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THE DUTY AND REWARD OF
HONOURING GOD



JOHN BRODERICK ROMEYN

1821

JOHN BRODERICK ROMEYN

(1777-1825.)

FROM 1808 till his death Dr. Romeyn was well known as a preacher in New York City. He left an important pastorate at Albany to take charge of the Cedar Street Presbyterian Church, then just formed. Before these he had filled satisfactorily posts in Schenectady and Poughkeepsie. He belonged to the Romeyn family of preachers, and was the son of Dr. Theoderic Romeyn, from whose work grew Union College. Among the labors without the immediate field of Dr. John Romeyn's parish may be mentioned his connection with the founding of Princeton Seminary. Not a student, Dr. Romeyn was yet a wide reader, and, though the power of his addresses is lost in the reading, he was an impressive speaker. From a description by his friend Dr. Vermilye, may be gathered some idea of his style. "He was little of a rhetorician, but there was in his words most momentous truth. There was life, vivacity, pathos, downright energy, perfect naturalness and sincerity, which gave the preacher the victory and made him, as for many years he was, the equal of his associates in popularity and success."

SERMON



I SAMUEL ii. 30.

Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise
me shall be lightly esteemed.

SUBORDINATION, in civil society, is essential not merely to its greatness, but to its very existence. Because all men are born free, it does not follow, that the distinction between rulers and their subjects is a matter of political compact, or the result of that superiority, which muscular strength, or providential advantages, give to some over others.

Government of every kind is an *ordinance* of God; and however diversified the opinions of men may be about the mode of its administration, it is essential to our social nature. From this ordinance, our connexion in the different relations of life, whether public or private, secular or religious, receives its good or bad character; its facility to produce the performance or neglect of duties; its power to increase or meliorate misery, and its capabilities to consummate our eternal ruin, or to secure for us the blessedness and glory of heaven. The *ordinance*, however, must be correctly understood, that our social connexion may be the source of present and future real and permanent enjoyment, and not of disappointment and misery.

I have said that government of every kind is an *ordinance* of God. As such, it must be regarded, and its responsibilities met at all times, and under all circumstances in which the persons governing may be placed. Hence arises the duty incumbent upon human authorities, to respect and obey the authority of God, inasmuch as they owe their existence as governments, and *the right* of exercising their gubernatorial power among their fellow-men, to his sovereign appointment.

To this plain and incontrovertible truth God refers in the text, which constitutes a part of his message to Eli, who possessed the authority of Judge, High-Priest, and Father in Israel. In each of these offices—offices, the two first of which under the theocracy, were filled by *special designation*; and the last, throughout the Jewish dispensation, in consequence of the promised Messiah, was considered not merely a source of personal endearments, or of clannish and national importance; but a matter of special providence—Eli had failed to discharge his duty. Though a man manifesting the evidences of genuine piety, yet being imperfectly sanctified, he acted under the influence of an overweening attachment to his children, which caused him to honour them more than God, in suffering them without restraint, grossly to sin against God, though he was their civil ruler, their religious head, and their father. Hence God denounced his wrath against the house of Eli, cutting them off from the priesthood, and consigning them to disgrace and poverty. And as the people of Israel acquiesced in, if they did not approve of, the iniquity of the sons of Eli, thus answering a later description made of them by a prophet, “like people, like priest;”¹ God in righteousness, not merely gave them a prey to the Philistines, but suffered the

¹ Hosea iv. 9.

ark, the symbol of his presence, to be captured, so that upon them as a nation, his providence wrote in legible characters, Ichabod, the glory is departed.

Thus he verified his own declaration, both to Eli and Israel; a declaration involving in it principles of the last importance to the present and eternal welfare of men in their different social relations—"them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

To these principles and the application of them to this anniversary, your attention is now solicited.

I. *The principles involved in God's declaration will be unfolded and illustrated.* These cannot be discussed at full length; but their nature will be examined with sufficient minuteness to answer our present purpose. They are the following:

1. *God alone can confer upon the children of men real and permanent honour.*

By honour is meant any thing which renders individuals praiseworthy, or commands esteem and veneration. The love of it, as it was originally implanted in the human constitution, was a love of conformity to God, the uncreated exemplar of moral perfection. Its influence therefore over the understanding, the heart and the life of man, so long as he continued in a state of innocence, was elevating and blessed. But sin perverted it into a means of degrading and ruining thousands of our race.

The grace of God revealed in the Scriptures is designed to counteract this perversion; and in all cases where this grace has been made effectual, the love of honour has regained its original character, and produces corresponding effects. It is one of the strongest passions of our nature, showing itself in our earliest years, and being coeval with the first exertions of rea-

son. As such, God addresses himself to it *in the dispensations of his Providence and his Covenant relations to the children of men*; saying, in the language of the text, "them that honour me I will honour—and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

1. *In the dispensations of his Providence, honour, of every kind, or whatever gives weight, character, influence, and power, comes from him alone.*

He gives these things in a special manner, for his providence is "his most holy, wise and powerful, preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions." He has not established general laws in the material and moral world, which uniformly and invariably operate, producing by their own inherent power all the effects he intended they should ever produce; because these laws are his works, and therefore cannot possess inherent power independent of himself. That which never would have existed, had it not been for the will of another, cannot possibly have any power in its constitution to continue itself in existence. For God to produce a creature independent of himself for one moment, is to bestow on that creature necessary existence; which cannot be, because necessary existence belongs only to God. Besides, if these laws produce all that harmony and order which we see in the universe, we ascribe to them consequences, which none but an infinite intelligence can produce; and, therefore, to be consistent, we must adopt the sentiments of those who say, every thing is a part of God, which is blank atheism.

They therefore who speak with understanding on this subject, must be convinced that these laws are nothing but God himself managing and controlling his works directly and specially, in such a manner as is most consistent with the perfections of his nature. In a word,

unless they consider God a mere indolent spectator of the Universe, they must grant he is every where present as an active intelligent Spirit, preserving and governing all things which he has made. Thus he is represented in the Scriptures, as exercising a special providence, not only over great things, but those which are small¹—not only over necessary things, but over contingent ones.² This representation proves that there is no such thing as chance, or accident, or fortune, in the world. These are words we often hear used, but they have really no meaning; or if they have, are merely “names for the unknown operations of Providence; for it is certain that in God’s universe nothing comes to pass, causelessly or in vain.”³

Hence the honour which he gives is a special act of his absolute sovereignty. Inasmuch, however, as he is not bound to give rewards to the obedient, though bound to execute punishment on the disobedient, a question arises, on what ground does he act in giving rewards? To honour him is the duty of all intelligent beings. Those who fail in the duty must meet with his righteous displeasure as their sovereign, whilst those who are faithful, do no more than their duty. Whence is it then, that over and above their protection and security guaranteed to them so long as they remain obedient, God has promised a *reward*? Such promise does not belong to the moral law, which, being written upon the heart of the first man at his creation, was the law of his nature. It is one of the sanctions of the positive law, which restricted man’s use of the fruit of the trees of paradise. Thus,

2. *In the dispensing of honour in its different kinds,*

¹ Matt. x. 29, 30. Psal. cxlvii. Exod. xxi. 13. Prov. xvi. 9. Joel ii. 25. Matt. vi. 26. 33.
² Jer. li. 16. Psal. cxlvii. 16. ³ Al. Turretini, Dissert. vi.

God acts not as a sovereign merely, but as a sovereign who has entered into covenant relations with men.

The positive law of which we have spoken, was converted into a covenant, commonly called a covenant of works. The penalty threatened, but not the promise, belonged to it as a law. While the man, from his dependant nature, was engaged to God by the law, God became *gratuitously* engaged to him by the promise.¹ In this promise given to man in a state of uprightness, God addressed himself to his hopes, as he did in the penalty to his fears. Nor does the covenant of grace in this respect vary from the first covenant; for its language is, "he that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Between the two covenants there is a close analogy, so that the language of both to man is, "them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

In both there is a direct appeal to the governing motives of human conduct; motives arising out of our dependant nature, and our responsibility to God under the constitution of a covenant relation. And as there has been no other covenant relation between God and man, involving in it the salvation of men, than that of works and of grace; the *uncovenanted mercy*, of which some talk much to make a parade of their charity, is merely the consignment of those towards whom the charity is professedly extended, to the penalty of the law without mercy, in case of their disobedience, and therefore a cruel mockery of human misery.

II. *No man, or number of men, can possess this honour, who do not honour God.*

You will recollect it is the honour which cometh from God. This is vastly different from the honour which

¹ Gib's Sacred Contemplations.

man confers upon his fellow man. The latter is ephemeral in its duration, vain in its nature, and unsatisfactory in its effects; whilst the former is eternal, substantial, and blessed. Though dispensed in a sovereign manner, it is dispensed according to covenant relations, and upon the conditions contained in these relations. When the creature honours the Creator; the subject his Sovereign; and the redeemed sinner his reconciled God, then God honours him.

Let us then examine for a moment the nature and the extent of this duty, together with the manner in which it must be performed.

1. *The nature of honouring God demands our attention.*

It is doing and declaring those things which show either *his* excellency, or *our* reverent and superior regards to him. When he made the universe, as he could propose no higher object to himself, he made it for his own glory. When we fulfil this end, we honour God; not by increasing *his* essential glory, but by manifesting *our* views and feelings of that glory, as exalted in excellence beyond our comprehension, and recommending him as such unto others by our exertions. It is God whom we are thus to honour; not the being of our fancy, pride, or unbelief, but the God of the Scriptures, FATHER, SON, AND HOLY GHOST, the JEHOVAH who hates sin and must punish the sinner. Without such an apprehension of his nature we cannot give him the honour due to his name; for we cannot acknowledge his perfections as we ought. In the face of Jesus Christ the Redeemer, he displays the honour due to him more conspicuously than in the works of creation and providence. It is impossible for us to enter fully into the nature of his revealed will, if we reject the divinity of his only begotten Son, and the efficacy of the

atonement of that Son. In the cross of Christ we see mercy and truth met together; righteousness and peace kiss each other. JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, AND HOLY GHOST, alone can be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly who believe in Christ. We know of no other God. No other has been revealed to us: no other made us. He it is whose glory the heavens declare, and whose handy-work the firmament showeth forth.

2. *The extent of honouring God is ascertained by our constitution, consisting of body and soul.*

Man is composed of two parts; the one binding him to earth, the other connecting him with heaven. With the powers of the one, and the faculties of the other, he must fulfil the great design of his creation. Our bodies must be presented to God a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service.¹ Our members must be yielded as "servants to righteousness unto holiness."² Our souls must realize him as altogether honourable and glorious; must delight themselves in him supremely; desire more communion with him, and be tenderly and perseveringly solicitous to preserve alive this sense of the honour due to God.

We cannot devote our bodies and spirits to any so properly as God. He is the Creator of both; and by the atonement of Christ hath redeemed them from destruction. They are his, and ought to be exerted for his service, and for the manifestation of his glory.

The duty of honouring God you perceive is extensive. Every member of our bodies and every faculty of our minds, must be enlisted in his service. The understanding must honour God by studying his nature and perfections as visible in creation, providence, and grace; the will must honour him by submitting to his will, universally and cordially: the affections must

¹ Rom. xii. 1.

² Rom. vi. 19.

honour him by centering in him as their object. He must be loved and feared; in him we must rejoice, trust, and hope.

This temper of the soul must characterize the whole life. All our actions must contemplate the honour of God as their ultimate end.

3. *The manner in which this duty can be performed, is by the regenerating and sanctifying grace of God.*

The Holy Spirit who, in the economy of redemption is the spirit of Christ, converts the sinner by applying the blood of Christ to the heart and conscience, enlightening the mind, and purifying the heart. Thus the darkness which obscures his understanding about the things pertaining to his salvation is dispelled; and the wild misrule of the affections of his heart with the appetites of the body annihilated. "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."¹ In this change, no additional faculties are created; but those which belong to our intelligent nature are rescued from the domination of sin, and placed under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. According to Christ's own words, he "reproves the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."² Such a reproof, where it is felt, and the whole life regulated by it, necessarily produces a complete renovation of a sinner from death unto life—from rebellion unto obedience—from apostacy to faith. The doctrine I know is considered fanatical, but it will stand the test of sober examination. Neither the superstitious notion, that the pouring of water in baptism on the subject, will regenerate a child of wrath; nor the skeptical, I

¹ 2 Cor. v. 17.

² John xvi. 8-11.

should rather say, the atheistic position, that an heir of the curse, with his carnal mind at enmity against God, can please him by his own works: does overturn or disprove the sober, deliberate, rational truth of the Son of God, which he unfolded to Nicodemus: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again."¹ In accordance with which, his apostle describes his followers as "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."² Without such regeneration and sanctification, no sinner can honour God, but, on the contrary, will continue hostile to his honour, and a rebel against his authority.

III. *God can be honoured in no other way, than according to his own directions, made known to them by a special revelation.*

Such a revelation springs from his nature as Creator and Legislator, but especially as Redeemer. He could not make a rational creature lawless, but him subject to a law. This law was written on Adam's heart, and was natural to him. But the positive law, and afterwards the prediction of Messiah, were matters of pure revelation. *The positive law, and the prediction of Messiah*, unfold to us God's two covenants, of works and grace. All the information which we have on these subjects is contained in the Scriptures of the old and new Testaments. They furnish us with the only directions which God has made known to us concerning his will, or the way of honouring him. But here three questions present themselves to our attention.

1. *Are these Scriptures really the will of God, revealed to us for our guidance and salvation?*

When the term Scriptures is used, I mean the books from Genesis to Revelation. It is true, that when God

¹ John iii. 7.

² 1 Peter i. 23.

spoke the words of the text, but few of the canonical books of the Old Testament were known; yet the rest of them, with the whole of the New Testament, constitute what we have received as the Scriptures. The inquiry therefore is, do these books come down to us with sufficient evidence, that God inspired the writers, or is our reason the judge to determine what part or parts of their contents constitute his will?

To the first question, the answer is unhesitatingly given in the affirmative. After all the laborious investigations of the subject, the testimony thus far is decidedly in favour of the received text.¹

To the last, insuperable objections present themselves; arising out of the diversity of views which exists among those who reject the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. In examining closely their pretensions, and the grounds on which these pretensions rest, I can find nothing of a uniform nature,² and therefore nothing of a binding authority. They leave us in the state of Israel, when there was "no king, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes."³ This completely destroys the paramount power of God, and infringes his wisdom, as the supreme legislator of the rational creation.

¹The reader is referred to Nolan's Integrity of the Greek Vulgate; Hale's Faith in the Holy Trinity; Laurence's Critical Reflections on the Improved Version; Nares' Examination, with Magee's Notices of the same. After all that has been written on the subject, to say the least, the objections to certain texts are of doubtful force, and their abandonment by some orthodox persons, *premature and rash*; particularly that of 1 John v. 7.

²The uniformity meant, is

confined merely to what are considered essential doctrines—doctrines involving in them eternal issues. The question is not about small matters, but those of the last importance. Is Christ Jehovah, or a mere man? Is his sacrifice necessary for our salvation, or are our virtues and good works sufficient? If he is a mere man or subordinate God, Trinitarians are idolaters. If he is Jehovah, Antitrinitarians are atheists, without God and without hope.

³Judges xvii. 6.

We praise Lycurgus and Solon, with other legislators, for furnishing their countrymen with a *definite* code of laws, but deny that such a code, *equally definite*, has been given by the supreme legislator, to his creatures and subjects. If the scriptures in their present form, resting on indestructible evidence, do not contain his will, as legislator, where is it to be found? Grant for a moment, that the human understanding is to determine, *not* the evidences, but the nature of this will, and what will be the consequence? "Jehovah, Jove, and Lord," will be the light in which the nature and claims of the ETERNAL ONE, will be viewed and respected. Juggernaut, among the Hindoos; the Grand Lama of Thibet; the Devil of the Africans, may be honoured as well as the Jehovah of the Scriptures. And hence, as there is no fixed or determinate will made known to us, none of our race *can* be punished eternally. The doctrine of universal salvation is the necessary result of the speculative opinions of those who reject the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. In all cases they who deny the atonement of Christ, have been compelled to league themselves with those who deny eternal punishment.¹

2. *How are we to regard these Scriptures?*

Assuredly as requiring our obedience both internally and externally. By them the understanding must be informed in all truth, the heart directed in its affections, and the conduct regulated in all the relations of life. They are given to us as "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."² Revealed to us "by

¹ This was the *great paramount* consolation of Dr. Priestly according to his own declaration on his dying bed. "Ye shall

not die," said the Tempter, and on his *falschood* the Heresiarch depended for eternal happiness.
² 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

inspiration,"¹ they constitute in every respect the rule of our faith and obedience. In them, as a whole, is contained the will of God, for our present comfort and everlasting peace. From them alone, we are enabled to "give an answer to every man who asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear: having a good conscience."² Rejecting them as they are, we reject our compass in the wide ocean on which we are embarked; and are left in our contingencies, trials, duties, and hopes, to the gloominess, the despondency, the despair of uncertainty, as it respects the issues of *the life which now is*, in its connexion with *the life which is to come*. Like the foundered mariner, we have nothing left us but the spars, the masts, the ropes of the deck from whence we have been cast with a power we can neither resist nor contravene, to contend with the buffetings of the mighty deep.³

3. *How are we to act, when a diversity of opinions about these Scriptures, occurs?*

This question involves in it a number of important rules of interpretation, which time will not permit me to discuss at length on this occasion. A few will therefore be merely introduced, and their claims upon our attention briefly unfolded.

The *first* rule for the interpretation of the Scriptures, is drawn from God's paramount authority over us. He must always have the highest place in our estima-

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 16.

² 1 Peter iii. 15, 16.

³ I take my leave, says Bishop Watson to Gibbon, with recommending to your notice, the advice which Mr. Locke gave to a young man who was desirous of becoming acquainted with the doctrines of the Christian religion. "Study the holy Scriptures, especially the New

Testament: therein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error, for its matter." Would Locke have thus recommended these writings, if he had thought of them as Priestly, Belsham, and their associates?

tion, for to glorify him is the chief end of our creation. As you have heard, all government of every kind springs from him; he therefore, must necessarily take precedence of any, even the highest of his creatures. No interpretation of his will can be correct, which brings him down to our level, instead of raising us up to his perfection. "My thoughts," saith God by the prophet Isaiah, speaking of the covenant of his love, the sure mercies of David, "are not your thoughts, neither are your ways, my ways, saith the Lord, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thought than your thoughts."¹ In the collisions which different interpretations of his revealed will, have produced, between *his rights* as a sovereign, and *ours* as creatures, the apostle's words ought to guide us. "Let God be true, but every man a liar."² Such a conclusion indeed annihilates the pride of the human understanding, in its usurped power to determine *what are the truths*, contained in God's will; but it provides, for the honour of him who gave us our understanding, and who has adapted his will to our intelligent nature, as well as our perishing condition. His honour is of more consequence than our pride; for we are atoms in his creation. He is *all in all*.

The *second rule* for interpreting the Scriptures is drawn from their nature. They contain a revelation of divine grace, intended for the salvation, the guidance, and the happiness of mankind. As such, their contents cannot be considered a discovery of the human understanding, or a republication of what is called the religion of nature. Containing, therefore, a supernatural revelation, they require supernatural aid to understand them. This aid, however, is not contradictory

¹ Isaiah, lv. 8, 9.

² Rom. iii. 4.

to our reason; though far above its utmost powers. The province of reason is to determine *the evidences* which substantiate this revelation. The supernatural aid is requisite, to direct the reason of those, who are satisfied about its evidences. If these evidences are doubtful, we are as *rational* in rejecting *the whole*, as *parts* of its contents; because we have no more authority for one of its doctrines than another, and no warrant to respect one book in the Bible, *more than another*.¹

The *third rule* is drawn from the existing character of man. This is, from the testimony of the heathen themselves of the most unfavourable kind, and therefore requiring divine interposition in his behalf. In all their darkness, they deeply felt their guilt, pollution, and helplessness. They had not the hardihood of impudence to maintain that there was more goodness among men, than evil—more virtue than vice. THEY KNEW BETTER! and the Bible gives us the clearest and fullest information on the subject that we can desire. Nothing which man can do for himself, will answer. He must have help from God, suited not only to his intelligent, but to his perishing condition. Supernatural aid he must have, in his use of the Scriptures, or

¹ Dr. Priestly charges Paul with being an inconclusive reasoner; his epistles, therefore, can be no part of the Bible. Mr. Evanson says, "the evangelical histories contain gross and irreconcilable contradictions—" they of course constitute no part of the Bible. Mr. Belsham charges John, in his gospel, with using metaphors "of the most obscure and offensive kind." Damm, a German Socinian, says, the history of the fall is a fable—the conquest

of Canaan, in Joshua, fictitious—the books of Samuel full of falsehoods—the Psalms contain no prophecies. Semler, on 2 Pet. i. 21, says, that the prophets have delivered the offspring of their own brains, as divine revelations. A recent author has elaborately endeavored to prove that Christ lived 25 years after his resurrection; and that what the evangelists relate as his ascension, was nothing more than his being lost in a fog!!!

he cannot escape the ruins of his apostacy and rebellion.

The *fourth rule* arises out of man's responsibility, as a creature to his Creator, and as a subject to his Sovereign. As the Creator and Sovereign has made known his will to *him*, he cannot plead ignorance. Nor can he plead that this will requires any thing unreasonable, unrighteous, or unholy. As God could not make a rational being except under a law, and as he was pleased to convert that law into a covenant that he might gratuitously reward obedience; so a rational being cannot but construe his revealed will so as to vindicate or establish the authority of God, and the subordination of man.

Secondly. *I pass on to the application of the preceding principles, to the Anniversary which has convened us together.*

In this application I stand before you as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. My opinions of the nature of that Gospel are known, for I have never concealed them. It would little comport with the honesty and integrity of ministerial character, to sacrifice truth, for what I consider to be error. The case of Eli, whose family, as you have heard, were degraded, is a warning to me and to all ministers of religion; and the case of Israel who lost the ark of God, by their connivance at the conduct of their ungodly priests and rulers, furnishes sufficiently clear landmarks, as it respects your duty. Christian courtesy and Christian charity, in the Scriptural meaning, never can be observed at the expense of Christian honesty—an honesty which your fathers considered entirely the reverse of a profession "to be ever learning, and never coming to the knowledge of the truth." Your fathers were men of whom the world was not worthy. They understood their civil

and religious rights, with a clearness of perception and correctness of view superior to the majority of their countrymen, and surpassed by few, if any, of the protestants of their day.

At the time when they appeared on the theatre of action, "the spell by which the papal hierarchy had bound the multitude for ages, was dissolved. To this important revolution, as you well know, the Christian world is indebted for civil liberty, that inestimable temporal blessing; the emancipation of the mind from subjection to every restraint but that which common sense and truth impose; the diffusion of knowledge among all classes of men, the poor as well as the rich, subjects as well as rulers; the enlargement of the sphere of knowledge in its different branches by new discoveries; the melioration of the morals of society, and the condition of individuals; the excitement given to ingenuity and industry in the various departments of life, by securing the possession of their rewards; and, in fine, all that ease, comfort, decorum, polish, order, and civilization, which make it a model to the rest of the world."

These consequences were unfolding rapidly in the different protestant nations, when in England they were arrested by the haughty and imperious Elizabeth, whose accession to the throne was hailed by a people who had groaned and agonized under her bloody predecessor.¹ The spirit of inquiry which the Reformation has produced, was extending itself to matters of state and of the church, as well as to the smaller details of private life. Men who had thrown off the despotism of superstition, destructive equally of political and religious liberty, could not quietly submit to the despotism of Eliza-

¹ Miss Aiken's history of Elizabeth's time, &c., furnishes curious and interesting facts, illustrating the character and conduct of this Queen.

beth. Conscious that the Reformation was not complete, they were eager to proceed in the good work. This was particularly the case with a majority of the exiles, who had been entertained with great humanity by the reformed states of Germany, Switzerland, and Geneva; the magistrates enfranchizing them, and appointing churches for their public worship.¹ They desired a more thorough reformation, and greater conformity to the foreign churches, but they failed. The arguments of Elizabeth and her courtly prelates to enforce uniformity in religion, were fines, confiscations, imprisonments, and all manner of hardships. The *Puritans*,² as they began to be called in this reign, remonstrated against this infringement of the rights of conscience. Many of the matters required were indifferent: as the reception of them, however, involved the right of the crown to lord it over conscience, they opposed; but in vain. The history of this period is so familiar to all as to need no enlargement.

My object in furnishing these notices is to press upon your attention the principles which influenced these real patriots—these friends of liberty in the church and the state, among whom your ancestors held so conspicuous a station. They have been unfolded to you and illustrated in the explanation of God's declaration, "them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." They could not submit to the right which the throne claimed of regulating the consciences of subjects in matters of religion; nor could they acquiesce in the absurd doctrine of "passive

¹ Neal's History of the Puritans, edited by Toulmin.

² This name originated at Frankfort, where the division of the English exiles commenced. See "The Troubles of

Frankfort," Phoenix, 2d vol. Strype refers to this work as giving *authentic* information. Strype's Annals, vol. i., 3d edit., chap. 7, p. 103, 104.

obedience and non-resistance," pertinaciously cherished by the infatuated Stuarts.

Whence did they derive this noble spirit of opposition to political and religious despotism—a spirit which has immortalized them, and constrained Hume himself to acknowledge that "the precious spark of liberty had been kindled and was preserved by the Puritans alone; and it was to this sect that the English owe the whole freedom of their constitution?" From the Bible. "The Bible, the Bible is the religion of protestants," exclaimed the celebrated Chillingworth.

Remarkable was the charge given by the venerable Robinson to the Pilgrims of New-England. "I beseech you remember, it is an article of your church covenant, that you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from *the written word of God.*"¹ This was their guide, their counsellor, the man of their heart. Having exercised their understandings in examining the evidences of its authenticity and divinity, they submitted them to its contents. With such views of its authority, and such obedience to its directions, they bid farewell, to the land which had given them a home—(when their unnatural country left them no alternative but to suffer or emigrate), and to their companions, with their beloved pastor.

Methinks I see the interesting group assembled on the shore of Delfthaven. On the countenances of all, anxiety and sorrow are depicted. Every one has his eye fixed on the man of God—the father of the flock. Kneeling down in the midst of them, he commends them to God and to the word of his grace. Prayer being ended, like the elders of Ephesus when they parted with Paul, the emigrants hang upon his neck, and weep, sorrowing at their separation, not knowing

¹ Neal's hist. and Brooks's Lives of the Puritans.

but that they would see his face no more. They part, never to meet in this world. The ashes of their pastor rest in Leyden, and theirs in Massachusetts. The wide ocean rolls between their earthly remains—but their spirits are with God.

Descendants of the Pilgrims! venerate the memory of your fathers. They were noble men, though despised by the slaves of the crown and the supporters of the hierarchy. The spirit, which their companions who could not emigrate, possessed, not long after their departure, broke forth with power, and accomplished a revolution then unexampled in English history—a revolution which placed on the seat of government a man, than whom ancient or modern times has furnished but few equals, and no superiors. To *Oliver Cromwell*, a *Puritan*, England is indebted for her maritime glory. And in his character and conduct, I do not hesitate to say, he furnished a striking contrast to the Royal Stuarts. He honoured God publicly in his official station, however dubious his personal religion, or censurable his political ambition may have been. During his government, vice and irreligion were discountenanced in the most decided manner, whilst the open manifestation of the fear of the Lord was encouraged and patronized. The Royal Stuarts, on the contrary, “despised God,” in the scriptural sense, substituting the traditions and will-worship of men, in the place of HIS truth and directions; and counting the honour of kings of more consequence than the honour of God. Remember their conduct and fate in your political relations, and honour the God of your fathers. They were honoured by him, in giving them a name, and enabling them in this western world to lay the foundation of a growing nation. In the Eastern States of our Republic, the fruits of their political sagacity grafted on their

religious principles appear. And if there be in these fruits any thing worthy, commendable, and honourable, it springs from the fact that your fathers honoured God. Your sin in not so doing will be greater, inasmuch as you enjoy full, entire, and perfect liberty of conscience, with none to molest you, or make you afraid.¹

In the spirit which these Puritans possessed, there was a manliness and honesty; a fortitude and chastity rarely witnessed. It is true they are charged with hypocrisy. But unless their profession was contradicted by their works, the charge is groundless. They abounded in the duties of religion, and have never yet been *convicted* of acknowledged violations of the duties of *morality*. The charge, unfortunately for its credibility or its truth, was first brought against them by the friends of the throne and the hierarchy—the *cavaliers*, as distinguished from the *round heads*, who openly and unblushingly indulged themselves in immoralities, as well as irreligious acts. They have also been charged with austerity, as being the bitter enemies of social enjoyments; but the authentic histories of their day, prove that they were as much the friends of the same, as their opponents, so far as real religion would allow.² They

¹ The cry of persecution in a country like this, under its present government, is really laughable, excepting when *liberal and rational Christians* act, as they did in Dorchester, Massachusetts, towards the late Mr. Huntington, in an exchange with Mr. Codman. The doctrine of liberty of conscience is well explained in the confession of faith of the Presbyterian Church, chap. xx. sect. 2.—“God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and com-

mandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it in matters of faith and worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments, out of conscience, is to betray *true liberty of conscience*; and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also.”

² Mrs. Hutchinson’s life of her husband, Edinburgh Review, vol. xiii. Art. I. Cromwell’s Life of the Protector.

could not indeed laugh and sing, drink and revel, as the others, because the fear of the Lord forbade. Before they obtained the ascendancy, it was natural for them to manifest dejection of spirits and sadness of heart, for they were under the murderous grasp of archbishop Laud,¹ and his deluded sovereign Charles I. To the taunts of their adversaries on this subject, they could with justness reply, as the captive Jews did to the *Pagan* Babylonians who required of them mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"²

Charges not unlike this have been brought against your ancestors after their settlement in this country; but in the estimate of human character, according to the Bible, they are of small concern. Their desire was to think on and perform "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report."³ Their faults, which are unfolded in the objections against them, all originated in their profound regard for the Bible. They considered it to be a book containing directions for mankind in every relation of life.

In the Retrospective Review, vol. iv. Part 2, Art. 1. Howell's Familiar Letters, the reader can see the account of the religious observances of one who, though as the writer states, was not an ultra-royalist, was still an anti-commonwealth man, and a thorough churchman.

¹ Laud, after Leighton, the father of archbishop Leighton, at his instigation, was sentenced to have his ears cut, his nose slit, to be branded in the face, to stand in the pillory, to be whipped at a post, to pay ten thousand pounds, and to

suffer perpetual imprisonment, pulled off his hat, and holding up his hands, GAVE THANKS TO GOD, WHO HAD GIVEN HIM THE VICTORY OVER HIS ENEMIES. Brooks, Lives of the Puritans, vol. ii. p. 431, who quotes Rushworth's Collect, vol. xi. p. 56, 57. Ludlow's Letter, p. 22, 23. Who could suppose after this, that High-Churchmen would be hardy enough to apologize for Laud, and condemn Calvin, in the case of Servetus?

² Psal. cxxxvii. 1, 4.

³ Phil. iv. 8.

From it they derived their reverence for God, and their determined resolution to honour him in the way of his appointment.

Descendants of the Pilgrims! imitate their love of the Bible. In it they found the salvation of their souls, viz., redemption through the blood of Christ. This was the charm which operated upon their minds and hearts, and produced such sacrifices of comfort and ease. None but Christ—none but Christ—was the motto of their Christian heraldry; and the language of their lives, as well as their hearts, was, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”¹

I have said that redemption by Christ was the charm which made the Bible so precious to them, and it is this alone which *can* make it interesting to any of our fallen race. Without this, there is a want of meaning in the Levitical institutions; obscurity, impervious to light, in the prophecies; and such a degradation of the character and office of Christ, as to make him of no more importance than Moses or any other of the prophets of God. Without this, there is nothing to excite our hopes or fears; nothing suited to our existing character and condition; nothing to produce in any person a deep, solemn, and controlling sense of responsibility to Jehovah. Let then the Bible be to you, as it was to them, your guide—your directory. And recollect that their Bible was not “*an improved version,*”² made by sectarian men,

¹ Gal. ii. 20. See the Cambridge Platform, drawn up in 1649, in Mather's *Magnalia*, fol. b. 5. p. 23, and the Saybrook Platform, in 1703. These platforms were the confessions of the churches in New-England,

and leave *no doubt* about their faith.

² The improved version of the New Testament, upon the basis of Archbishop Newcome's new translation, attributed to Belsham, and republished in Bos-

from an examination of codices and printed texts, replete with conjectural emendations,¹ which requires the knowledge of the learned languages to ascertain its correctness: but the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as they were delivered to the churches by the evangelists and apostles of our Lord, faithfully translated, which require merely common sense and an honest heart to understand, and approve themselves to the experience of every renewed sinner.

Descendants of the Pilgrims! your fathers honoured the God of the Scriptures, Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. With child-like simplicity, and ardent gratitude, they owned Jesus of Nazareth to be Jehovah, their righteousness and strength. To him they confided their souls and bodies for time and eternity, as knowing him in whom they believed, and being persuaded that he was able to keep that which was committed to him against that day. He was all their salvation and all their desire. You justly glory in their love of civil and religious liberty; but seek rather to glory in the cross of Christ, by which they were crucified unto the world, and the world unto them. It was the application of his blood to the heart that gave them the spirit of martyrdom. Remember that he will come a second time to judge the quick and the dead. Before his awful bar, you with them must stand to give in your account. They have left you a precious legacy: not merely a goodly land—nor civil liberty—but the Bible! You are the posterity of those who watered the soil on which they sojourned, with tears shed in

ton. For the *honesty*, as it respects Newcome's name, and *truth*, as it respects the text, see Magee, Hales, Nares, Laurence, &c.

¹ One of Belsham's canons to interpret Scripture is this: "Im-

partial and sincere inquirers after truth must be particularly upon their guard against what is called the *natural* signification of words and phrases." Cal. Enq. p. 4, 5.

wrestling with God for their children and children's children. For this Bible and those prayers you are answerable. If you have rejected, perverted, or disobeyed the first—the last will operate to your increased condemnation.

What a meeting will that be! A meeting between the fathers of New-England and their descendants. No religion will sustain you then but that which supported and comforted them in their trials. If you are not united to that Lord Jesus who was the God of their salvation, you perish for ever in the final catastrophe of the universe.

Descendants of the Pilgrims of New-England! receive this discourse as an affectionate tribute to their memory, and an honest admonition for your benefit, from a descendant of those Hollanders among whom they sojourned, and from whose shores they emigrated. I have done. Amen.