clergy* account for it? We ask *how*? Either the compulsory system existed then, or it did not. If it did exist, how came it to pass that it was not even hinted at? If it did not exist *then*, there is no divine authority for its existence *now*.

The clergy of our country are prone to claim a divine right for every thing; whereas in plain literal truth, they have a divine right for *nothing*,—for nothing, at least so far as the conception, the history, the orders, and the revenues of their establishment are concerned. But the most singular, and at the same time the most senseless of all their claims, is the right of inheritance to apostolic gifts by virtue of a spiritual lineage, which they say they can prove, but which they have hitherto failed in attempting, and which, from the nature of the case, they never can accomplish. One source of proof only is open to them; but one source *is*; and if they produce evidence from *this* source, we will admit the validity of their claim. If they have descended from the apostles, as they say they have, and if they inherit by virtue thereof apostolic powers, as they say they do, let them do the “*signs* of an apostle,” and we will believe them. Let them live, and labour, and watch, and pray, as did the apostles; and not only will we believe them, we will submit ourselves to them as persons appointed to be over us in the Lord. But before we admit their evidence, it is only fair that we should see the sign manual affixed, and the seal attached to the original grant, transferred to that copy which they profess to be in possession of. Now this transfer implies the presence of *miraculous* powers, and *spiritual* results. Let them produce these—let them show us the King’s manual—let them exhibit the divine seal,—not in baptismal regeneration, nor in sacramental efficacy, where the agency can be no more tested

than it can be believed ; but in healing the sick, in opening the eyes of the blind, and in raising the dead. If they are apostles, let them exhibit the *seal* of their apostleship,—not in baronial honours, heraldic blazonry, lawn sleeves, or mitred crests,—not in worldly trappings, or in glittering illusions, but in extraordinary gifts and sanctifying grace. Till the clergy *appear* to be that which the apostles *were*, in supernatural endowments and in christian graces, they must excuse, so far as we are concerned, the absence of a monstrous credulity, necessary to an admission of claims not only unfounded but preposterous.

Leaving, however, the first principles of a state religion, let us go on to perfection ; not wasting more of our time upon secular ecclesiastics, human ceremonies, or compulsory assessments for religious purposes. For the present we leave the hierarchy, where the hierarchy leaves us—and where it leaves all others as well—and proceed to remark, that notwithstanding the noble staff of episcopal spiritualists—invented or created whensoever or by whomsoever—bishops and deacons are the only authorised officers in a new-testament church. The whole matter may be thus briefly stated: A church is an *assembly*—a christian church is a *christian* assembly—a christian assembly, constituting a christian church, is an *organized* assembly—this organization implies *compact*—compact supposes *freedom of choice*—freedom of choice involves the *voluntary principle*, and the voluntary principle comprehends a *willing subjection to the legislative will of Christ*. Every spiritual assembly thus organized, is a *valid* christian church—every valid christian church is *independent* of the civil state, the state-church, and all churches in the state—an independent church has power to elect its own *officers*—the only officers they can elect, are *pastors and deacons*—every pastor thus elected is a *new-testament bishop*, and every deacon thus chosen is a *new-testament deacon*. The business of the bishop lies principally in the spiritual interests of the church ; the business of deacons prin-

cipally in the temporal. Deacons are assistants, servants, or ministers, to the bishop or pastor. They are principally servers of tables; and there are three tables they have to provide for: The Lord's table, the pastor's table, and the poor's table. The Lord is the great Master of assemblies, pastors are his distinguished officers, and the poor being his peculiar treasure are left to the care of his churches, as the appointed guardians of his property, his interests, and his honour. The means by which this support is furnished is not by miracles, but by means. These means arise out of voluntary contributions made by all the members, by which funds are raised for the aforesaid uses. The rule by which the contributions are to be made is not the payment of a pew-rent—as the occupant of a freehold—but secular ability; and that this ability may be efficient, the able-bodied poor are to be industrious, tradesmen are to be “diligent in business,” and to give as God is pleased to prosper them; while all classes are to be active in their callings and careful in their habits, abjuring the expensive fashions of worldly minded persons, avoiding gluttony and intemperance of every description, and watching especially against covetousness, which is denounced as idolatry, and which is not less fatal than the sin against the Holy Ghost. Such are the principles of a christian church, such the requisitions of its members, and such the means of its support. The most remarkable feature in the case is, the *spirituality* of its members forming the source of its replenishment. This simple truth is really the philosophy of religion, practically considered; and may be viewed as the secret of its various successes and defeats. It is the philosophy of its history, the guide to its prosperity, and the gauge of it. Whoever will examine this subject, carefully and analytically, will be thoroughly convinced of the truth of this suggestion, and perhaps of the importance of the doctrine it involves.

Official honours, and official responsibilities, are usually determined by the officers engaged, and by the

society represented ; which in this case are undoubtedly the highest and most responsible in the realm, not excepting even Her Majesty's ministers, or Her Majesty's court. The principles, objects, motives, laws, privileges, and institutions of a spiritual economy, are not only clearly distinct, but infinitely different and incomparably superior to those of a common wealth. If therefore, a common wealth sets up a religious hierarchy, and dignifies it by the name of church, that church is sure to be a bad one ; it is unsupported by divine authority, its ceremonies and worship are of human appointment, its officials are elected by an illegal power, and the election being at best but fictitious, and in real truth factious, if not rebellious, it follows that a national church is a degenerate, carnal, antichristian church. Whatever be the amount of wealth by which it may be endowed—whatever the ostentatious titles assumed and paraded by its clergy, it is not a new-testament church ; its officers are not the officers of a new-testament church—it has none of the features, nor has it the vestige of a claim to either identity or affinity with the church of Christ. Not only is apostolical succession by episcopal ordination a piece of priestly imposition, the bishops themselves are not *new-testament* bishops,—their election is *bad*, their ordination *invalid*, and the whole system corrupt, heretical, and heterogeneous. A poor dissenting minister, elected to the pastorate by a christian church, though his civil status is far beneath the status of a state curate, has nevertheless more official honour, and more spiritual efficiency, than has his ermined grace the Lord Bishop of London, or “ the most reverend father in God, by divine providence,” his Grace the Archbishop of York or Canterbury.

If the world mould the church, the world will leave its impress upon the church ; and if the church mould the world, the church will leave its impress upon the world. If a legislature make a church, that church is sure to be a bad one, let it be called by whatever name it may ; the reason is, the legislature knows nothing about church-

making. It is not a spiritual body, has no spiritual jurisdiction, nor any spiritual functions, and is consequently wholly incompetent for ecclesiastical business. On the other hand, if a spiritual church mould a representative government, that government will be a good one, call it by whatever name you may ; the reason is, the infusion of religious qualities into a political compound, so as to give tone and character to its principles and deliberations, must ever be advantageous to the government, to the country, and to the world.

But in a new-testament economy, all ministers are not alike. They differ from one another, and often from themselves as much as from one another. They differ in gifts, in opportunities, in efforts, in trials, in dispositions, in localities, in experience, and in many other things. But each is what the Lord makes him, and no more. One plants, and another waters ; one lays the foundation, and another builds thereon ; one sows the seed, and another weeds the crop. All are employed ; but all are not either in the same locality, or in the same company ; nor do they all work in the same way, or with the same tools. Some stand on Mount Ebal, others on Mount Gerizim ; some blow the deep bass, others the silver trumpet. One kills, another makes alive ; one wounds, and another heals. By one the sinner is led to Sinai ; by another the saint is conducted to Zion. Boanerges was a son of thunder ; Barnabas a son of consolation. Peter had the gospel of the circumcision ; Paul a dispensation for the heathen. Each had his sphere, and each his measure of success ; " For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in Paul toward the Gentiles."³⁹ " Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man ? I have planted, Apollos watered ; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither is he that watereth ; but

God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth, and he that watereth are one; and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour."⁴⁰ Thus wrote the apostle of the Gentiles.

Leave we pastors for deacons, the same variety appears. How conceited, ignorant, self-willed, and obstinate, are some! They are the plagues of the pastor, and the ruin of the church. Instead of waiting upon the minister, the minister must wait upon them; instead of helping him, he must help them; and instead of not acting *out* of their sphere, they are sure not to act *in* it. These men—mostly ignorant and rude—lifted unwisely—and sometimes clandestinely into office—are grievously inflated with pride; and fancying themselves possessed of irresponsible power, they learn to look big, give themselves airs, spout nonsense at church-meetings, and talk about *ruling*! Only a few churches are priest-ridden; but how many are *deacon-ridden*, is not easily guessed—perhaps most of them.* Others however, are thoughtful, diffident, unassuming, and really willing to carry out the ends of their official relations to the pastor, to the church, and to the congregation. Such men are always valuable, mostly scarce, and hardly ever willing to occupy official standings in the churches to which they belong. Like good horses, they are choice specimens of their

⁴⁰ 1 Cor. iii. 5—8.

* It is high time that the churches of Christ, studied their privileges, understood their position, and exercised their powers collectively, rather than officially. It is no uncommon thing for churches to be governed by their deacons; and no uncommon thing for deacons to fancy the government is, by office, upon their shoulders. Deacons of this description are, surely enough, lords over God's heritage; and if history speaks truly, and if experience and observation may be relied on, they are the worst lords the heritage can have. But they *are* lords of the churches' own making, and seeing the power that can make is a power that can unmake, if, after having dressed a few bad articles with a little brief authority, they neglect to undress them, they must bear the consequences and have no pity.

kind; and although they are not quite perfect, they are nevertheless competent for useful services, may always be depended on, and therefore not easily over-valued. But, are all *deacons*?

Let the churches themselves pass under review; and what an infinite diversity—what surprising differences do we observe! Not only do the individuals composing them, differ in sex, in age, in estate, in social relationships, and in civil distinctions; they also differ in their tempers, their dispositions, their gifts, and their usefulness. Some have devotional, but not conversational; others conversational, but not devotional gifts. Some have feeling, but not utterance; others have utterance, but not feeling. Some have perception, but not language; others have language, but not perception. Natural talents, spiritual gifts, inward grace, and religious dispositions, are infinitely various and beautifully harmonious.

The material world is full of variety; so much so, that every species differs from every other species of the same genus, and every being differs from every other being of its species. No two flowers, no two insects, no two animals, no two human beings, are perfectly similar to each other. Man is the most perfect of earthly organizations; and the son of earth is lord of the creation. Between the smallest particle of matter and the smallest insect, there are gradations; and between the smallest insect and man, there are more gradations still. Each existence, each insect, each plant, has its own economy—its own harmonies and relations. There is an essential sameness in constituents, but an universal difference in the superficies. Every man, as well as every plant, has his congeniality—his own form, his own indispensability. No other creature can supply his place; neither can one man supply the place of another in the harmony of divine providence, any more than one man's fingers would do for another man's hands, or one man's eyes for another man's head. Every man is himself all over—from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot.

From the root to the trunk, from the trunk to the arm, from the arm to the branch, from the branch to the twig, from the twig to the bud, and from the bud to the blossom and the fruit, there is one determinate power producing one determinate result. The whole is an image of each part, each part is an image of the whole, for all the parts resemble, and all the parts depend, one upon another. One power lives, one spirit breathes, one fountain circulates, in all. Of one blood God has made all the nations upon earth ; yet national differences are not less striking than individual, nor less important. Each organic being is capable of change ; but the change is always proportionate in its parts. It is never capricious, fastidious, or heterogeneous. Far from it. Divine power is as uniform in its operations, as it is various in its productions. As it forms its least plant, so it forms its most exalted man ; and as organic decays lead to natural replenishment, so one generation adds to the wealth and social happiness of another.

Now, what we see in one department analogy teaches us to expect in another ; and what analogy suggests in relation to differences under a spiritual economy, that scripture, history, experience, and true philosophy, confirm. As no tulip is perfectly similar to another, no egg to an egg, no parrot to a parrot, no eel to an eel, no lion to a lion, no man to a man ; so neither is one christian perfectly similar to another. Essentials have a character of sameness ; but their manifestations are admirably diversified. For as the animal, the intellectual, and the moral powers of man, occupy not separate apartments, but blend together, and live in one another ; it follows that the individual character is a combination of various properties originating in the entire compound, and of course exhibiting an individual peculiarity. Now if we look at the christian character, we shall find it formed in the same manner ; for spiritual life is not something which lives separately in a man, but something which lives connectively, and acts connectively, with the whole of man. It acts upon the various compounds into which

it enters, or to which it is allied ; and it is acted upon, or in other words influenced, by its connexions and relations. It is a passive as well as an active agent ; and its essential properties are manifest under various phases, yet always in combination and sympathy with the original elements. Spiritual life is always the same ; and human nature is always the same, but its organizations, its modifications, its localities, its susceptibilities, its inherent tendencies, with other circumstances, create the distinctive peculiarities of which we are now speaking.

Take an illustration from husbandry. In grafting, all the cuttings may be taken from one tree, and all the stocks may belong to one species, or say, to one genus ; but although the grafts are exactly similar, the stocks are not so ; for every stock has its own peculiarity, and that peculiarity is perceptible in the structure of the tree, the shade of its foliage, the form of its blossom, and the flavour of its fruit. All the grafts may grow, but they will not all grow alike ; all the trees may bear fruit, but they will not all be alike fruitful. And not only are there differences in the stocks themselves, there are differences moreover in soils, in latitudes, in aspects, in culture, and in many other things, all of which are apparent in the *results*. In like manner the word of God, which is called the *engrafted* word, and which is able to save the soul, is always and every where the *same* ; but the persons who receive it are all different ; and although the word of God bears its own fruit, yet individual differences are clearly enough seen in the tempers, the dispositions, the habits, the manners, and the general conduct of believers. Then again, there are the influences of locality, association, books, public instruction, divine teaching, and a thousand things besides, all different, all producing differences, and all varying the results in individual characters.

Were we to institute a careful comparison, we should no more find two christians exactly alike, than two human beings, two fishes, or two any-thing-elses. In

religion, one life animates, one spirit resuscitates, one object assimilates ; but essential principles, working in heterogeneous masses, evolve individual differences. Spiritual agents, and agencies, have identical interests ; but as they act upon human beings according to what there is in them, and as human beings are all individually different, it follows that individual differences continue in a *christian state*, and that these differences are referable to organic and other causes. Hence we observe the multifarious exhibitions of spiritual life in the perceptions, the judgments, the experiences, the pursuits, and the general character of christian conduct. As no two persons always think, or reason, or feel, or judge, exactly alike, so neither do any two christians ; yet as human figures are human figures, however various ; and as human beings are human beings, however dissimilar ; so christian characteristics *are* christian characteristics, and christians *are* christians, however various and striking their dissimilarities. They do not all see alike, nor all act alike ; neither is it possible they should. They were not all *made* alike ; nor have they all made themselves alike. We say not made *themselves* alike ; for every man has two forms of being,—one organic, the other moral,—one original, the other accidental,—one immediately from God, the other mediately from himself. In this view of the matter every man may be said to make his own face, and to make his own head ; yet not so as to destroy, or to obliterate, the original character, which retains its essential form under all the phases through which it passes, amidst all the modifications it undergoes, and despite of all the changes to which it is subject. Identity of character, or of being, is compatible with successive transformations, and multifarious disclosures. A man's face *is* his own face, whatever changes it may undergo ; and a christian's self *is* his own self, notwithstanding the vicissitudes he may daily experience.

If these views are correct we have a moral demonstration of that extreme folly which expects a perfect sameness

in christian theology, christian experience, or christian conduct; understanding by theology religious opinions, and by conduct a course of practice founded upon opinions. Till God shall make all men exactly alike, and till all men shall cease to modify the originals, perfect uniformity is a perfect chimera. Psychological uniformity is an intellectual absurdity.

Not less preposterous are *religious tests*, be they doctrinal, be they practical, be they experimental, or be they ceremonial. Private judgment must be allowed; and that once allowed, theological tests are an invasion of religious freedom, inconsistent with the sovereignty of God, and repugnant to the nature of man.

Equally absurd, and infinitely more wicked, are the *anathemas* of ruling ecclesiastics, and the fines and penalties of civil governments, against that freedom of thought which some men call heresy. The *bible*, and the *bible alone*, is that divine authority to which the human understanding ought to defer. The text must be believed—its majesty revered. But human expositions, human creeds, human mandates, and human authorities, *are* human, and *only* human after all; and to human authority in divine things men ought not to bow.

Lastly; we observe the deceitfulness of the human heart in that love of censure, that coarseness of expression, and that overweening self-complacency which some men call *faithfulness*. For how fatally must a man be spell-bound, how judicially blinded the eyes of his understanding, and how thoroughly corrupted his moral judgments, if, when filled with envy, malice, and all uncharitableness, he ascends the judgment seat, proceeds to try professors of religion by a certain standard, and that standard himself—if, in the presence of his own frailties, he can first believe that *his* standard is the *only* true one, next that conformity to it is the great condition annexed to eternal life, and lastly, that in consigning to everlasting destruction, as mental recusants or religious

vagrants all who differ from him, he is discharging the duties of the pastorate, feeding the flock of Christ, and doing God service! Strange infatuation! Awful proof of man's degenerate state! But "such were some of *you*."

Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. Let him be perfectly convinced of the truth of the gospel, and let him labour to understand its theory, to experience its blessings, to defend its character, and to diffuse its light; but let him not imagine that there are no intellectual, no theological, no experimental, no circumstantial differences in the reception, in the embodiment, and in the manifestations of religion. Neither let him foolishly suppose that other persons than himself, holding other opinions than those sanctioned by the approbation of his judgment, cannot, on account of such opinions, be as sincere in their profession of the gospel, as strong in their attachments to Christ, as useful in their lives, and as acceptable to God, as he himself is. Let him bear in mind that infallibility is intolerance, that intolerance is persecution, and that persecution embodied is Antichrist developed.

CHAPTER V

DISTINCTIONS AND GRADATIONS BENEFICIAL.

WHOEVER reflects seriously and dispassionately must tacitly confess it to be the will of God, that *distinctions* should exist as well in the church as in the world—among christians as among men. In nature, in providence, and in grace, differences and distinctions everywhere present themselves,—not merely in some particular locality, or at some retrospective period, but in every country, over the whole habitable globe, and through all the pages of history.

In these distinctions we observe *gradations*, rising from the simple to the complex, from the less to the more finished, from the earth to the mineral, from the mineral to the vegetable, from the vegetable to the animal, from the animal to the moral, and from the moral to the spiritual world. The same principle is observable in the history of creation, the course of divine providence, and the records of mercy. God works upwards in order, and onwards in agency. As his plans are developed, the whole scene rises in grandeur, brightens in appearance, and becomes richer in effect.

These gradations exhibit *connexions* of surprising interest. All the gradients have been unerringly taken

and securely united ; from the truffle to the tree, from the mite to the mammoth, from the shrimp to the whale, and from the widgeon to the eagle. Millions of gradations are lying between an insect and an angel,—between organized beings a million times less than a grain of sand, and the Newtons, and Lockes, and Boyles, of human nature ; but the gradations and connexions are all there. Not a link is missing in all the chains, not a chain in all the series, not a series in all the system. Every interstice is filled, every train completed. Not a chasm or a break,—not a rupture or a feeble place, appears in all the works of God. Every chain has its exact number of links, every series its exact number of chains, and the whole system its exact number of *connexions*.

Not only is one species united to another in its respective genus, but the *heads* of the species are united too. The mineral and vegetable kingdoms join hands in the lithophite and the truffle ; the polypus unites the vegetable and the animal ; the ape the animal and the man ; the nominalist the man and the christian ; the Mediator the christian and God. One thing is especially remarkable, viz. that in all these conjunctions, or connexions, the connecting species participates in the natures of both the species united. The zoophite has so much of the vegetable, that for a long time it was classed with them ; the water-snake connects reptiles with fishes ; the flying-fish joins affinity with winged aeronauts ; the ostrich links together birds and quadrupeds ; the ape joins hand with man and beast ; the religious zoophite brings the world and the church together, and Jesus Christ—who is called Immanuel—unites the church and God. In the full beneficence of his heart, and in the riches of sovereign grace, the Father took hold of Christ in his manhood ; Christ in his manhood took hold of the elect, called the seed of Abraham ; the seed of Abraham took hold of human nature ; human nature of animal nature, animal of vegetable, vegetable of mineral, and mineral of earth and dust. In this way God reconciled all things unto himself, by Jesus Christ. For

God was in Christ reconciling the *world* unto himself, not imputing to the elect their trespasses. Hence we find the incarnate mission of the Saviour was not the destruction, but the preservation of the present system. As a surety and a substitute, he died for his people,—not that he might destroy the present order of things, and consequently the various races of beings extant since the creation, but that he might “save his *people* from their sins,” and that “the *world* through him might be saved.”

Evidently this connexion of all the parts involves *participation and dependence*. Hence every plant has its insects, every latitude its plants, every locality its occupants. Each exist for all, and all for each. All live, and all die for one another. In the general provision all participate; and on each other's life and death, all depend. Decay is reproduction, death is life, and the grave a subterraneous passage to immortality. Independency is unknown. It is an abortion—an absurdity, when viewed in connexion with the plans of God. One independent Being only, is all that can exist; and he is the author and centre of the universe. He only can look downwards when he looks away from himself; but he *does*, for he is higher than the highest, and therefore can never look *up* to another. The eyes of all wait upon him, from the smallest organism—thousands of which inhabit the cavities of a grain of sand—to the highest archangel before his eternal throne. And so dependent are all the inhabitants of this material system upon one another, that the destruction of a single moss, and probably the annihilation of a grain of sand, would lay the whole fabric in ruins; just as a machine might fall to pieces by the loss of a pin, or an edifice by the decay of a certain material. Were God to withdraw his agency from the works of his hands, the chains would all become ropes of sand, the trains would destroy one another, and the universe itself would disappear.

By this mutual participation and dependence, the individual and collective tendencies of all the distinctions

comprehended in the entire system, are obviously *benignant*. They are as truly beneficial as they are clearly universal; for under this divine arrangement all are supplied, and all are useful. Nothing can be spared, yet nothing remains to be supplied. The provision is neither penurious nor superfluous, deficient nor redundant. Nothing is wanting, yet nothing is wasted; for he who multiplies the seed sown gathers up the fragments, and has so contrived that while we lack nothing we should lose nothing. From a few original elements countless millions of existences are distributed through the air, through the sea, and through the earth. Creation teems with life; yet life in all its varying forms, minute divisions, and individual attributes, forms but one harmonious chain, suspended from the eternal throne, and subject to the sovereignty of its eternal Author, who “doeth according to his will both in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of this world.”

Yet far be it from us to suggest an irresponsible necessity. The existence of certain fixed laws, in the construction of the universe, and in the divine administration of human affairs, can scarcely be doubted: but the paradoxical corollaries of Spinoza, Hobbs, Hume, and others, are unworthy of confidence. It is monstrous to suppose that God made a number of machines merely for the sake of illustrating his inventive powers, or for the gratification of seeing the delicacy and regularity of their actions; as well might he be supposed to have created a number of spheroids and spindles, merely for the pleasure of seeing them turn round—or a number of automaton, for the purpose of seeing their performances. As little do we sympathise with those who, for the humane purpose of relieving the divine mind, represent the world, with all its compages, as one vast machine, which when once constructed, and put into motion, requires nothing but a continuance of physical power because it can never go wrongly. We are believers in a system of order, and a scheme of providence and grace;

but we are no admirers of that theory which assumes the existence of a universal mechanism, or of a concatenation of causes and effects, which binds alike the material, the rational, and the spiritual world, in one vast, hard, adamant chain of absolute fatality. The scriptural representation of the matter is, that God exerts an universal and perpetual agency, in relation to all creatures and things; yet not in that sense which implies the world to be an energy, life a mere production, and death an absorption. The truth is, God has endowed man with moral attributes, placed him under a moral law, and rendered him accountable for moral conduct. By an intelligent agency which sustains, directs, and controuls, he governs the world; and by a gracious agency which appears in the sanctification of the mind, he rules and saves the church.

But though we have nothing to do with the fatalism of Spinoza, the pre-established harmony of Leibneizt, or the theory of occasional causes as held forth by Hume, we entertain profound admiration of a system which organizes, fertilizes, and utilizes every thing comprehended in it; which makes every thing in the whole economy valuable,—the small as well as the great, the weak as well as the strong, the poor as well as the rich. “Ye are of more value than many sparrows;” yet even sparrows have a value in an economy which links every thing together, and which renders through the medium of connexion the insect as valuable as the camel, the widgeon as the eagle, the pebble as the diamond, and the very dirt beneath our feet as the blazing sun above our heads. God has made nothing in vain; and in point of unity and dependence, creatures to whom a leaf is a colony, or a particle of sand a continent, are, indirectly, as necessary to the entireness of the economy and to the happiness of man, as the horse, the sheep, or the cow.

It is a manifest error to suppose that the world was created *exclusively* for man. At the same time it is evident that man has been most munificently

regarded. There is even a condescension in the tendencies of the material system, and a complacency in divine providence, which smiles propitiously upon his skill and industry, so that the earth not only yields her increase, but unsavoury juices, contained in the roots and fruits of vegetables in a wild state, become changed into grateful aliment, which when combined with farinacious bulbs, enlarged and improved by culture—or with fleshy pulps which melt in delicious flavours, supply an ample compensation for his toils.

Even *partial deficiencies* are highly advantageous to the social and moral happiness of men; for by these deficiencies there is room for the principle of compensation; and deductions and compensations serve to equalize their conditions. And, as if to unite mankind in one great family, and to bind that family in one kind bond, local deficiency is *benevolently* stamped upon every part of the globe, that by making the happiness of abundance a joint-stock affair, men, in pursuit of that happiness, might reciprocate the affections of a common nature in the pursuit of a common object worked out by the free exchange of industrial produce. In this manner God has made one man to depend upon another, one nation upon another, and one quarter of the globe upon another.

By this wise economy man becomes enriched by his poverty, and dignified by his dependence; and if at all enlightened upon the principles of political economy he may even glory in his infirmities, exclaiming, "When I am weak then am I strong." Thus, according to the wisdom of a gracious providence, the remunerative car of productive exertions may be drawn round the wide world, to the mutual advantage of every tongue, and every tribe; the wealth of nations may float on every sea, change hands at every port, and become distributed over the length and breadth of every land. And not only *may* it be so, but in plain truth it *must* be so, ere the social happiness man is in quest of can be obtained,—ere political institutions can be stable,—ere

prophecy can be fulfilled, and ere knowledge, literature, morality, and divine truth can be universally diffused. What is to induce mankind to beat their swords into plough shares and their spears into pruning hooks, but the *advantages of free trade*? What is to repress the worst, and to cultivate the best passions of human nature, but that commercial intercourse, in the profits and blessings of which all the parties will share? What is to bind man to man, nation to nation, and interest to interest, but principles of reciprocity? Or, what is to bring about that blessed era, predicted so many centuries ago, looked forward to with so much buoyant expectation, and anticipated by so many believing souls,—in which no man shall have to say—*teachingly*—to his brother, “Know ye the Lord;” but when all shall know him from the greatest to the least?

Far be it from us to undervalue, or to speak even slightly of men who have done what they could, and who are still doing what they can, to benefit the world by the establishment of foreign missions; at the same time, I must be permitted to think that had greater attentions been paid to our own hive, and greater diligence shown in expounding the great principles of religion, in connection with the great principles of free trade—which are as demonstrable as the strictest science—as deep in their basis as the constitution of nature—as stable as the pillars of creation—as ancient as the existence of man—as enduring as history—and as progressive as the happiness of that society whose advancement, history shall record,—had greater zeal been shown in expanding these germs of future activity—in working them into the minds of British seamen, British soldiers, British merchants, British travellers, and into British education—had we imitated the “League” and the “British-Anti-State-Church Association,”—had we worked at home more, and abroad less, I must be of opinion that our prospects would have been better than they are.

Quitting, however, this subject, and offering an apology for having touched it, we proceed to glance at the bene-