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## THE CHURCH'S SAFETY.

Matt. xvi. 18. Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

True Christians are, of all men, the most sensible of their own weakness. Their understandings and their dispositions unite in cherishing this sensibility. They are creatures absolutely dependent on their Creator. They perceive this; and they choose that it should be so. If, relatively, they have more strength, intellectual or moral, than some others of the human family, really, they have none which they can call their own. Ask the Christian, "What hast thou but what thou hast received?" he will answer, Nothing. He will say of God, "In him we live, and move, and have our being."\*

The truly pious clearly perceive their own inability to practice virtue, to ward off evils, and to withstand temptations to vice; and although they lament over it, they are disposed to confess the fact, and become debtors to the grace which is in Christ Jesus. Of themselves, they can do nothing.

Sensible of their weakness, they also perceive the world against them. However various the dispositions, and different the views of men; yea, although they be at irreconcilable enmity with one another; whatever may be the distinctions in language, in politics, in religion, which exist

among them; they are united in a natural and malignant opposition to faithful Christians. "*Marvel not my brethren, though the world hate you.*"\*

On the agency of Christians, nevertheless, depends instrumentally the existence of the visible church. This existence is threatened by the Pagan and the Mahometan, the Theist and the Jew; and is in no small danger from the hypocritical professor. These have enlisted in their service power and prejudice, riches and honor, numbers and zeal. What, with this danger in view, and conscious of his own weakness, can support the believer's hope? The promise of his Redeemer, "*Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*"

The words are part of a conversation which Christ had with his disciples about his own person and character. Peter, whose zeal is ever ardent, expressed the sentiments of his believing companions, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." In which words we have, 1. A view of the person of Christ, in which Peter had confessed his belief, "*this rock.*" 2. The relation of that divine person to the church; that of a foundation to an edifice.

\* Acts, xvii. 28.

\* John.

*“upon this rock I will build my church.”* 3. The safety of the church, *“the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”*

To illustrate this safety, shall my endeavors, in this discourse, be directed. I shall, however, premise some truths taught by Christ in the text and context, and exceedingly helpful to a full understanding of the church's safety.

I. Premise some doctrines proposed in the passage of revelation before us.

This is designed as an explanation of the text—a defense of it from the misconstructions of enemies to truth—and as a mean of strengthening our faith in the security promised to Israel.

*Propos. I.* Christ wills that his disciples should make an explicit profession of their faith in himself.

The whole of this conversation led them to make such a profession. He directly demands it in the question, “but whom do ye say that I am?” By a public profession of their faith, believers fulfill a law of their nature,—they express their sentiments. *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. As with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, so with the mouth confession is made unto eternal life.* This has a salutary influence upon themselves. The reduction of their conceptions into language renders these more accurate, and has a tendency to confirm their faith. It is also beneficial to society. Expression is the vehicle of sentiment. By our public profession others are admonished to go and do likewise. A good confession, like a holy example,

has often done much good. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”\*

It has, not unfrequently, been the means of inducing others to commence a serious investigation of religion. *What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us ?†* is an inquiry preparative to, *whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women, whither is thy beloved turned aside that we may seek him with thee ?‡* Such a profession is, moreover, acceptable to our beloved Lord. O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rocks, in the secret places of the stairs; let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely. Song ii. 14.

*Propos. II.* All saving information is derived from the special aid of the Divine Spirit.

Christ proposes this truth to his disciples. “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.” The doctrine of Christ is a supernatural revelation. The cordial reception of it is a supernatural gift. The efforts of unassisted reason would never have discovered the great mystery of godliness—not from creation, for the human mind is not able to trace any necessary connection between creation and the redemption of sinners—nor from the dispensations of Providence; for although these are all subservient to the system of grace, the connection is too mysterious to

\* Math. v. 16. † Song v. 9. ‡ Song vi. 1.

be ascertained by the mind, without more than ordinary aid. Omniscience can, indeed, perceive a connection between all the operations of divine providence, and that ineffable display of the perfections of Jehovah's, which is made in the person of Jesus Christ; but it requires efficiencies of the Divine Spirit, perfectly distinct from those which confer the power of reasoning, in order to produce that adaptation to divine truth in the human soul, which is necessary to a saving reception of the system of grace, even after it is presented to the understanding in propositions which are intelligible to the natural man. *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.\** There is an essential difference between the rational assent which is given to doctrines, even when revealed, and that cordial approbation of the system of grace which the pious have given to divine truth. The natural man vieweth not the things of the Spirit of God—because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

*Propos. III.* Faith is eminently employed in beholding the Head of the church carrying on all her concerns by a real exertion of his authority.

Jesus holds up this object to the view of his disciples, whose faith is now quickened by his conversation with them. *"I will build the church."* The disciples

had declared their belief in him as *"the Christ, the Son of God"*—as the great God—the Word made flesh. This idea fills the whole soul—they, for a moment, forget the meanness of his appearance. But the eye is again arrested by the poverty, the weakness, of the church. The disciples are few, and feeble, and ignorant, and contemptible. They are ready to cry, *"By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?"* The words of Christ expel fear, and pour joy into the soul. At that moment they feel their importance in connection with him. There is a high value stamped upon their lives and their immortality. They rise above present appearances. The world is crucified unto them. They glory in the cross. The church is safe. Their hopes are secure. Obstacles formerly insurmountable vanish from their view. *Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel, a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, Grace, grace, unto it.\**

*Propos. IV.* The church largely participates in the stability which pervades the counsels and the works of Jehovah.

All his works praise the Lord. He hath firmly laid the foundations of earth; and he setteth fast the mountains.

But, things *glorious* are said of the city of God. *"His foundation is in the holy mountains."*† Christ's interest in her is the bond of her security. *"I will build my church."* He claims a property in her. He has unto her the relation of an architect, of a

\* 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

\* Zech. iv. 7. † Ps. lxxxvii. 1.

proprietor, yea, of a foundation to the building. "Upon this rock I will build my church." This is his own person. As the apostle said of the rock which supplied Israel with water in the desert, so say we of this—"That rock is Christ."

By a perversion of scripture and of sense, Peter is made by some the rock on which the church is founded, because his name signifies a rock. If this had been the case, the church must have fallen when the foundation was removed. Peter is long since dead. He has not left a successor in office, save in the ordinary exercise of ministerial duties. None succeeded him to the apostleship. And if the Roman bishop have any claim as the successor of Peter, it is because he inherits, not his zeal, his piety, or love, but his denial of his Lord, and his opposition to laying the foundation of the church in the sufferings of the Lord of glory. Let the friends of the man of sin build upon the pretended occupant of Peter's chair. Their rock is not as our rock, our enemies themselves being judges. The stone which these builders rejected is made the HEAD of the CORNER. The person of Christ, which Peter confessed, and which is in allusion to Peter's name, is called a rock, and not the person or office of Peter who made the confession, is the foundation of the church. *Other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* Resting upon this, she is possessed of immovable stability. *God is in the midst of her ; she shall not be moved. The*

*heathen raged ; the kingdoms were moved ; he uttered his voice ; the earth melted.\**

*Propos. V.* The church is still to expect severe attacks from powerful enemies.

She is not yet beyond the reach of her adversary. She is liable to attacks, furious, and frequent, and constant. Christ, by his death, has obtained a conquest for us over all the powers of darkness: but our enemies are not so far defeated as not to exist, or to be totally discouraged from any further attempt towards our ruin. Opposed to the gates of Zion are the gates of hell. Christ intimates this in the text. Gates, by a figure, conveys the idea of cunning and of violence. In gates, counsels were anciently held, and from them armies marched to battle. The counsels and the forces of malicious spirits, and of wicked men, are united against true religion. The prince of the power of the air worketh in the children of disobedience, and seeketh whom he may devour.

*Propos. VI.* The friends of religion have no cause of much alarm.

The gates of hell shall not prevail. Christ, the faithful and true witness, hath promised this. He is able also to perform. Not only shall the elect be all saved, but an organized church shall exist on the earth until the end of the world. The visibility of the church is included in our text. In this the honor of Christ is concerned; and against it are the efforts of Satan directed. The church of Christ, fully organized,

\* Psalm xli.

is sound in her doctrine, has the legitimate use of the sacraments, and ostensible conformity to the laws of Christ in her discipline and government. Such is the true church. A suitable number of professors of this description shall Christ maintain as witnesses for him in every age. They may be, at particular times, very few and little known. Jesus has intimated that it should be so. The woman must escape for her nourishment to the wilderness, while the whole world wonders after the beast. No promise has she of preservation in any particular nation or language. Those to whom the characteristics of the true church belong, may be the minority in a communion greatly corrupted, or exist in one or more distinct and separately organized societies. The divine law, it is true, determines the duty of individuals and communities in relation to those circumstances : but the promises secure the existence of his true church in her visible form, until the resurrection. *Go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : and lo ! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

(To be continued.)

#### THE PROVIDENCE OF THE MEDIATOR.

(Continued from page 172.)

"On my right hand unto the Son the Father  
said,  
Sit thou, Messiah, Lord of all ; and reign  
Until thy foes become a stool on which  
Thy feet may stand, the acknowledged Lord  
Earth, with all its potentates and powers,

Bend under thee. And heaven with its inhabitants  
Created, shout, The King of glory comes,  
In all the terrible array of war,  
To break in pieces thrones ; and power abused,  
Wrench from the sceptred hands of royalty :  
And make a way for truth to spread her wings  
And fly unto utmost bounds of earth,  
That, to his rising, kings may come ; and  
Gentile nations in his brightness shine,  
And earth's dark places know him in his  
grace.  
Hail, Jesus ! King of nations and of saints !

The advantage gained by the decisive battle of Zama, was prosecuted with great vigor, by the successful Romans. They rapidly spread their dominion over a vast number of tributary nations, which were made to recognize the sovereignty of Rome. One hundred and thirty-eight years after this battle, and sixty A. C., Pompey the Great took Jerusalem, and reduced Judea to the rank of a province, which, till after the advent of Messiah, continued to be governed by Jewish princes, who were recognized by the Roman government. The world was thus preparing, by the enlarged dominion of Rome, for some important moral change. The communication opened between the distant parts of the empire and the metropolis, for military and cruel purposes, was equally convenient for conveying the truth : and the awe inspired by the general government among the nations, become a shield to the disciples of the Redeemer, when in obedience to his command they went unto all the world to preach the gospel. The apostle Paul took advantage of this protection, when the provincial magistrate treated him unjustly. He appealed to Cesar.\*

Thus important external advantages were afforded for the

\* Acts xv. 11.

## SAFETY OF THE CHURCH.

(Continued from page 245.)

II. To consider, more extensively, the evidences which bear testimony to the safety of the church.

The text itself, indeed, is evidence sufficient. Christ's words stand in no need of confirmation. In condescension to our weakness, however, God gives unto us line upon line, and precept upon precept. The evidences of the most important doctrines of Revelation are diffused through the whole volume of the sacred writings. This was necessary to prevent mistakes—to encourage a diligent perusal of the Holy Scriptures—and to confirm the faith of his children, in particular articles, and in the authenticity of the whole system. Had revelation been communicated to us in a regular system, the scriptures would neither have been as safe or as useful as they are in the present form. Did they teach the same doctrine, enforce the same duty, and promise the same comfort once only; however plainly, perspicuously, and accurately it might have been expressed; a corruption of the original text by accident or design, a false translation or an improper criticism, would have unsettled the faith of thousands—would have rendered it difficult if not impossible to ascertain the truth, and heretics and infidels would have had a decided advantage over the friends of religion.—These dangers are happily pre-

vented. The great doctrines of Christianity appear every where in the book of God. They are interspersed through the historical, the preceptive, the promissory part of revelation. Every book, every chapter, is a system of divinity. What is in one place more obscurely intimated, is elsewhere clearly explained. In order to wound religion in any of its principles, the sacred text must be adulterated in every page of our Bibles. What infidels object to revelation, the want of a systematic arrangement, is really an evidence of its authenticity. Infinite wisdom is discoverable through its apparently negligent simplicity; and the wisdom of man is confessed to be folly. It will not, therefore, be deemed improper, that *comparing spiritual things with spiritual*, we endeavor to collect, from the testament of our Lord, additional arguments for the safety of his church.

And,

1. This appears from the light in which she appeared to God in his eternal choice—an object of love.

The Ancient of days had the plan of his works before him, ere time commenced its march. It was fixed; and the church was elected in Christ her head and representative. He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world. Eph. i. 4. Believers are by nature destitute of any lovely quality to render them eligible to such privileges as their Father's election includes. They are sinners; but as fallen men,

the Father himself loved them, and gave his only begotten son to die for their sins. This reflects not dishonor on the divine character. It would, indeed, argue perverseness of mind in man to love an object whose qualities were all odious. Man's taste is a subject of law, and that would argue its vileness and consequent culpability. The love of man is, moreover incapable of producing in its object a moral change. But neither of these objections militate against the electing love of God.

The moral excellency of his own nature is the only criterion of the propriety of his volitions, He is not accountable to another. for none can say unto him, What doest thou? His love is more-over efficient. It has, upon its objects, a transforming influence. It provides for the guilty robes of righteousness, and clothes the vile with every lovely attribute. *Behold, the daughter of the king is all glorious. Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.*

If the church then appeared to him in this light from of old, her safety will necessarily follow, if there be power and wisdom sufficient, on the part of Heaven to secure her final exaltation. The word and wisdom of God, our Redeemer expresses his delight on a foresight of his connection with the church. His discourse implies her safety, who is beloved by one in possession of such resources as he commands. "I am understanding, I am strength. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. The Lord possessed me in the beginning of

his way, before his works of old. When he prepared the heavens, when he established the clouds above, when he gave to the sea his decree that the waters should not pass his commandment, when he appointed the foundations of the earth then I was by him rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men." Such love, aided by infinite resources, will not suffer its object to perish. "I am persuaded that neither death nor life," &c. Rom. viii. 38, 39.

2. This safety appears from the purposes of the divine mind respecting the object.

If he have purposed the church's safety, she cannot be destroyed. *His counsel shall stand and he will do all his pleasure.* Not a particle of matter in creation which he hath not formed, and which he doth not regulate. Not a single event in the moral world, concerning which he hath not made previous and adequate arrangements. There never was a time in which he was undetermined, never a time in which he altered his arrangements in a single instance. *He is of one mind, who can turn him? The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them who are his.* These purposes have special reference to the church. Her salvation is predestinated. No event can hinder it. His purposes are all consistent with one another. As to his infinite mind they are one. In this one all events are included. He has therefore obtained this inheritance, *being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own*

*will, that we should be to the praise of his glory.*

3. The price paid for the church's redemption is a pledge of her safety.

The price is infinite. According to previous stipulation it hath been paid. The parties contracting, are infallible. Nothing can argue greater security.

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. In order to ransom his church God tabernacled in our nature. He voluntarily humbled himself, by appearing in the likeness even of sinful flesh, by fulfilling in our room all righteousness and by his suffering unto the death in our behalf. He who knew not sin, by inherent pollution or actual transgressions, was by imputation made sin for us. He had a fellow-feeling of our infirmities, and experimentally learned all our afflictions. He felt the enraged efforts of malicious spirits to aggravate his torments, during the hour and the power of darkness. Infinite wrath poured its torrent on his devoted head. The communication of the cordial drops of his Father's love was withheld, while he drunk the cup of sourness and bitterness unmingled with sweetness. His soul shuddered. His agony expressed his blood through his garments. He groaned, he bled, he died. Deep, deep did he lay the foundation of the building of mercy.

Thus he paid for the redemption of the whole church—purchased not with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Christ. Every individual believer was thus ransomed from sin and from death—Thou wast slain and hast

redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, tongue, and nation. For their souls and their bodies he laid down the stipulated price, of infinite value—Ye are no more your own, ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies and spirits which are his.

Every thing necessary, to preserve their souls and bodies, to prepare them for his house above, to introduce them to his heavenly mansions, and to continue them in the enjoyment of endless felicity, he thus by his death provided for them—All things are yours and ye are Christ's. In consequence of his death he is himself exalted—Wherefore God hath highly exalted him and given him a name above every name. All his purchased stores are committed to his own disposal, and as our Great Banker, he distributes to the necessity of his saints out of his fullness—In him it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell—Out of his fullness have we received grace for grace. What then, has his church to fear? Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea, rather is risen again: but,

4. The safety of his church may be argued from the interposition of Providence in her behalf.

Because the High Priest of our profession hath redeemed his church from the curse, God hath given him authority to employ all the resources of nature in her service and for her good—He is a King and a Priest upon his throne; and shall build the temple of the Lord. The Father promised this to him, when he subscribed the

bond as our surety—Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession—He has performed the promise—And I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came unto the ANCIENT of days; and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him. The Redeemer asserts in positive terms that he in possession of such authority—All things are delivered unto me of my Father—All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me.

The angels who have kept their first estate, and the whole church in heaven and on earth, recognize him with joy in this capacity.—Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. And I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders, saying, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Rev. v. 9, 12.

The scriptures teach us that the Prince of the kings of the earth, rules his empire in subser-viency to the salvation and the stability of his church. In order to conceive aright of the system of grace, we must consider it as the chief of the ways<sup>1</sup> of God. "Say ye unto the righteous, it shall be well with you." "All things shall work together for good to those who love God," In

the inspired representation which the prophet Ezekiel gives us of the movements of Providence, in chap. i. and x., Jesus in the appearance of a man sits on a splendid throne directing the revolutions of the wheels. Even in the midst of his humiliation some rays of his intrinsic glory escaped through the mantle of his poverty. Angels announce his birth with joy; and a star directs to the spot in which he lay. While ministering on earth, he healed the sick, opened the eyes of the blind, stopped the rage of the maniac, and forced Satan to obey his voice. Over the winds and the waves he exercised unlimited power during his life, and while HE suffered, nature trembled and seemed to mourn.

To the disciple whom he loved, he appeared gloriously in the island of Patmos. He, whose vesture was dipped in blood, and whose name is the WORD OF GOD, is also, KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS. From the mediatorial angel who stands at the golden altar with a censer full of incense in his hand, the righteous receive all their blessings and the wicked their punishments. He is the Governor among the nations. He rules in the midst of his enemies. The angels of light are his ministering spirits, and the devils are chained to the wheels of his chariot.

No weapon formed against Zion shall prosper. God hath raised his Son from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not

only in this world but that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be Head over all things, to the church which is his body, the fullness of him who filleth all in all.

5. We have an evidence that the church will be finally triumphant from the victories which she has already achieved.

The contest between her and the gates of hell have long ago commenced. For nearly six thousand years, the war between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent has lasted. Even the leader of the church's forces, whom God gave for an ensign to the people, has been furiously attacked by the powers of darkness. Behold! the consequences Christ overcame in his death, spoiled principalities and powers, led captivity captive, and in his exalted state gives gifts unto men. As the body to the head, so is the church to Christ. In him, all her members are more than conquerors. The breaker is come up before them; they have broken up and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: their King shall pass before them and their LORD on the head of them. Under the banner of the Redeemer, the church has marched her foremost ranks. The great trumpet of the gospel has given a certain sound and these have prepared for the battle. They have engaged; they have conquered; and are now at rest in the full possession of their heavenly inheritance. The utmost efforts of the enemy could only kill the body and thus hasten the saints to their kingdom and their crown. A few more

skirmishes will finish the contest as it respects the part of the army now engaged. Succeeding generations will follow; and from the success which has accompanied the efforts of those who have previously engaged, they may assuredly calculate on victory. They are embarked in the same glorious cause—they are clad in the same impenetrable armor—they have the same glorious and omnipotent Captain, who has already issued orders to the sentinels of heaven, "Open ye the gates that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in."

6. There is established in the counsels of the Eternal, an inseparable connection between the divine glory and the church's welfare; and this shall undoubtedly secure her salvation.

For his glory, God is exceedingly jealous. He will not suffer it to be given to graven images. He has himself connected it with the system of grace, and Zion is a crown of glory in the hand of our Lord. Who then will attempt to wrest it from him?

The special agency of each divine person, the special honor of these divine agents, are now engaged in a common cause with the church. The promises of God shall not fall to the ground. The intercession, cannot be in vain, which the High Priest makes within the sanctuary. The Spirit which dwells in the hearts of believers is immortal and omnipotent. Once communicated to the soul of an adopted son, he never separates from him. The Father's love is sure, the Son has finished his redemption. The Spirit of grace will with equal cer-

tainty lead unto glory those who possess this great pledge of their inheritance. After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the **EARNEST** of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.—Eph. i. 13, 14.

Infinitely secure, then, must be this vessel laden with the riches of the divine glory—the Great Pilot will conduct her into the haven—the powers of hell shall not prevail.

III. Consider the utility of this doctrine.

If Jesus hath been conversing with you, my brethren, during the exposition of this text which I have essayed, ye will not be strangers to its use. You will have it hereafter to say, Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened unto us the scriptures? In order to help you to the practical application of it, I shall conclude these remarks by suggesting some of the uses which the discussion of the subject may answer: and

1. It inclines the believer to contemplate this glorious object in its proper light.

Things glorious are said of the city of the Lord. God himself delights in his church. He will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. Our elder brethren, of God's intelligent family—those pure spirits who have ever lived near him and have enjoyed his fellowship, are still learning more of his character from the church. They have an interest in her movements;

they eagerly investigate the mysteries which have reference unto her. To principalities and powers in heavenly places is made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. Turn your eyes, Christians, to the same object. It is inviting beyond expression. Those who were ransomed from the death, gathered into Christ himself as their head inseparably connected with them, the man Christ surrounded with all the effulgence of the Godhead, seated upon the throne of the universe; the winged seraphim the ministers of his pleasure; death and hell cast into the lake of fire, the gates of glory opening to the generations of the righteous, they enter with joy and gladness. Oh, God! with thee they are happy and safe.

2. This doctrine is calculated to wipe away the tears which bedew the church's cheeks, and disfigure her in the presence of her children.

If she calculate on natural causes, the prospect before her is gloomy. Unbelief threatens to wrap around her the mantle of destruction. The heavens blacken, the earth trembles, the mountains are cast unto the midst of the sea, and the waters roar; but, there is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God. The promises in the hand of the Spirit convey peace and joy unto the soul.

Confer not, my friends, with flesh and blood. The text directs your hopes to the agency of your Savior. Go up through the wilderness leaning on your beloved; and in the light of his countenance the church will appear beautiful

as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, and terrible as an army with banners. In the world you shall have tribulation; but in me you shall have peace. Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

3. The words of our text, strip the menaces of her most powerful enemies of all their terror.

The heathen indeed rage, and the people imagine a vain thing. *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, to plot against the Lord and his Anointed.* When such formidable combinations are seen formed against the church from without; when corruptions and distractions prevail within her walls, it is not surprising that her friends should be alarmed; but let not fear palsy the arm of industry in her service. The Lord reigneth, let the earth be glad. A sight, of Immanuel building his church, animates, invigorates and cheers the soul. They appear to be more for us than they who are against us. Their vociferous threats die on the distant breeze; their arrows fall to the ground without a stroke. Our heavenly Father hath declared of his Son, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever—a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. He hath appointed him to rule in the midst of his enemies."—By a public decree he hath commanded the nations to submit to his authority. "Be wise, ye kings, be instructed, ye judges of the earth—kiss the Son." And he hath sanctioned the decree, by threatening destruction to those who will not comply with its behest.—"Lest ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little."

You will recognize therefore, brethren, in him, who during his humiliation was a servant of rulers, in his present exalted state the Supreme Ruler and Judge. Why need you fear the threat of your adversary? Your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is his name. All the treasures of wrath, as well as the treasures of grace, are at his disposal; the instruments of the Lord's indignation are in his hand. All judgments, the partial distribution of punishments in this life, and the irrevocable sentence, which stamps with eternity the wo of the wicked, are administered by the Mediator. He hath given him authority to execute judgment *because he is the Son of man.* John v. 27.

4. This doctrine is useful, in order to encourage us to fight the good fight of faith.

Yes, brethren, I am not afraid to insist, in your hearing, upon the power of the enemy; I am not afraid to assert in positive language your own weakness, while I have it in my power to present you with such a powerful Ally. Jesus shall build his church, the builders shall not lose their labor. Trust ye in the Lord Jehovah for ever: in him is everlasting strength. The cause of truth is his. Can you believe the infidel, with the power of a false philosophy, shall be able to effect what the whole force of superstition tried in vain—tear the Bible from the bosom of the church? Did your King in all his glory, appear in your assembly with this book in his hand, bidding defiance to every adversary, would you be assured of the safety of the sacred scriptures? Be then assured of

it. Jesus, though not visibly, is really present in his church. His stately steppings are heard in his sanctuary. He is as a wall of fire round about her and the glory in the midst of her.

The efforts of your internal enemies are also great. The struggles of corruption within are fierce and obstinate. The temptations of the world have many attractions; but fear not the united efforts of all your enemies. Follow up the defeat which Jesus gave to the powers of darkness; and like those who have already conquered push the victory. You do not meet the enemy naked and defenseless. You have the whole armor of God. Your fellow-soldiers are the excellent of the earth. The Son goes before you and the God of Israel shall be your reward. Isa. lii. 12.

How shall I part with you, my brethren, without asking you, respectfully, on whose side are you? I am authorized to set forth the safety of the church and of all her sons and daughters; but not, all they who say Lord, Lord, shall enter into his kingdom. I cannot assure any of you personally that he is in a state of safety. The church shall enter to bliss, but many a fellow-worshiper shall be left without when the door is shut. Oh! brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure. I can assure you there is sufficient merit in Christ's blood to cleanse from all sin—that there is in your Father's house bread enough and to spare—that you are all *welcome, invited, commanded* to believe in his Son whom he hath sent: and that he who believeth shall be saved; shall

have all the security which the text promises to the church; shall have grace here and glory hereafter. AMEN.

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LIFE OF JOHN KNOX, THE SCOT-  
TISH REFORMER.

[Concluded from page 261.]

"The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."—Psal. cxii. 6.

When the general assembly met in December, 1563, Knox took no part in the proceedings, till the business was far advanced. He then introduced the subject of the charge and prosecution against him for convoking the brethren, and entreated their judgment—whether he had been guilty of usurping authority to himself, or had merely acted in obedience to the authority of the church. The courtiers vehemently opposed the discussion of the question; the assembly, however, took it up, and determined that Knox had acted on the authority of the assembly, when he issued the letter for which he had been prosecuted.

During the sitting of the next general assembly, in June, 1564, Knox and several of the brethren were called to a conference with Maitland, the queen's secretary, and other courtiers. Knox was accused of speaking disrespectful-ly of the queen. Maitland, his accuser, was learned and subtil, but was quite overmatched by the plainness, honesty, and intrepidity of Knox. In August, Knox was commissioned to visit the churches in Aberdeenshire; and by the following assembly, he received