

THE  
PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.

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Communications.

*Divine Punishment.*

The candid inquirer after truth, must see at once the difference in opinion that exists among those who claim the same general name—that of Christian. To search after truth, and embrace it when found, should be the earnest desire and employment of all who assume the name of Christ. In these days of modern improvements in Christianity, when *doubt* holds her leaden sceptre over both reason and revelation, when truth is left unsought, when by bold assertion and critical dexterity it is evaded or concealed; it would appear necessary for those who have embraced Christ, the king of truth, not to act like Pilate the Roman governor, who, when Jesus Christ stood before him, accused of perverting the word of God, asked, what is truth? But waited not to hear the answer from the lips of the God of truth.

As it appears to comport with the design of the Presbyterian Magazine, as exhibited by the prospectus of that work—one of the conductors, as time and opportunity may offer, intends to avail himself of this channel, to state some scriptural truths which seem to be controverted by some. This shall be done without either the desire or design of exciting controversy, but only to establish believers in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in the essential doctrines of the gospel.

VOL. I.

We would inquire, in what character God punishes sin. That God is a sovereign is verified in every page of inspiration, and the great volume of *nature* attests this fact. His dominion is universal and illimitable. In all his works *greatness* in conjunction with *goodness*, strikes our view, and wherever we see the parent, we behold also the legislator. Jehovah is a benefactor in whom we have reason to rejoice, whose purposes are gracious, whose *law* is the plan of our happiness. Every good and perfect gift comes down from him. But the hand that confers them we cannot see. Mysterious obscurity rests upon his essence. And further than he reveals himself we cannot know him.

Now as he is a sovereign, it does not appear from nature or revelation, that God uniformly acts as a sovereign; for many of his works must be attributed to him under another relation. He is revealed to us, under the endearing title of father—as a king—frequently as an unlimited sovereign—and often as a judge and ruler.

To assign all to God under one relation, or give to him under a wrong relation, those things which belong to him in another, is to confound the truths of the word of God. This leads to many mistakes, and occasions errors of the grossest kind. How necessary is it, that we have correct apprehensions of the true character of him, who claims our worship, and of that part of his character in which he

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address this multitude by parables; which, I was aware, they would not rightly understand."

It is easy to imagine the effect which such an answer as this, would have produced on selfish and unsubmitive persons. To such persons, it would have given little comfort to know, that the things which caused their perplexity, were agreeable to the arrangement which God hath settled for ever. To hear, though from Christ himself, words which exhibit so decisively, the perfect sovereignty of God in giving or withholding his saving mercy, would not have been grateful, it is feared, to some who call themselves Christians. Especially would some have been apt to demur, on such an occasion as that to which we have been referring. Here, were standing before Christ, perhaps several thousands, shrouded in ignorance, and ready to perish in their sins; and there, a few disciples, whose minds had already been enlightened, and who, for the most part at least, had received already the renewing grace of God. Yet the great multitude are suffered to remain in their wretchedness, and the disciples alone, highly favoured as they have been already, derive any benefit from the instructions of Christ!

It may seem surprising, that instead of replying to this objection, Christ should have recognised the conduct, on which, with such a plausible appearance of reason it is predicated, as conformable to a general principle of the divine government; which is, that "whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." (ver. 12.) In vain will men demand the reasons of this maxim in government, adopted by infinite wisdom and benevolence. God giveth account of his matters, to none; reasons he has for all his decisions and doings; but he who will not repose in him implicit confidence without

knowing his reasons, will perhaps discover them when it will be too late to profit by the knowledge. It is a solemn certainty, which would remain so though disliked and denied by all men living, that God hath mercy on "whom he will have mercy;" and deems it perfectly equitable, to leave such as have no grace totally void of grace, and to continue bestowing, as he thinks best, the treasures of his goodness on persons who have been previously enriched by his sovereign donations. He hereby does no injustice, and pursues a policy which being approved by his own unerring mind, is little prejudiced by the disapprobation of creatures of yesterday, and who are wise, only to do evil. Accordingly our Lord does not attempt to vindicate this principle, but merely states it, as what he knew to be a maxim in the divine administration, and which was now exemplified in the allotments which God had made respecting the disciples and the multitude. "I speak in parables, because unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given: and this arrangement agrees with an established principle of the divine government, which is, that whosoever hath, to him shall be given; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that he hath."

T. H. S.

(To be continued.)

### Of Titus and Crete.

Discrepancies in doctrine and worship among Christians, on minor points, when the essentials are retained, should be no interruption of that cordiality towards each other, which the sincere followers of the kind and mild Redeemer, will always possess, and be disposed to cultivate. Our faith and manners are invariably influenced by education, and early associations; if erroneous, some apology is due; to

judge is the province of another, with which we interfere at our peril. On questions of church government, it is, for a great part, as safe, as on the question of meats, to follow the leadings of our own consciences. The difficulty of deciding is of this an invincible argument. From the same records we draw, and with equal candour, the stable proofs of our various sentiments, according to the views with which we open the sacred text. That a candid and pious writer, "On the Order of the Primitive Church," should experience "pleasure in being able to derive from the word of God a sanction for his own system,"\* is desirable for the sake of his conscience. His own safety is not jeopardised, because he disturbs not the peace of others. But the same premises yield different conclusions to us; possibly because we have always supposed a primitive bishop, the pastor of a single church, and diocesan episcopacy an innovation, fostered after the days of the apostles.

Candia, or Crete, famous for the wisdom of its ancient laws, and for its proficiency in tactics, is an island about one-seventh as large as the state of Pennsylvania, of a mild and happy climate, and an air unusually salubrious. Eleven diocesan bishops of the Greek church, in December, 1819, superintended the Christian inhabitants, who were supposed to amount to one hundred and fifty thousand souls, and to be less numerous than the Turks.

The present, compared with the population of the island in gospel days, may be accounted as one to three. This writer is, therefore, evidently correct in supposing Crete of dimensions and population sufficient for a diocess. He admits that Titus is "never called exclusively the bishop of the island;" and

says also, that "he is no where called an evangelist." But that "he was to set in order the things that were wanting in every city; and that he was to ordain elders, or presbyters, for the whole island." To all this, we subscribe, and are willing, in the language of Theodoret, to pronounce him the apostle of the Cretans.† When Paul and Titus first went to Crete, before any church had been planted on the island, Titus must have been an attendant upon Paul, and a preacher, without any relation unto, or connexion with the Cretans. This is substantially admitted; when the writer alleges, that "Paul visited the island at an early period of his ministry, before he was made a prisoner, and he left Titus among the islanders to water the churches which he had planted." With respect to the time he differs from Dr. Paley, of his own church, who, with many others, has been of opinion, that Paul, after his liberation, sailed from Rome into Asia, and taking Crete in his way, left Titus there.

This departure from the sentiments expressed in the "Horæ Paulinæ," a work of unusual merit, seems correct, because it does not appear that Titus went to Rome with Paul, when he was carried a prisoner to be tried by Cesar. Nor do any of the letters written from Rome, during that imprisonment, to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, or Philemon, mention Titus, or even imply that he was at Rome. On the contrary, his presence with Paul is excluded by Coloss. iv. 11. "*These only* are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me;" and Titus is not named as one of them.

That Paul purposed to visit Colosse, soon after his liberation, appears from his letter to Philemon, (ver. 22.) But the bespeaking of

\* Christian Observer, republished in the "Episcopal Magazine," Feb. 1821. Philadelphia.

† Οὐρα Κρητων ὁ Τίτος ἀποστολος (ος).  
Theod. in Tim. ii.

lodgings there, would have been premature, if it had been intended consequent upon the arduous labour of planting churches in Crete. The epistle to Philemon preceded the letter to the Hebrews; in that, Timothy was joined, in this he is mentioned as absent; "with whom, if he come shortly," (xii. 23.) Paul promised to see those, to whom the letter was sent. This purpose of visiting Judea, was, therefore, after his direction to Philemon to procure him lodgings at Colosse. Accordingly, some have imagined that Paul went, with Timothy and Titus, to Crete, where he left Titus, and proceeded to Judea, returned through Syria and Cilicia, tarried some time at Colosse, wrote from thence to Titus in Crete to meet him at Nicopolis, came to Ephesus, left Timothy there, and proceeded to Macedonia. But neither does Titus appear to have been with Paul at Rome, during his first imprisonment, nor is there the least evidence that such journey was ever undertaken or accomplished. It was the opinion of Pool, that Paul left Titus in Crete, when he touched there a prisoner, on his passage to Rome. But as Titus is not named in the enumeration of either of the companies who left Macedonia for Jerusalem; nor mentioned in the history of their going unto, remaining at, or coming from Jerusalem; nor spoken of in the account of the voyage, two years afterwards, accomplished from Cesarea to Rome, this opinion seems unfounded. It does not even appear that Paul landed at Crete on that voyage.

Many have thought that Paul, at or prior to the period of his separation from Barnabas, sailed with Silas and Titus from Cilicia to Crete, and returning to the Asiatic continent, left Titus to perfect the settlement of the churches there. But there is no hint of such a thing in the acts, or any of the epistles. Yet the native language of Titus was that of the inhabitants of Crete.

Also, Titus, who was in years and office older than Timothy, and commanded more respect, must have been as competent for that service, as he was to settle the differences in the Corinthian church, or to preach the gospel among the rude inhabitants of Dalmatia. But conjectures are as unprofitable as endless. We cannot collect from the scriptures, that Titus was with Paul, from the time of his separation from Barnabas, during all his travels through Asia, Macedonia, and Greece, his subsequent voyage to Jerusalem, and return through the Asiatic churches; nor until he came to Ephesus, when Apollos, from Corinth, met him at that place; unless Titus i. 5, will prove, that they were associated, at some interval of the historic account, in Crete.

There is great difficulty in ascertaining when the epistle to Titus was written; but this writer in placing it before the imprisonment of Paul, agrees with Lightfoot, Lardner, and many other learned critics. And though we will neither assign the precise time for Paul's going with Titus into Crete, nor the particular winter, which they spent together at Nicopolis, after the recall of Titus from that island, yet, for the reasons before given, this writer appears to us to be correct, in having assigned to them a period prior to the apostle's first imprisonment at Rome.

Titus was appointed to discharge an important duty, when Paul sent him to Corinth, with his first epistle to that church, to rectify the disorders of a congregation which possessed higher advantages for language, science, and polished manners, than any other, and in which there appear to have been no officers. He was successful, and then obeyed the message of Paul to him, to meet him in Macedonia, to communicate the particulars of the affairs at Corinth. He was sent to them again, with the second epistle, and afterwards was followed by the

apostle in person. This confidential service, compared with the circumstance, that no such apology was written in behalf of Titus, as of Timothy, affords some ground to presume, that Paul had previous experience of the prudence and fidelity of Titus.

The epistle to Titus expressly limits his service in Crete to the arrival of a substitute, who was promised to be sent; it can never, therefore, let us suppose it to have been written when it may, prove a permanent connexion between Titus and the churches of Crete.

As Titus was to ordain elders in every city, it may be inferred, there were none until constituted by him, this being one of the things left undone.\* To suppose that there were, is also to conflict with his practice, of first planting, and afterwards ordaining. But when this work was performed, or progressed in by him for some time, he was to meet Paul at Nicopolis. Those whom he had ordained, and others, whom Artemus, or Tychicus, might afterwards commission as elders, that is as pastors or bishops, continued, it may be fairly presumed, for the evangelists, like the apostles, had no successors,† the succession of the ordinary office, as every where else.

If it could be proved, that Titus died in Crete, it would no more establish that he was bishop of Crete, than his death at Corinth or at Dalmatia, where the scriptural record

leaves him, would have evinced, that he was bishop of either of those places.

Dr. Potter says‡ “he (*that is Titus*) was ordained and appointed to this office (*bishop of Crete*) by St. Paul;” and refers to Titus i. 5. as his proof. But the words§ mean no such thing. The verb translated “appointed,” is never once used in the New Testament in the sense of *to ordain to an office*; but was in this instance designed to refer Titus to the particular directions Paul had given him, when he left him in Crete.|| If there were no bishops but of particular churches, at that time, and we think the affirmative cannot be shown, to have ordained Titus a bishop, would have confined him to one charge; but the apostle gave him no new commission; he was to exercise the office which he already had, towards any people to whom he was sent. And it would be as correct to say, that he was ordained a bishop at Corinth, or in Dalmatia, in both which places he served as an evangelist, by the assignation of Paul, as to denominate him the first bishop of Crete. That he had the oversight¶ of the churches, particularly to give each of them presbyters or bishops,\*\* in Crete, in virtue of his office of evangelist is freely conceded, but this was not to ordain him especially the bishop of Crete.

The apostles received an extra-

‡ Page 143. “Whose bishop he had made him,” that is, of the Cretans. p. 222.

§ Ως ἐγὼ οὐδὲ διεταξάμην.

|| The passages in which the original word occurs in the Greek Testament, are the following. Matt. xi. 1. Luke iii. 13. viii. 55. xvii. 9, 10. Acts vii. 44. xviii. 2. xx. 13. xxiii. 31. xxiv. 23. 1 Cor. vii. 17. ix. 14. xi. 34. xvi. 1. Tit. i. 5. In none of which it is used for ordaining to an office. Hesychius explains Διατατῆσι by διακοσμεῖ, καθηγείται.

¶ Τῶν ἐπι: Κρήτης ἐκκλησιῶν ἐπίσκοπην. Eusebius, l. iii. c. 4.

\*\* καὶ τούτων ἐπίσκοπων κρείσις. Chrysostom, hom. in Tit. i.

\* τὰ λείποντα. Titus i. 5.

† If diocesan bishops existed in the days of the apostles, and were their successors in office, then the Catholic argument, that Peter, being the prince of the apostles, left his peculiar powers to the bishop, who succeeded him at Rome, finds some support. But if they had no successors in office, then John, having survived Peter, died the head of the visible church, and the Catholic argument is ruined. So important did this point appear to Pope Pius the IVth, that “he is said to have offered Queen Elizabeth, a confirmation of all she had done, provided his supremacy was acknowledged.”

ordinary commission, which may be said to have virtually contained all the offices, which have been legitimately exercised in the church since they received it, and thus they were the predecessors of all other church officers. This high commission was necessarily limited to *them*. Paul's apostleship was often questioned, but the proofs of his apostleship were numerous and great. That the apostles were bishops of the whole church, in the appellative sense of the term, is evident. The pastors or bishops of particular churches having been commissioned by them, were justly referred to them as the heads of their respective successions; but there is little more propriety, in bringing the apostolic commission down to a level with such presbyters or bishops, or of elevating the latter to the grade of the former, than of supposing every governor an alderman, or every alderman of this city a governor of the state, because commissioned by him.

Titus exercised an office evidently inferior to that of Paul, for he went and came, preached, planted churches, and ordained bishops, according to the directions of the apostle. He attended upon his person, and did the work of an apostle, in subordination to him. So far as appears from the New Testament, his work was not fixed or stationary, more than that of the apostle. His residence in Crete may not have been so long as that of Paul at Ephesus. The exercise of his office at Corinth, except that he ordained no presbyters there, much more resembled that of a bishop, which was then understood of one church, than when he was travelling through the cities of Crete, ordaining bishops or pastors, in the cities to which he came; for this was in character for an evangelist, and precisely the work of an apostle. This duty as far exceeded that of a modern diocesan bishop, as this does that of a bishop in the gospel days.

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The office of Titus then, call it what we may, appears to have been in rank next to that of an apostle, and his work evidently extraordinary. It seems to have been the practice of Paul to carry the gospel into strange places, collect worshipping assemblies; and afterwards to return and ordain elders, of those who had some experience. Thus when he landed with Barnabas at Perga in Pamphylia, they proceeded to Antioch in Pisidia, thence to Iconium, then to Lystra, and afterwards to Derbe; they then returned to all these places, and ordained presbyters or bishops in each of the societies. The Corinthian church was a worshipping assembly for years before they had any officers. Pursuing the same reasonable method, he first collected churches in Crete, left them worshipping assemblies, and having given instructions to Titus to ordain such as were fit to be officers in the churches; he thus left him to accomplish what he would have done, had he tarried longer, and gone through those congregations a second time. Thus the churches in Crete were furnished, as other places were, with presbyters, pastors, or bishops, who could afterwards continue a regular administration of ordinances, by commissioning others of the same order in succession.

There is nothing in the instructions given to Titus by Paul, which will not be found implied in the work of an evangelist; and the same work might have been accomplished by him in virtue of his office, in any other district to which he came.

The work for which Titus was left in Crete, was not that of a bishop, who has the oversight of the individuals of a church, but a more general or indefinite service, to constitute elders or bishops over the worshipping assemblies, and give permanency to the fruits of apostolic labours.

That every church, or congregation, was at the first, in some sense

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episcopal, admits not of a doubt; but this is no warrant for diocesan episcopacy in the modern use of the word; nor does the history of Titus and Crete appear to us to yield relief. That Titus had powers as an evangelist, even transcending those of a modern bishop, is freely acknowledged; but they were suited to his itinerant ministry, and he was no more, either by his commission, or the execution of it, the settled bishop of Crete, than of Corinth, Nicopolis, Dalmatia, or of any other places in which he planted, or watered churches. And to limit the offices of the apostles, and evangelists to any particular church, or larger district, over which they might for a longer or shorter period preside, by virtue of their general authority, appears to contravene the terms of the apostolic commission, and the nature of the duties for which evangelists were originally appointed.

J. P. WILSON.

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*Some Articles of Faith in which Antitrinitarians and Trinitarians accord.*

It is the common report of people, who style themselves *Unitarians*, that their opponents are the enemies of reason, the advocates of mysticism, unfriendly to free inquiry, ready to demand faith where there is no information, and peculiarly illiberal in their views and learning. Now it may serve some good purpose to extract from "*The Unitarian Miscellany*," a periodical work published in Baltimore, a few propositions in which Trinitarians perfectly accord with these *exclusive* enemies of bigotry, ignorance, irrationality and superstition.

1. "We embrace our opinions upon the most serious and firm conviction of their truth." So do we.

2. "We have not been led to them without an humble and devout inquiry into the revelation

made by Jesus Christ, earnest prayers to God for his enlightening influence, and the best use we could make of the powers he has given us." Nor have we.

3. "While we have the written word of God in our hands, we think it an imperious duty to consult the divine oracles themselves, and to build our faith entirely on the simple truths they contain." So do we: and indeed, without repeating it again, we solemnly assent to each of the following extracted propositions.

4. We "believe, that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain authentic records of the dispensations of God, and of his revelations to men. We think the evidence of the truth and divine authority of these books to be abundant and convincing."

5. We believe "that the revealed truths of the scriptures are in conformity with the principles of right reason, and consistent with one another. We hold it to be impossible, in the nature of things, that any truths, which God has revealed, should be irrational, or contradictory among themselves. What stronger evidence can you have of the falseness of any proposition, than that it contradicts an undeniable truth, violates the plainest laws of your understanding, and opposes the deliberate convictions of your judgment? No such proposition, we are persuaded, can be contained in the scriptures. If any are found apparently of this character, we believe the obscurity arises from an imperfect acquaintance with their meaning, and that further inquiry, and more accurate rules of interpretation, will prove them to be perfectly consistent with the clear, positive parts of scripture, and with our rational convictions. Passages, about which there can be no doubt, should serve as guides in explaining the obscure."

6. We "believe one of the great doctrines taught in the scriptures to be the **UNITY** and **SUPREMACY** of