

# CHRISTIAN

A Family Newspaper: devoted to

REV. E. D. VERY,

Volume V.

SAINT JOHN, NEW-BRUNSWICK, FRIDAY, JUNE 18, 1852.

Number 22.

## NOT ALONE.

The following is a remonstrance to a friend who complained of being "all alone:"

Not all alone; for thou canst hold  
Communion sweet with saint and sage;  
And gather gems, of price untold,  
From many a consecrated page;  
Youth's dreams, the golden lights of age,  
The poet's lore, are still thine own;  
Then, while such themes thy thoughts engage,  
Oh, how canst thou be all alone?

Not all alone; the lark's rich note  
As mounting up to heaven, she sings;  
The thousand silvery sounds that float  
Above, below, on morning's wings;  
The softer murmurs twilight brings—  
The cricket's chirp, cicada's glee;  
All earth, that lyre of myriad strings,  
Is jubilant with life for thee!

Not all alone; the whispering trees,  
The rippling brook, the starry sky,  
Have each peculiar harmonies,  
To soothe, subdue, and sanctify;  
The low, sweet breath of evening's sigh,  
For thee hath oft a friendly tone,  
To lift thy grateful thoughts on high,  
And say—thou art not all alone!

Not all alone; a watchful Eye,  
That notes the wandering sparrow's fall,  
A saving Hand is ever nigh.  
A gracious Power attends thy call—  
When sadness holds the heart in thrall;  
Oft is His tenderest mercy shown;  
Seek, then, the balm vouchsafed to all,  
And thou canst never be alone!

## "A CHURCH WITHOUT A BISHOP."

Such is to be the title, or at least the topic, of a book, by the Rev. Lyman Coleman, and an introduction is prefixed to the work from the pen of the great German scholar and historian, Neander. The leading design of the work is to show from historical documents of the first centuries, and from Scripture, that the early churches were simple in their structure, and popular in their form of government. We copy the third chapter.

### INDEPENDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCHES.

The churches which were established by the apostles and their disciples exhibit a remarkable degree of unanimity one towards another. One in faith and the fellowship of love, they were united in spirit as different members of one body, or as brethren of the same family. This union and fellowship of spirit the apostles carefully promoted among all the churches. But they instituted no external form of union or confederation between those of different towns or provinces; nor, within the first century of the Christian era can any trace of such a confederacy, whether diocesan or voluntary, be detected on the page of history. The diocesan, metropolitan and patriarchal forms of organization belong to a later age. The idea of a holy Catholic church, one and indivisible, had not yet arisen upon the world, nor had the church assumed any outward form of union. Wherever converts to Christianity were multiplied they formed themselves into a church, under the guidance of their religious teachers, for the enjoyment of Christian ordinances. But each individual church constituted an independent and separate community. The society was purely voluntary, and every church so constituted was strictly independent of all others in the conduct of its worship, the admission of its members, the exercise of its discipline, the choice of its officers and the entire management of its affairs. They were, in a word, independent republics, as Mosheim and Neander justly de-

scribe them. "Each individual church which had a bishop or presbyter of its own, assumed to itself the form and rights of a little distinct republic or Commonwealth; and with regard to its internal concerns was wholly regulated by a code of laws, that if they did not originate with had at least received the sanction of the people constituting such church." This is said with special reference to the earliest churches.— "In regard to the relations of the presbyters to the churches, they were appointed, not to exercise unlimited authority, but to act as the leaders and rulers of ecclesiastical republics, to transact every thing in connection with the church, not as lords of the same but as its servants." The opinion of these great historians of the church, in respect to the independent, popular character of the government of the primitive churches, is sufficiently obvious in these passages.

Particular neighboring churches may for various reasons have sustained peculiar fraternal relations to each other. Local and other circumstances may, in time, have given rise to correspondence between churches more remote, or to mutual consultations by letter and by delegates, as in the instance of the churches at Antioch and Jerusalem, Acts 15, and of Corinth and Rome; but no established jurisdiction was exercised by one over the other, nor did any settled relations subsist between them. The church at Jerusalem, with the apostles and elders, addressed the church at Antioch, not in the language of authority, but of advice. Nor does all history, sacred or profane, relating to this early period, record a single instance in which one church presumed to impose laws of its own upon another.

This independence of the churches, one of another, is fully and clearly presented by Mosheim. "Although the churches were, in this first age of Christianity, united together in one common bond of faith and love, and were, in every respect, ready to promote the interest and welfare of each other by a reciprocal interchange of good offices, yet, with regard to government and internal economy, every individual church considered itself as an independent community, none of them ever looking beyond the circle of its own members for assistance, or recognizing any sort of external influence or authority. Neither in the New Testament, nor in any ancient document whatever, do we find any thing recorded, from whence it might be inferred that any of the minor churches were at all dependent on, or looked up for direction to, those of greater magnitude or consequence. On the contrary, several things occur therein which put it out of all doubt, that every one of them enjoyed the same rights, and was considered as being on a footing of the most perfect equality with the rest. Indeed it cannot, I will not say be proved, but even be made appear probable, from testimony human or divine, that in this age it was the practice for several churches to enter into and maintain among themselves, that sort of association which afterwards came to subsist among the churches of almost every province. I allude to their assembling by their bishops, at stated periods, for the purpose of enacting general laws, and determining any questions or controversies that might arise respecting divine matters. It is not until the second century, that any traces of that sort of association from whence councils took their origin are to be perceived; when we find them occurring here and there, some of them tolerably clear and distinct, others again but slight and faint, which seems plainly to prove that the practice arose subsequently to the times of the apostles, and that all that is urged concerning the councils of the first century and the divine authority of councils, is sustained merely by the most uncertain kind of

postponed till September, meanwhile he will reside at the Royal Palace of St. Cloud.

ITALY.—The Papal Government is very uneasy at the intelligence of frequent conferences between Louis Napoleon and some of the chiefs of the Italian liberal party. M. Thiers had a friendly interview with the Pope.

SWITZERLAND.—A correspondent writing from Berlin, says it is there rumored that negotiations have been concluded between the Central powers, with the consent of England, to restore the canton of Neuchâtel to Prussia.

AUSTRIA.—The financial embarrassments of the Empire, are as complicate as ever. The result of the Frankfort and London loan has not transpired with certainty.

A correspondent of the Times writing from  
"BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE—BY LOVE UNFEIGNED."—ST. PAUL.

# SITOR.

& General Intelligence

EDITOR.

support, namely the practice and opinion of more recent times."

Indications of this original independence are distinctly manifested even after the rise of Episcopacy. Every bishop had the right to form his own liturgy and creed, and to settle at pleasure his own time and mode of celebrating the religious festivals. Cyprian strongly asserts the right of every bishop to make laws for his own church. Socrates assigns this original independence of the bishops as the principal cause of the endless controversies in the church, respecting the observance of Easter and other festivals.

But we need not enlarge. Nothing in the history of the primitive churches is more incontrovertible, than the fact of their absolute independence one of another. It is attested by the highest historical authorities, and appears to be generally conceded by Episcopal authors themselves. "At first," says the learned Dr. Barrow, "every church was settled apart under its own bishops and presbyters, so as independently and separately to manage its own concerns. Each was governed by its own head and had its own laws."

"Every church," according to Dr. Burton, "had its own spiritual head or bishop, and was independent of every other church, with respect to its own internal regulations and laws. There was, however, a connexion, more or less intimate, between neighboring churches, which was a consequence, in some degree, of the geographical or civil division of the empire. Thus the churches of one province, such as Achaia, Egypt, Cappadocia &c., formed a kind of union, and the bishop of the capital, particularly if his see happened to be of apostolic foundation, acquired a precedence in rank and dignity over the rest. This superiority was often increased by the bishop of the capital (who was called, in late times, the metropolitan) having actually planted the church in smaller and more distant places; so that the mother church, as it might literally be termed, continued to feel a natural and parental regard for the churches planted by itself. These churches, however, were wholly independent in matters of internal jurisdiction; though it was likely that there would be a resemblance, in points even of slight importance, between churches of the same province."

Riddle's account of this subject is as follows:—"The apostles or their representatives exercised a general superintendence over these churches by divine authority, attested by miraculous gifts. The subordinate government of each particular church was vested in itself, the whole body elected its ministers and officers, and was consulted concerning all matters of importance. All churches were independent of each other, but were united by the bonds of holy charity, sympathy and friendship."

Similar views are also expressed by Archbishop Whateley. "Though there was one Lord, one faith, one baptism, for all of these, yet they were each a distinct, independent community on earth, or acknowledging any sovereignty of those societies over others.—Each bishop originally presided over one entire church." Now what, according to these Episcopal concessions, was the bishop at first, but the pastor of a single church, a *parochial bishop*, exercising only the jurisdiction, and enjoying the rights of an independent Congregational minister? But more of this hereafter.

Several of the ancient churches firmly asserted and maintained their original religious liberty, by refusing to acknowledge the authority of the ancient councils, for a long time after the greater part of the churches had subjected themselves to the authority of these confederacies. The church in Africa, for

example, and some of the eastern churches, although they adopted the custom of holding councils, and were in correspondence with these churches, declined entering into any grand Christian confederation with them; and, for a long time, remained inflexibly tenacious of their own just liberty and independence. This their example is an effectual argument in refutation of those who pretend that these councils were divinely appointed and had, *jure divino*, authority over the churches. Who can suppose that these churches would have asserted their independence so sternly, against an institution appointed by our Lord or his apostles?"

The independence of the churches, then, is conceded even by Episcopalians themselves. It has both the sanction of apostolical precedent, and the concurring authority of ecclesiastical writers, ancient and modern. This of itself is a point strongly illustrative of the religious freedom which was the basis of their original polity. This independence of particular churches is the great central principle, the original element, of their popular constitution and government. It vests the authority and power of each church in its own members collectively. It guards their rights. It guarantees to them the elective franchise, and gives them the enjoyment of religious liberty, under a government administered by the voice of their own members. It is the great principle, the great promoter of their views, and thus earned the animosity of the priestly party. On the overthrow of the Republicans, Murray was apprehended, and his long imprisonment has often been referred to. His friends in England had corresponded with the English Consul about his detention, and the hopes of the ultimate release of their relative were strengthened by a letter received from that gentleman, in which he expresses a distinct belief in Murray's innocence, and alludes to the causes that prolonged the legal proceedings. His relatives in this country—not supposing parliamentary interference necessary—lived on in hope that time and innocence would insure the release of the prisoner.—Great was their horror to see by the newspaper despatch that Murray, without open trial, was to terminate his long imprisonment by a public execution. His aunt went in a state of distraction to the representative of the Pope in this country, Cardinal Wiseman, in the hope of gaining his intercession for mercy—not justice—but she was not permitted to see the Cardinal; she then went off to that distinguished member of our catholic nobility, Lord Arundel and Surrey, and urgently supplicated his signature to a petition to the Pope to save Murray's life. This plea for mercy Lord Arundel and Surrey coldly refused to sign. The distracted lady could not understand this apathy of a Christian to plead for the life of a fellow creature and fellow-subject—she forgot the politics of the condemned.

What can be more tenderly beautiful than the following tribute to woman? It was paid by Mr. Webster in one of his masterly speeches:—"May it please your Honors, there is nothing upon this earth that can compare with the faithful attachment of a wife; no creature who for the object of her love, is so indomitable, so persevering, so ready to suffer and to die. Under the most depressing circumstances, woman's weakness becomes mighty power; her timidity becomes fearless courage; all her shrinking and sinking passes away, and her spirit acquires the firmness of marble—adamantine firmness, when circumstances drive her to put forth all her energies under the inspiration of her affections."