

THE

EVANGELICAL WITNESS.

VOL. I.

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NO. IV.

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

That the church of God has suffered much from division has been a fact admitted and deplored by all ages. It has formed one of the leading offences in true religion, one of the most painful subjects of grief and anxiety to the pious, and suggested many projects as a remedy, which, not being founded in truth and righteousness, have usually terminated in enlarging the evil. A circumstance of such frequent occurrence, of such long duration, and extending so far as it does in the present day, when the endless number of Christian sects presents a frightful mass of confusion although they dwell together in considerable peace, must be calculated to disturb the pious with a doubt whether the long sought unity really exists. An attempt to shew, therefore, that such unity does exist, and to explain in what it consists, may be useful at once to encourage and direct the friends of truth in their expectations and their efforts relating to this important object. Such an attempt is the object of this essay.

1. The church of God is one in fact, and incapable from her constitution of admitting distinct, divided, and independent, ecclesiastical establishments. The first evidence we shall offer is the nature of the first promise given to fallen man in the garden of

der contracts for upwards of \$200,000 to be paid from funds over which they have no control.

Russia, also, is labouring to multiply copies of the Bible, with astonishing success; and the interior of Europe is full of men fired with a noble zeal to spread the Bible.

Upon the whole, the board rejoice that they are able to present such pleasing accounts of the progress of the Bible Society, both here and elsewhere. And they would congratulate this society that God has been pleased to smile upon their feeble exertions, and through their instrumentality to place the Bible in the hands of many to whom they trust it will prove the wisdom of God, and the power of God, to the salvation of their souls.

And while they rejoice that the Bible is making its way into the dwellings of the rich, and the cottages of the poor, they would pray that God would open the hearts of all to receive it in the love and in the power of it. And may the whole earth be filled with the knowledge and the glory of the Lord.

REMARKS ON THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

"The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all."—Psl. ciii, 19.

Throne, denotes that magnificent seat whereon princes sit in state, to receive the homage of their subjects, and display their own power. This seat, the sceptre, and the crown, are the symbols of supreme authority. The throne of Jehovah is *prepared* by himself. His power is not acquired or conferred; it necessarily and eternally belongs to him. *The heavens* designates the place of blessedness raised high above the earth. There among unbodied spirits, stands the throne of glory. The authority of him

that sitteth upon it, is without limits; his sceptre extends over the celestial regions, and all their hosts—over the seas, and all that in them is—over the earth, and all its inhabitants; “*his kingdom ruleth over all.*”

Thus, a divine overruling providence is asserted in the text; and however mysterious the *doctrine*, in its vast extent and minute details, the *fact* is undeniable. God in a most wise, most just, most powerful, and most holy manner, governs all his creatures and all their actions. “The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all.”

I thence invoke thy aid, thou spirit that dost prefer before all temples, the upright heart.

———What in me is dark,

Illumine; what is low, raise and support;
That to the height of this great argument,
I may assert eternal providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.

We shall shew the reasonableness of the doctrine; give scripture evidence of its truth; and remove objections.

1. It is reasonable, and, of course, a dictate of sound philosophy, to believe that God, by a continual providence, governs the world.

The belief, that there is some invisible superior, whose agency effects the concerns of this world, does not only now obtain very generally, but has also in all ages prevailed. Unwavering Atheists, have been rare among our race; and sceptical philosophers never could continue long, to act consistently with their own speculative dogmas. The most barbarous nations did homage to some deity; and the wisest of the heathen, had some notions of the unity of God. It is to divine revelation undoubtedly, we are indebted for sound knowledge of his agency and attributes; but believing the existence of an eternal, efficient and intelligent cause of those things which appear, it is reasonable to admit, as an article of our creed,

that the Creator also governs universally the works of his own hands.

The designs of God, in forming the heavens and the earth; the necessity of order in the great system; the fitness of Jehovah exclusively for conducting the vast machinery; and the testimony of facts, permanently in our view, sufficiently show the absurdity of denying the doctrine of a perpetual providence.

Design, in action, necessarily enters into the idea which we form of an intelligent agent. Even the insane do not act without an object, however irregular and eccentric; much less can a wise man, in the exercise of his understanding, be busy without intending some effect. Shall we then admit that infinite wisdom has no end to answer, by the worlds which he has formed? No! such an admission is obviously absurd. But, either God had no design, in rearing the magnificent edifice of the universe, or having had an end, he ceases to prosecute it, unless there is a providence to govern the world. Whatever moved him to create, still moves him to preserve and govern, unless he has abandoned his object, and permitted his immutable purposes to be neglected, defeated and forgotten.

This world is in need of a governor, and is worthy of one competent to manage all its concerns with wisdom and with equity. Every city and village, in our land, yea, every one of our families, is deemed of sufficient importance to be subjected to the control of competent authority, and certainly has need of some polity for the preservation of due order. No sooner does the merchant fill his vessel for a foreign port, than he commits her to the care of the pilot and the master, and consigns his merchandize to the management of some discreet correspondent, in the place for which she is bound. And is the whole creation unworthy of the attention of its maker, and its God? Behold the various tribes of animated beings which people the forests, the air, the dust, and

the waters of the deep, moving under the impulse of their instincts, and fitted, whether great or small, with organs adopted to their work and their element; ascend the steps of the observatory and contemplate the planets moving under an almighty impulse, with mathematical exactness, in their respective orbits; consult the records of your own race, think of the generations that are past, that now inhabit the earth, and are hereafter to succeed to the place of present occupants; the countless generations of beings of whom each individual has a rational, accountable, and immortal soul, susceptible and certain of ceaseless miseries, or perfect and everduring joys; and then affirm, if you dare, that God has abandoned the universe, as unworthy of his care and government. O! if there were a spark of benevolence in the heart of him that doubts the divine providence when he looks abroad through nature, it must be with a joyless eye he surveys the dreary desert.

To other feelings, Christians are called by the word of faith, taught in the gospel. *The Lord reigneth let the earth be glad.* There is no other being to whom the sovereignty could possibly be transferred; for there is none but Jehovah competent to this mighty task. He combines all the qualities, in a perfect degree, which are required in order to govern the world in righteousness. Intelligence, power, goodness and justice belong to him who is necessarily invested with supremacy. If any of these attributes were wanting, he would not be entitled to our homage; and if any of them existed, only in an imperfect degree, he could not command the unlimited confidence of his rational subjects. The union of his attributes, however, each of them in perfection, and all in harmony, renders him so completely eligible to the work of universal government, that no reasonable objection can be offered against his providence; and we cannot account for that dislike to the doctrine, which appears in the human family, otherwise than by the blind

pertinacity with which men, whose hearts are naturally at enmity to God, adhere to the principles of rebellion against his holy commandments.

Facts, in the economy of the natural world, and in the connexion between inanimate nature and man, the subject of moral government—facts, unquestionable and obvious, abundantly exist, to testify the divine and unceasing superintendance of the world. The only difficulty in the argument from them, is in making a selection; and the only dispute, which legitimately can arise, is on the propriety of the selection. I take for illustration, the air and the light. Our connexion with these portions of creation, is sufficiently extensive, and sufficiently intimate, to give an idea of the amazing magnitude, constancy and minuteness, of the providence of him who rules in the whirlwind, and said “let there be light.” In making this reference, I appeal to your eyes and your ears.

You see the light. Created on the *first* day, and having answered its immediate purpose among the elements of ancient chaos, the sun, on the *fourth*, becomes its principal depository. This substance enters into combination with other ingredients, in the constitution of almost every body, of which we have any knowledge. It is again extricated from its combinations, and radiates in every direction, with great velocity. Light, in its pure state, is that which gives the eye its usefulness. By it the traveller pursues his journey, the labourer his occupation, and the man of science, his several researches. Without it, vegetation would languish, the diamond lose its brilliancy, and the Heavens would be stripped of their glories.

It is for the purpose of using this substance, and so increase in knowledge and in happiness for the honour of the creator, that your eye was formed from the earth—organized with inimitable delicacy—endowed with life and with growth—and with a motion.

on its own axis, subject to the determinations of your will. And have the eye and the light, for nearly six thousand years, continued to hold a delightful, a profitable communion, entirely by accident, or without a constantly superintending providence?

The common air, too, in which we breathe, and without which we could not long subsist, although invisible, is a witness, that bears testimony to the doctrine of God's providence. This remarkable fluid, composed of distinct elements, either of which in a separate state, would speedily destroy life, is itself an ocean surrounding our world, as the minister of health and enjoyment. Without it the fire would be extinguished, the fields and the forests would be stripped, and every living thing must perish on the earth. It enters into your lungs, circulating its heat through blood, and sinew, and bone, and marrow, preserving every fluid from stagnation, and the solids of the frame from rottenness. You hear its vibrations in the tones of the harp, and in the thunder of heaven.

To meet the atmosphere, as the vehicle of knowledge and of joy, the ear was bored; and without the ear, the organs of speech must remain without employment, and all the advantages of language to man, must have been forever foregone. If there was wisdom in the design, and power in the execution, when man was first fitted for attention to sounds; there is equal might, and equal benignity in the preservation of that fitness from generation to generation: and the fact of such preservation, is an abiding witness of God's care of his own works, of his present pervading providence. We shall now exhibit a summary view of

2. The scriptural proof of God's providence.

This kind of evidence is, with Christians, at all times, the most conclusive; for it is on the word of the living God, that faith unwaveringly rests. In many cases we may reason satisfactorily in the more extended,

but less clear light, which the Almighty gives by the works of nature; but to supernatural revelation we apply, as the perfect rule of our belief and behaviour.

A general acquaintance with the contents of the Bible, must convince all who receive it, as of divine inspiration, that Jehovah presides over the universe; for the scope of the whole, is to represent the invisible God, present every where, knowing all things, actuating creation, and controlling every event. The history, the prediction, and the most plain positive declarations, describe, imply and affirm, the perpetual providence of God.

The scripture history furnishes the most ancient, and the most authentic account of the origin, and the progress of nations; and, indeed, of all the social relations of man. It descends into minute details respecting individuals, and presents to view those incidents in life, which affect the temper, which tend to form and display the character, and which decide the entire condition of the person of whom it treats. The chief use of history consists not in the variety of ideas which it communicates, or the multiplicity of thoughts to which it gives rise; but in the great moral principles which it inculcates, and the development which it makes of the plan of God's moral government. In reading, therefore, in our Bibles, the records of antiquity, we find God is represented as every where present, and always in action. Whether the parts selected for study, respect empires or cities, families or individuals, the divine providence appears conspicuous. Egypt and Assyria, Nineveh and Babylon, the house of Abram and the house of Levi, Jehu as well as Joseph, furnish satisfactory examples. In short, the sacred word describes the climates and the seasons, all nature, all mankind, and every man in all the circumstances of his birth, and his life, and his death, as under the unceasing superintendance of a particular providence. "He causeth

the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth. He maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures. Thou visitest the earth and waterest it: thou crownest the year with thy goodness: thou preservest man and beast: thou hidest thy face, they are troubled, thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Man's days are determined, the number of his months are with him, he hath appointed his bounds that he cannot pass. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth."

Prophecy is but history in prospective. The prediction is founded upon foreknowledge, and implies the certain futurity of the event; and the certain futurity of the event predicted, depends on the purpose of the sovereign. Providence secures the accomplishments of the purpose, and is established uncontrovertibly by the truth of prophecy. Although all events have not been predicted by the prophets, enough is revealed to show that all are foreknown of God, and that the purpose of his mind extends to all: such events, too, are foretold in Scripture as, together with their circumstances, indicate the application of the prophecy, to objects of the greatest extent and the utmost minuteness; and, of course, the operations of providence extend to every concern, however great, or however small. A.

(To be continued.)

DECLINE OF INFIDELITY.

In the late reign of infidelity, Newburgh was remarkable for its deism. A blind emissary of infidelity, who visited Baltimore, and other places, appeared in Newburgh, and preached, in the court

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Those prophecies which respect the revolutions of empire, show the superintendance of providence in the voluntary actions concerned in the catastrophe; and the prophecies respecting the posterity of Noah, and Abram, and Ishmael, and Israel, prove, beyond a peradventure, the concern of providence with the case of individuals, and with the most contingent events of every man's life. With remarkable particularity God foretold, by the mouth of his prophets, the circumstances which occurred in the history of Jesus of Nazareth; and by his holy providence he accomplished what he had of old determined should be done; "for of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." It is easy to multiply quotations; a few more will suffice. The passages of Scripture, to which now your attention is invited, are plain declarations of the doctrine of providence.

VOL. I.

1. Ephesians i. 11. *Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*

There is no mistaking the agent referred to in this apostolical assertion. It is God, to whom the writer, verse 3d, ascribes blessedness, and who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ. The universality of his operations is plainly affirmed—*he worketh all things*; and the rule of his agency is *the counsel of his own will*. The *counsel* is in harmony with his attributes, and the *work* must necessarily correspond with the *plan*. What God does, he determined to do; and what he hath purposed shall he not bring it to pass? Eternity, righteousness, and immutability, belong to the decrees of God; and wisdom, power, and holiness, are developed in the providential execution. As we cannot conceive of a time in which God was either ignorant or unresolved what to do; so we cannot conceive that his agency is now more limited than he purposed from everlasting. The doctrine of providence is introduced by the apostle, in his letter to the saints at Ephesus, not as a mere speculative tenet, but as a powerful encouragement to their faith, and their gratitude; and though he applies the argument from the decrees and operations of God, more immediately to the concerns of Christians, he affirms that the definite care exercised by the father of Christ, over the election of grace, is the work of one whose kingdom ruleth over all. He rises, from a particular instance, to the general principle—“in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” This assertion of the abstract truth is essential to the writer’s reasoning; for did he admit of limits to the purpose and providence of God, there must be limits also to our confidence in the divine protection; this, however, is the joy of the saints, the divine energy is always and universally in action.

2. Proverbs xvi. 33. *The lot is cast into the lap ; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.*

The object of the lot is to supercede, in the disposition of property or dignity, human design; and to submit the decision, in the case, to what is vulgarly called chance. And what is this? The doctrine of chances, I know, has become a matter of calculation to the man of science; and the practice of deception, under it, an art, to the acquisition of which the gamester devotes his time and his talents. Lotteries have often been resorted to as the criminal amusement of those who feel inclined to destroy time without turning it to profit, and as the means of gratifying the basest propensities of licentiousness and avarice. A great scheme of iniquity, embracing innumerable immoral and impoverishing tendencies, legalized by inconsiderate or profane legislators, among the different nations, has been established in the doctrine of chances. But what is chance? Chance, we have the best authority for the word, *chance happens to all men.* We understand the meaning. Incidents occur, in every man's history, to which his own providence did not extend. But is chance nothing, Then millions worship an idol. Let mere philosophy interpose to explain the way in which the disposing of the lot comes to pass. Design, in man, when using the lot, is acknowledged villainy. The decision is referred, not to human art, but to the laws of nature. The revolutions of the wheel, and of the dice, are governed by the laws of gravitation, and of motion. And what are these laws, but the will of God, actuating the material world? The decision then is necessarily left to the law giver—"the lot is cast into the lap, and the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." The most casual occurrence, is governed by the providence of God.

3. Luke xii. 6, 7. *Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*

The principle, which our Redeemer applies to the insignificant sparrow, applies equally to every insect; and the reasoning founded upon the *number* of the hairs of the head, is elsewhere applied to their *colours*, and *fall* to the ground. Matthew v. 36. and xxi. 20—Thou canst not make one hair white or black. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. That principle is too plainly asserted to be misunderstood. The providence of God extends to every creature, animate or inanimate. It descends to the arrangement of the sparrow's nest, her flight and her fall; it descends to the aggregation of those atoms which constitute the finest filaments of hair; and the very collocation of them, so as to reflect the rays of light on which depends their colour. It ascends moreover above the heavens.

4. Psalm cxlvii. 4, 17. *He telleth the number of the stars, he calleth them all by their names. Great is the Lord and of great power, his understanding is infinite. Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains. He giveth snow like wool; he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold.*

God then governs the world, with an unremitting providence, which working all things, controlling circumstances the most accidental to us, directing in the most minute concerns, is extended over the most magnificent. He governs the material world by an impulse, operating upon the inertness of the elements of which it is composed. He governs the inferior tribes of living creatures by means of the characteristic instincts of their nature. He governs angels and men by motives addressed to their moral constitution, without impairing their spontaneity, and without the admission of uncertainty into his own righteous plans; for even the wickedness of the wicked shall be overruled for the glory of his provi-

ence. Psalm lxxvi. 10. *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.*

It is sin that involves the doctrine of providence, if not in difficulty, certainly in dispute. Had no evil existed in the world, there would have been no doubt of the universality of divine government; and it is ignorance of the divine agency, respecting the criminal actions of fallen creatures, that occasions the perplexity which often effects intelligent men; but if we cannot clear up the doubt, or remove the rebellious principle of opposition from the heart, we must at least attempt to rescue the doctrine of divine providence from the charge of inconsistency, and endeavour to show :

3. That the objections made to it are susceptible of a satisfactory reply.

1. It has been objected that the world is too good a system to admit of a continual agency in the direction of its machinery.

Speculative men of no mean talent, and of diligent research, affirm that the universe was at first constructed so perfectly, and all its springs, whether in the natural or moral world, so well adjusted, as to proceed to the end without further support or interference from the hand of the almighty artist; and that it is more honourable to the divine attributes, to admit that such perfect skill has been employed, than to suppose, that the system of creation requires the continual agency of its maker. Their proof is a comparison of the universe to a piece of exquisite mechanism, and the argument is from analogy. That machine is the most perfect, and indicates best the skill of the artist, which answers its end, for the longest time and with the greatest exactness, independently of its maker, and without the need of repair. We seek no better comparison to prove the very opposite to that for which it has been adduced by unbelieving philosophers. From the principles ad-

mitted in this very comparison, we shew the imbecility of men and the greatness of God. We meet the infidel upon the ground which he has himself selected, and employ the weapons which he hath himself chosen. We must, in order to be consistent, become atheists, or admit a perpetual providence.

Let the specimen of mechanical skill be produced. Endow it, if you please, with ideal perfection. It is separated to a distance from its maker. It answers *its* end and even after *his* death. And what is it? The matter, of which the several parts are constructed, existed independently of the artist. He could neither create nor annihilate a particle. He only gave the materials their form and their place. Being so composed, this machine answers its end by the laws of the material world; laws which existed before the artist discovered his application of them, and over the duration of which, he has no control. The machine not only exists in its perfection and use, separated from its maker and independently of his will; but when removed from under his hand, the specimen of his genius exists in defiance of his will: and it is of course the proof of human imbecility. It illustrates also the power of God. Self existence is a divine attribute, and cannot be predicated of matter. The laws of nature are only the continuous expression of the will of the Lord of the whole earth. In that will, there is of course, almighty energy. Matter and mind, the whole creation, and the laws of creation, had their origin from God, and continue by his will; and of course if there is a God, there is an overruling providence.

2. It is equally unreasonable to object to the doctrine of God's purpose and providence, that it reflects upon his holiness, and exposes him to the charge of being himself the author of sin in the world.

We know that many subtle theologians have admitted the charge in affirming a providence; and that others have denied both the one and the other. The

principle, in both these apparently opposite cases, is precisely the same—that God cannot effectually control every action of the sinner, while the agent himself is the efficient author of the action; for that to do so, involves a contradiction. This is the radical principle of all such reasoning. The contradiction has, however, never been seen or made manifest by any one; and indeed it is impossible that it can exist. If the Lord cannot certainly govern, to the purposed result, the voluntary actions of his creatures, without destroying their moral agency, then he cannot govern them at all, without destroying their distinctive nature; but the destruction of the activity and spontaneity of mind, is the destruction of mind itself. And such a scheme of providence is itself the contradiction; for it is not the preservation and government, but the annihilation of the moral world. Were we to follow consistently the course of reasoning which this principle would indicate, we should be constrained to enter the wilderness of absolute scepticism. We cannot for a moment admit that God made any creature whom he cannot certainly govern, according to the very nature of the creature, for the creator's purposes. The thought would be accompanied with unsupportable horror.

It has often, indeed, been confessed by religious instructors, that there is a difficulty in reconciling moral agency with the divine decree, and the providence which puts the decree in execution. This may have arisen from courtesy, or a disposition to avoid singularity, since the sentiment is very prevalent in society; but assuredly the greatest difficulty is in discovering any appearance of inconsistency between the two, unless it be said, that reconciliation is impossible in cases of parties which were never at variance. Between the certainty of providential control, and the freedom of man, in will and in action, we never could discover even the semblance of contradiction. These are two great and distinct

facts, in the system of the universe, most reasonable, most clearly declared in the word of God; and although, like other ultimate facts in the constitution of the universe, they be surrounded with mystery, our vision has never been sufficiently acute to discover the intervening darkness in which doubt, of their truth, might fix her abode.

In affirming the doctrine of providence, it is promptly and positively denied that God is the *author* of our sins. The very phraseology is revolting to Christian sensibility. The idea which it involves would unsettle the very foundations of our faith and our hope. Sin is a want of conformity unto, or a transgression of the law. Does God authorise this? He prohibits it; does he approve of it? he condemns it; does he choose it? he says, O do not this abominable thing that I hate. Does he *make* the sins of men? Sin is no creature of God. It is no substance—neither matter nor mind—not an object of creative energy. It is that quality of disposition, of thought, of action, of an intellectual being which is contrary to moral law. Has God *infused* vicious propensities into the minds of his accountable subjects? he made man upright: does he *seduce* from holiness to iniquity? let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any one. What then, has God nothing to do with our sins? Yes! he punisheth them. He inflicts pain proportioned to crime. Sinners, he will call you to account for your transgressions before his awful tribunal, and, in the terrible display of his infinite opposition to your iniquity, he will order the impenitent to everlasting burnings. The flames of *their* torments shall glorify *his* justice. But there is forgiveness with him. In Christ, who bare our sins and suffered for us, he is reconciled and reconciling us to himself. He saves his people from their sins. This is our hope and our joy. But were we to admit, Christians, that the divine efficiency

propels the mind to sin, the Bible must cease to command our respect and to fill our hearts with gladness. Its worth depends on its inspiration. *Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*; if, however, the same divine energy moved to speech, the lying lips of the false prophets, and indited to Mahomet his koran, then is our gospel preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. The crescent is entitled to your regard, as much as the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thanks be unto God we are not left thus to confound the agency of God, with the works of the flesh and the devil. They are entirely distinct and opposite: for the flesh striveth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other. We are not, however, to suppose that seeing God is not the efficient cause of sinful propensities, therefore his providence has no control over the sinners actions. On the contrary, the greatest crimes ever perpetrated, nay, every exertion of every sinner in the universe, and all the effects resulting from them, are under that control. Every man's disposition has some influence on his words, and his actions; and the behaviour of every one, has more or less influence on others. Whether that influence effect, directly, matter or mind, all the results are subservient to the divine purpose; and that subserviency is secured by the divine agency. A very extensive and complicated machinery, of vicious motive and criminal action, was in operation for years in bringing about the events which led to the exaltation of Joseph in Egypt. What he said of his brethren, when they remembered their transgressions, is sufficient to illustrate our assertion. *"As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive."* The tendency of the most corrupt passions, whether permitted or restrained, not excepting seduction by evil spirits, is by the providence of God made to accomplish his de-

signs. To this purpose was the vision of Micaiah declared to Ahab and Jehosaphat. *"I saw the Lord setting upon his throne: and the Lord said, who shall entice Ahab king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead: then there came out a spirit and said, I will entice him: and the Lord said, thou shalt prevail."*

3. It is sometimes objected to the doctrine of a universally pervading providence, that great events alone require, deserve, or receive the notice of the sovereign. Even good men are occasionally visited with doubts, arising in part from temptation, and in part from a sense of their own insignificance and unworthiness, whether God has forgotten them. When iniquity prospers, and righteousness is the companion of disappointment, despondence verges towards unbelief. *How doth God know? and is their knowledge in the Most High? verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.*

We have heard men of some reflection affirm that providence extended only to the result; but that the means which led to that result were overlooked.

All such objections belong to one class, and owe their origin to the tendency we naturally, though improperly, have to attribute our imperfections to the being whom we adore. The recollection of his perfection should suffice to settle the doubts.

Men engaged in very important concerns, are constrained to overlook the unimportant. They feel that they have limited capacities. But God is infinite; and there is no creature which he thought proper to make, which he does not think proper to govern. Omniscience and omnipotence, securing the result of any combination of causes, will not be inattentive to the means which bring the event to pass. The saints may take a lesson from the fowls of the air, and fearlessly depend upon him who said, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

God, indeed, is king over all the earth. His power and his sovereignty are pledged in covenant by his word and his oath, in defence of the redeemed. His all-pervading providence is especially employed in their interest; and we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. Murmur not at his dispensations; for the most painful afflictions act, at his command, to promote your everlasting welfare. Droop not at the remembrance of your own unworthiness; for the Lord hath not forgotten you. He that spareth not his own son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.

Christians! your Redeemer reigneth. He directs in providence over all the earth. While natural causes proceed to their effects in their natural course, while the moral world proceeds in its successive generations, with an agency that is voluntary. He by a supernatural power controls all causes and results, and gives to them a direction subservient to the interests of his church. The building is safe upon the rock: and the living stones of the temple shall live forevermore. Let Israel rejoice in him that made him. Let the children of Zion be joyful in their king. God in your own nature, your husband, and your high priest, rules upon his throne. Touched with a sense of your infirmities, he will not leave you comfortless. He will guide you with his counsel and afterwards receive you to glory. Praise the Lord, O! Jerusalem; praise thy God, O! Zion, who hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all. A.