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[When original articles of *biography* are not at hand, we shall occasionally select one for our pages. The following is from a very interesting article in the "Religious Monitor," entitled "Biographical Sketches of the Reformers in Scotland."—*Ed.*]

MR. JOHN SPOTTISWOOD.

MR. JOHN SPOTTISWOOD, one of the Reformers in Scotland, was born in 1509. He was the second son of William Spottiswood of the shire of Berwick, who lost his life in the disastrous battle of Flodden, along with king James IV. and many other of his countrymen, September 9, 1513; and of Elizabeth, daughter of Henry Hop-Pringle, of Torsonce, on the borders of Selkirkshire. He is said to have been left an orphan by the death of his father.

The persons to whose care young Mr. Spottiswood had been committed, sent him, when he had arrived at a proper age, to the university of Glasgow, where he made good proficiency in his education, and took his literary degrees. But as his mind was early impressed with a serious sense of religion, he applied himself chiefly to the study of divinity. Mr. Crawford says, that "he was for some time under the di-

rection of the learned and famous Dr. Major, who was then theology professor at Glasgow."

The doctrines of Luther were now making progress, not only in England, but also in Scotland. They attracted the attention of Mr. Spottiswood, and he assented to them, in so far as he understood them. But he perceived how dangerous it was to profess them openly in his own country, during the persecutions which were carried on in the reign of King James V. Being disgusted with the cruelties which were then exercised, and abhorring the thoughts of appearing as a clergyman in a Church which was, in many respects, directly opposite to the religion of Christ, he withdrew himself privately into England, where the Reformation had already made a considerable progress, and where a greater degree of liberty, with regard to religion, was then allowed. He went thither, most probably about the year 1534, when he had entered into the twenty-third year of his age.

He now intended, it has been said, to follow some secular employment; but the wise and sovereign Disposer of all events had determined, that this sincere inquirer after truth should have

to — Tennant, laird of Lynnhouse, in East Lothian.

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THE SCRIPTURES THE SUPREME
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VERSY.

“ IF ye continue in my word,” said the blessed Saviour, “ ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

This promise is replete with instruction and comfort. Those who sincerely seek for truth, from the words of Christ, shall find it; and those who find it, shall have liberty from the “ elements of the world whereunto others are in bondage.”

The man, who knows the truth, and loves it, shall not remain the slave of prejudice or passion. His time is not a burden from which he seeks relief. He does not continually chatter with the creature; but, having access, with boldness to his heavenly Father, he converses with him upon subjects delightful and important. *My meditation of God shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord.*

There is one consideration, however, which often disconcerts the peace of a benevolent mind. Men entertain different sentiments about religion. When we perceive serious and learned men defending opposite opinions about the one thing needful, what are we to do? Shall we conclude that all is a delusion, and become sceptics; or shall we not rather give diligence to discover the abode of truth, and having found it, point out the road to others?

Truth is uniformly consistent with itself. It is the proper object of the human understanding.

The final perfection and eternal happiness of man are inseparably connected with the knowledge and the love of it. A man can have no lasting peace until he have arrived at that state of mind in which he can say of the principles of religion, “ I am verily persuaded.”

In order to attain to this persuasion, about the constitution and doctrine of the Church of Christ, we must apply to himself. *Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.* The Redeemer refers us to the volume of inspiration for our instruction. *Search the Scriptures—they are they which testify of me.* The Bible is the infallible standard by which religious opinions are tried. Every sentence in the Old and New Testament, both as to matter and form, has been written under the direction of an unerring Spirit. *Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

The Holy Spirit, speaking in the Scriptures, is the Supreme Judge of all religious controversy.

This proposition rests upon two axioms. 1. There is no tribunal to which we can appeal from the determination of God. 2. God has determined in the Scriptures every thing respecting the doctrine and order of the Christian Church.

I. There is no tribunal to which we can appeal from the decision of God.

To mention this to a sober man is sufficient to procure for it his unwavering assent. God is *omniscient*, he cannot himself be mistaken—*Truth*, he cannot deceive others—*Infinite majesty*, all his creatures are bound to submit.

The little portion of intelligence which God has communicated to us, enables us, confidently to decide about what we perfectly understand. It serves also to let us know that he is himself omniscient.

We are capable of knowing something about the system of being. The different material objects which come under our view, the changes which they undergo, and the laws agreeably to which these changes take place, attract our attention, and we reduce our ideas respecting them into a system. Yet, how imperfect that system! It is but a very small part of the material world which can be subjected to experiment. Some bodies by their grandeur excite our astonishment, but baffle our curiosity. Others are so minute as to elude the most vigilant examination. And it is still more difficult to understand the world of spirits. That immense field remains hitherto unexplored.—We are too closely allied with matter to speak even with accuracy upon such a subject. Our thoughts and our language are both incapable of a momentary abstraction from the qualities of body.

Finite creatures,—it is little we see or know of the universe; yet we take pride in dignifying with the name of science, the few ideas we have formed concerning the very small part of the family of being to which we have been introduced.

God alone is perfectly acquainted with every thing which exists. He created the essence and formed the qualities of the creatures. He is continually present with them, and all their changes are under his direction. His own

divine perfection, the nature of man, the plan of salvation, all that is connected with religion, he understands, and his understanding excludes the possibility of error. Let us also recollect that,

God is truth—he cannot deceive us. Elevated infinitely high above his creatures, he cannot be tempted to evil. It is no profit to the Almighty that we should mistake falsehood for truth. As we cannot doubt his integrity we may rest assured that all his words are truth.

Wisdom and faithfulness are in God, invested with infinite majesty. It is madness as well as impiety to attempt opposition to his judgments. Accountable himself to none, every one is accountable to him. *He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?* His decisions, although sovereign, are not capricious. The eminence of his perfection is the law by which he acts. We have no reason, no right, no power to appeal from his righteous tribunal.

II. God hath determined in the Scriptures every thing respecting the doctrine and order of the Christian Church.

Men frequently multiply disputes under the name of religion concerning many things which do not belong to that subject. They agitate *questions which engender strife, but minister not to the use of edifying.* Whether a garment shall be of this cut or of that colour, whether I should eat flesh or fish on Friday, are questions which God has not determined in his word. But he has determined that they are not questions of religion. *Let no man therefore judge*

you in meat and drink. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are sufficient to instruct us in every thing which it is necessary to know respecting the plan of salvation. To the Oracles of God nothing is at any time to be added by the inventions of men. The Holy Spirit, from whom Christians have an unction whereby they shall know all things, teaches them by the Scriptures. The inward light, which contradicts the written word, is not the testimony of that Spirit, but the suggestions of Satan transforming himself into an angel of light. *To the law, and to the testimony: If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.* The Spirit of the Lord is not self-contradictory. The maxims which he inculcates on the soul are those which he has inscribed on the pages of the Bible. And these are sufficient to "perfect the instruction of the man of God."

The kindness of Jesus is too great to leave us at a loss for any information which could be profitable to his Church; and as there is no further addition to be made to the cannon of Scripture, we conclude with confidence that there is none necessary. The awful threatening, "if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book," denounces, not only the person who should pretend to enlarge the Sacred volume by new revelations, but also him who should proclaim its deficiency, and propose amendments from his own reasoning, or from the authority

of the Fathers. Divine revelation is intended to *destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent, who establish maxims of carnal policy, casting down reasonings, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ.*

The command of God, and the example of Christ and his apostles, require us to appeal, for the determination of every dispute relative to faith or practice, to the inspired writings; and the Pharisees and Sadducees are condemned for departing from the Scripture as their standard of judgment. *Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your traditions; but in vain they do worship me teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.* □

[To be continued.]

BAPTISM.—NO. III.

THE IDENTITY OF CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM.

IN the explanation of the commission given by Christ to his ambassadors, the general nature of Christian baptism was unfolded to our readers. This would abundantly suffice on this subject, was it not a matter of controversy among the followers of Christ. Waiving the more minute differences of opinion, we shall confine ourselves to the two following, viz. First, The lawfulness of *infant baptism*; and, Second, The description or kind of infants who ought to be baptized.

With a view of proving the first, which to us is of the ut-

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BRIEF MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE REV. JOHN SCHUREMAN, D.D. PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY, ETC. IN THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH.

'Tis done! and now he's happy!—The
glad SOUL
Has not a wish uncrown'd. Ev'n the lag
FLESH
RESTS TOO IN HOPE of meeting once again
Its better half, never to sunder more:
Nor shall it hope in vain.

BLAIR.

IT is a pleasing thought that the day is fast approaching when the estimate of human character shall be very different from what it is at present. Now, he whose every step is marked with blood, and dies a conqueror on the embattled plain; or he, who, without sacrificing the lives of his fellow-men at the shrine of his ambition, advances a nation's honour and establishes a wholesome system of government; or he, who, in the retirement of the closet, explores the fields of science, and makes a variety of important discoveries, is after death quickly exhibited to the public in all the pomp of his achievements and the splendour of his talents. The world contemplates the character with pleasure; the traits of cele-

brity which the biographer has eloquently portrayed, are read and remembered, and told with admiration, while the account of one whose walk had been with God, and whose death displayed the power of a Saviour's love, attracts but little notice, and is soon forgotten. But, the time is not far distant when the radiance of faith and piety will eclipse the sickly lustre of earthly greatness when the delineation of the life of a good man will be more admired and prized than all that was ever said of heroes, and statesmen, and philosophers. Yes, the time is not far distant, when the names of those Christian worthies who, in the different ages of the Church, distinguished themselves for piety and usefulness shall be universally known, and esteemed more precious than the most precious ointment—their virtues and services read to be imitated—their titles, and honours, and riches, though of a spiritual kind, contemplated to excite to zeal and diligence in the Gospel race—when the record of—THESE WERE THE SERVANTS OF GOD, IN THEIR DAY, AND THESE ALL DIED IN FAITH, shall be published from shore to shore, and thrill every heart with joy. THEN the full

his joy that his spirit was about to be disengaged from his earthly frame, and to wing its flight to the regions of light and bliss, just like a bird, that tired of its cage, claps its wings when about to be set at liberty. With "one eye on death and one full fixed on heaven," he seemed to say, in the moment of expiring, *Now that God has given me the wings of a dove, I will fly away and be at rest.*

The following lines of Doddridge admirably describe this closing scene.

"When death o'er nature shall prevail,
And all the powers of language fail,
Joy through my swimming eyes shall
break,
And mean the thanks I cannot speak."

He is gone, and to him the language of another poet may be applied.

"Sunk though he be —————
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-
spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning
sky."

Schureman! Sweet repose to thy ashes, and imperishable honour to thy memory. Thou art removed beyond the reach of sorrow, pain, and sin. Heaven is thy home, which, after many conflicts, and toils, and pains, thou hast happily gained; and we would not, if we could, call thee back to earth. But the full heart will ever cherish with mournful pleasure the remembrance of the numerous and amiable virtues which adorned thy character.

Since the decease of the Doctor, his widow has become the mother of a son. It is devoutly wished that the child may be spared to be a solace to his mo-

ther—that the mantle of the father may descend upon the son—and that, like him, he may shine as a bright ornament in the Church of God.

αγαπη.

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VERSY.

[Continued from p. 158.]

In additional confirmation of the principle maintained in this dissertation, let us examine and define the province of *human reason*, *ecclesiastical authority*, and *the writings of the ancients*, in matters of religion.

1. It is necessary to define the province of human reason. This term is often used in an improper sense, and such use of it is dangerous. It presents to the mind an imaginary object, in the pursuit of which, man is bewildered and lost. By human reason sometimes is understood a certain system of doctrines for the direction of our belief and practice, distinct from Divine revelation. This is a system, however, which has no existence, which no man can define, and the belief of which, as it is a nonentity, must be productive of mischievous consequences.

Human reason is nothing but the *faculty of reasoning and the exertions of that faculty*. It is not the rule of direction, but the power of ascertaining and applying the rule.

The faculty of reasoning in relation to the sacred Scriptures, is as the eye to the light. The organ of vision is not the principle of illumination; but is necessary to perceive the light of

heaven, and the various objects which are illuminated by its rays. Considered as the gift of God, this faculty is an inestimable privilege, — a spark of intelligence communicated to the creature, from the eternal principle of knowledge. It is however limited in its exertions to a narrow sphere. Incapable in its best possible condition of embracing every object, the vision becomes dim beyond a certain distance, and in our present fallen state, it necessarily receives erroneous views of the most important concerns of life.

It cannot indeed be denied, that man in the exercise of his power of reasoning, has made great progress in natural science, and settled many controversies respecting it by the increasing light of repeated experiments. But we cannot conclusively argue from his success in science, to his progress in the knowledge of religion by the same means. The method of salvation through a crucified Saviour, as it originates in the good pleasure of God's will, is made known only by divine revelation, and the special influence of divine grace is indispensably necessary to the saving knowledge of it, even when revealed. Natural science invites us to its study, without regard to virtue or vice. It imposes no restraint on criminal affections. It presents no barrier to sensual gratifications. But religion is at war with every lust. It gives indulgence to no kind of vice. There is a connexion between doctrinal and practical truths. If we receive this doctrine, we must, in order to be consistent, practise this duty. Man, unwilling to practise holiness, wishes that the doctrine which is accord-

ing to godliness were false. Thus "*the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.*" Regenerating grace is requisite, in order that human reason may apply the rule of revelation.

It is the same God, who has given us the power of reasoning and the oracles of inspiration. The latter gift is not intended to destroy the former, or to supersede its exercise. On the contrary, it increases our information and corrects our errors. If the bodily eye is indebted to another sense for its aid in determining the figure, the magnitude, and the distance of visible objects, how much more is the human understanding indebted to divine aid for assisting our reasoning faculty in ascertaining principles, the knowledge of which is essential to our improvement and happiness.

The exercise of reason, respecting the doctrines of revelation is necessary. God addresses man as a rational creature, and commands him to employ the talent which he has received.

Its province is to contemplate the claim of the Scriptures to inspiration, to receive them as the word of God, and to examine their contents. The question which the Christian has to determine by the use of his reason in perusing the Scriptures, is not whether this doctrine was known independently of the Bible; whether it was discoverable by reason; or whether when revealed it is comprehensible by the human mind; but, the question is merely, whether this is a doctrine of the Scriptures. The ground of our belief, in any part of the Bible, is not its reasonableness, but its being sanctioned with

"*Thus saith the Lord.*" The most sublime mystery of the Christian religion has as great a claim upon my belief, as that two and two are four. No perception of my soul is more clear and certain than that God is incapable of falsehood.

It is also the duty of man, practically to apply the maxims of inspiration. The inferences which are legitimately drawn from the Scriptures are of divine authority. God will not fail to recognize every sentiment which is contained in his words. It would, indeed, be in some cases unfair and unmerciful to charge fallible man with believing every sentiment which might justly be inferred from his expressions; but the omniscient God has revealed nothing the full force of which he did not comprehend.

The Redeemer has set us an example of argument by inference, in his reply to the Sadducees; and the inspired apostles followed the example of their Master in their disputes with the Jews. Christians, therefore, while they submit implicitly to the supreme authority of divine revelation, must use the reasoning faculty in deducing consequences for the direction of life from its established axioms.

2. It is proper to settle the province of ecclesiastical authority.

There are some principles which are common to the Church with other societies of rational creatures. The exercise of the social affections; the preservation of order; the establishment of subordinate rules of conduct; and the right of the Body to control any member in agreeableness to the supreme law.

The Church does not give authority to the Scriptures, but derives it from them. All ecclesiastical acts are to be tried by the doctrines of revelation as the supreme standard. From these divine oracles all Christians are to learn, whatever station they fill, how to *behave themselves in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth.* The pillar, upon which, in allusion to the practice of the Romans, in publishing their laws, the statutes of God are inscribed for the information of his subjects; and the ground upon which the summary exhibition, made of Scripture truth, rests. The confession of our faith in the articles of religion receives authority, in a ministerial and subordinate sense, from ecclesiastical acts; but the Church itself receives authority for all its righteous deeds from the sacred Scriptures, *built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.*

The officers and judicatories of the Church have no power to increase or diminish the number of ordinances specified in divine revelation; but must regulate the order and seasons in which these ordinances are to be dispensed. Whatsoever is prohibited in God's word cannot be authorized by the church; but a duty enjoined requires the arrangement of all things necessary to a compliance with it. No ecclesiastical act can render any part of time holy, as the Lord hath sanctified the Sabbath; but special acts of devotion required by God, impose upon the Church a necessity of specifying the times for attending to them. The Lord's day demands

of us the suitable exercises of religious worship; in other cases, the exercises of devotion demand the time necessary for their proper observance. Setting his people at liberty from the *doctrines and commandments of men*, Christ commands them to stand fast in that liberty against the encroachments of ecclesiastic domination. About such things, however, as God hath left undetermined, there is no need of the Christian's contending. Whether a minister of the Gospel should preach twice or three times on the Lord's day; whether he should begin public worship by prayer, by singing, or by exhortation; whether he should sing once or twice before sermon. are questions about which there should be no contention; but being settled by the Church for the sake of harmony and order, all its members should submit. It is the will of God that every thing should be done "decently and in order," in agreeableness to what he has required in his word.

3. The writings of the ancients may be perused with advantage in order to assist us in understanding more clearly some passages of Scripture. Allusions are made frequently in the Bible to the prevailing usages of the periods in which its various parts were written; and an accurate acquaintance with the languages and customs of the ancients are exceedingly serviceable in ascertaining the meaning of such passages of revelation as refer to them.

No uninspired writings are, however, of any authority in determining what is the doctrine and order of God's Church. It is indeed very natural to man to be

influenced by authority. It is pleasing to be in the company of those whom we esteem. Reverence for characters produces respect for their opinions; and this cannot fail to influence the judgment. Many men, it is also to be observed, are unwilling to take the trouble of thinking closely; and are therefore satisfied that others should think for them while they practise upon the principle of implicit faith. The religious opinions, however, which are founded upon human authority are not worthy of the Christian. His faith rests upon the Gospel of Christ, which is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

The province, which the works of the fathers should occupy in matters of religion, can be very easily defined. Writings which come down to us well authenticated, which are evidently genuine, which have been composed by persons of discrimination and veracity, may undoubtedly be admitted as witnesses of matter of fact. Such testimony will, of course, decide what were the opinions of certain men, and what were the customs of the Church at a certain time. But these opinions, and these customs, are still to be tried by the Scriptures. If upon examination they are found to be conformable to the will of the supreme Lawgiver, the Christian will rejoice. He is always pleased at finding the Church abiding by the law and the testimony. But if they are found to be otherwise, he is at no loss whether to follow the writings of the ancients, or the Scriptures of inspiration. All Christ's disciples will say to the writers of antiquity, as Peter and

John did to the Jewish Sanhedrim, *Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.*

How pleasing is the sight of a pious and zealous Christian, going on from strength to strength towards Zion. With an humble sense of his own infirmities, unwavering dependence on God's Spirit, diligent endeavours to discover truth, sincere resolution to hold it fast, and anxiety to have a saving interest in it, he searches the Scriptures, knowing that in them he shall find eternal life. In them God speaks to him. From their decision he knows, and he rejoices to know it, there can be no appeal. They determine every thing which requires a determination. Their maxims he endeavours prudently to apply in all his conduct. He diligently employs every help to the understanding of them. Sensible of their perfection he compares Scripture with Scripture. What is less clearly intimated in one part of the sacred volume, is more clearly explained in other parts. The histories, the promises, the precepts of revelation, all contribute to establish his faith, and to animate his hope. Delighted with the whole plan of grace, he admires the manner in which salvation is dispensed to man. The visible order appointed for the Church by the blessed

Saviour, he receives as the best; and he esteems as worthy of himself to support what was worthy of God to bestow. He is disgusted at the man who proposes amendments to it as offering an insult to the love which inspires, the wisdom which orders, and the authority which establishes the constitution of the Christian Church. "Zion" is, in his view, "the perfection of beauty." In his Christian warfare, in his afflictions, yea, in the hour of death, he is supported with this reflection.

The Holy Ghost, says he, speaking in the Scriptures, has been my instructor. I have not built my hopes upon the foundation of human authority. The decrees of councils, the traditions of elders, the writings of fallible men, have been received only as far as they are supported by God's testimony. Upon the word of revelation, a word which cannot fall to the ground, and which God will own when I appear before him, I now venture, yea, I confidently rest my immortal soul, while I resign my body to the dust. To my God, whose revelation has been the guide of my life, I now come. *Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

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