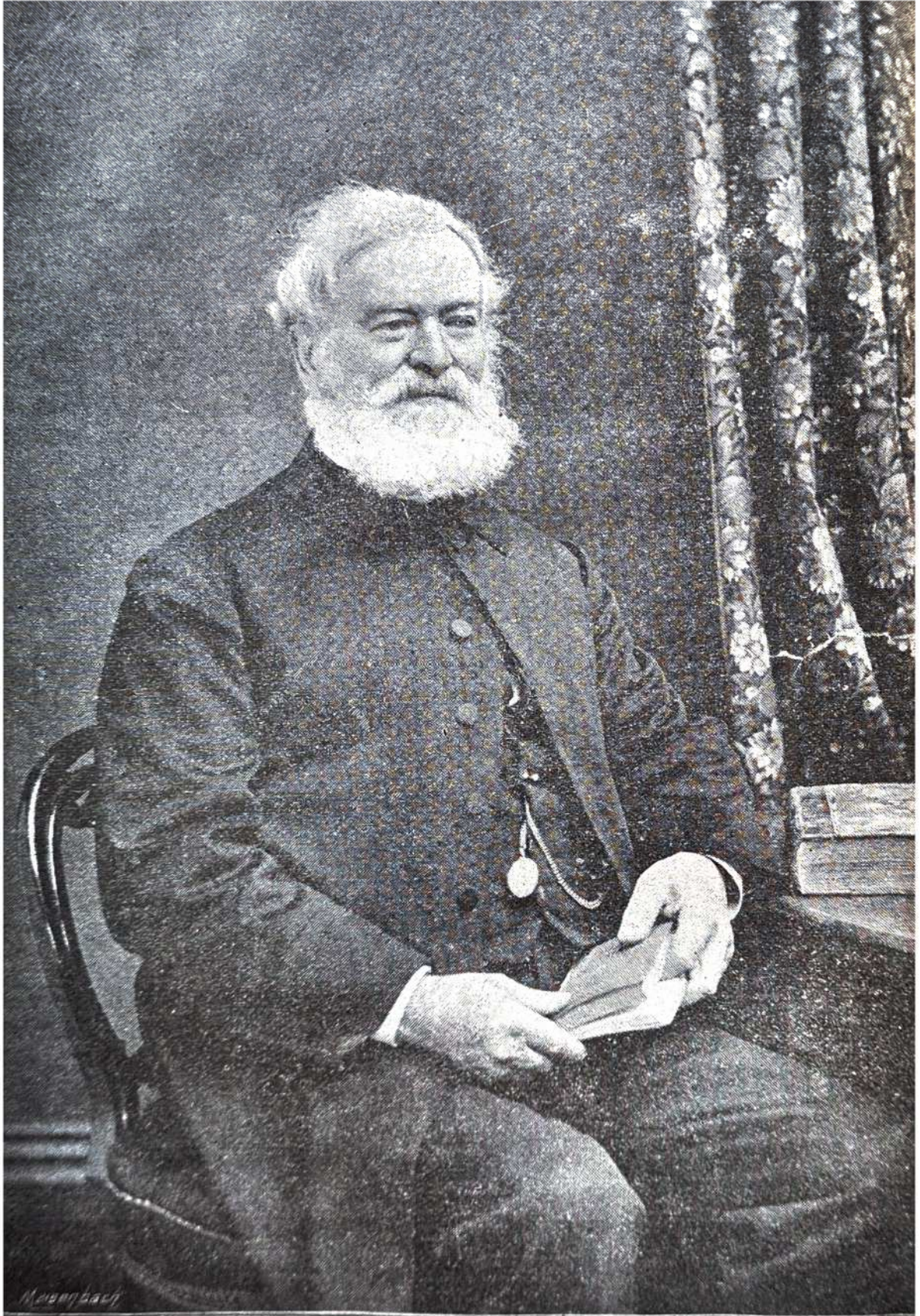


MISUNDERSTOOD

SCRIPTURES.

BY

REV. ROBERT NEVIN, D.D.



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MISUNDERSTOOD SCRIPTURES.

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF SOME PASSAGES IN THE
INSPIRED WORD, RESPECTING THE IMPORT OF
WHICH THERE HAS BEEN MUCH DIS-
CUSSION AND DIFFERENCE OF
OPINION ; WITH A VIEW
TO ESTABLISH THE
REAL MEANING.

BY THE
REV. ROBERT NEVIN, D.D.,
AUTHOR OF "STUDIES IN PROPHECY."

MEMORIAL VOLUME,
CONTAINING BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH BY REV. PROF.
CHANCELLOR, D.D., AND FUNERAL SERMON
BY REV. PROF. DICK, M.A.

Londonderry :
JAMES MONTGOMERY, CARLISLE ROAD.
MDCCCXCIII.

REV. ROBERT NEVIN, D.D.

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

It is natural; and it may be profitable, not only for relatives, but for fellow-workers and all who are deeply interested in the maintenance and final triumph of Christ's kingdom on earth, to preserve a record of the principal incidents, the distinguishing characteristics, and the most noteworthy efforts and achievements of those especially who, being placed in public office in the Church, have proved themselves valiant for the truth, and in its defence have continued "faithful unto death." In order to mark them off as the objects of His special delight and honour, and to enable others to discriminate and catch the force of their inspiring example, we are told that God Himself is careful to secure that some such record shall be preserved of all His devoted servants. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not." God's own record

of human thought and action misseth nothing, and is infallibly accurate and enduring. That subtle element which we call light is said to be universally diffused through infinite space, and as it vibrates and glides swiftly along, enwrapping the worlds in its course, it takes up a perfect ineffaceable image of everything on which it falls, and also gathers up into its indestructible treasure-house every spoken word and even every unspoken thought that agitates the brain. What a record shall be unfolded before every human eye when, on the great day of final reckoning, "The books shall be opened," and "for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof!" Our only hope lies in the significant statement so graciously appended, "And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life."

The memorial sketch of the life and labours of our dear departed friend and brother which we propose to offer must be brief, imperfect, and unsatisfactory, because it bears so much of a routine and external character. But from a life-long intimacy of the most tender, confidential, and helpful kind, intensified by the trials through which we have passed, I can think and write of him now with the deepest assurance, not merely as of one whose name is "enrolled in heaven," but as of one whose name has a place in the more select and honoured roll of the dauntless and consistent witnesses for Christ against all the counter-claims and ensnaring combinations of anti-Christ, and who "overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives even unto death." "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

I feel that the pathetic words of the heroic dirge which David uttered over the death of the bosom-friend of his youth are not too strong for me to use on the present occasion—"I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan : very pleasant hast thou been unto me : thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women : how are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished !"

Robert Nevin was born at Carnaff, near Dervock, October 21st, 1817. The Nevin family came originally from Scotland, and settled first at Kilmoyle, about five miles from Ballymoney. Robert's father and mother bore a striking likeness to each other, and this likeness, mental and physical, was largely transmitted to their children. They were gifted with a bright intelligence and a sparkling humour, suppressed somewhat by a refined natural modesty and gentleness of demeanour, but quickened and mellowed by the inner fire of a deep and irrepressible piety. James Nevin made a comfortable and prosperous home for his family in Carnaff, and was a tower of strength to the cause of religion and temperance in the congregation and district. The Church was unhappily disturbed for a time by a fierce internal strife that issued in the disruption of 1840. "He at that time manifested an attachment to the principles he had espoused, which no invective could shake, no reproach could move."

Two of his sons had been dedicated to the ministry, and while these disturbances were at their height were passing through their collegiate courses. James, the younger, had finished his second session in the Royal Belfast Collegiate Institution, when he fell into a rapid decline, and died in his 19th year. In July, 1839, the Presbytery reported to Synod—"The Presbytery record, with sym-

pathy towards bereaved relatives, the early removal by death of Mr. James Nevin, a student characterised by early piety and promising talents." His father died in his 81st year, his mother in her 84th, and their eldest daughter, Anne, attained to her 87th year; Robert was 75 years old when he died. Between his sister, Mrs. S. Patton, and the subject of this sketch there existed points of strong natural resemblance, and throughout life they were bound together by an innate sympathy and a blending force of silent affection that are seldom found equalled. "They were lovely and pleasant in their lives; and in their death they were not (long) divided."

We can imagine Robert Nevin—as a boy, fair, bright, tidy, thoughtful, sedate, precocious, loved and fondled in the home, admired and cordially greeted by all his neighbours, easily the leader in his classes at school, in the Church a youthful sage, devoutly absorbing theology as a flower absorbs the sunshine. Old men who knew him as a lad were wont to say that his early life was throughout a course of preparation for the ministry. He found an excellent classical teacher in Mr. J. Smith, who afterwards conducted a flourishing school in Cookstown; and in 1833 he commenced his collegiate studies in Belfast, where he seldom failed to secure annually some of the honours of his class. The winter of 1839-'40 he spent at the Edinburgh University, where he was greatly roused and stimulated by the lectures of Dr. Chalmers. Three autumn sessions he studied theology in Paisley, under the much-loved and venerated Dr. A. Symington. On the 11th of May, 1841, Robert Nevin, little more than 23 years of age, was licensed by the Northern Presbytery to preach the Gospel, and on the following Sabbath he took Dr. Stavelly's

place at Dervock, preaching from 2 Cor. v. 20—"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ." What a contrast there was between the tall, dignified, somewhat austere-looking Doctor, and his fair, slight, young pupil substitute for the time, who had sat erewhile so reverently and devoutly at his feet!

His first appearance in Londonderry was on the 15th of August, 1841, when he preached, forenoon and afternoon, from 1st John iii. 1. The congregation had been without a stated supply since the retirement of the Rev. G. T. Ewing in 1837, and it was now torn by internal dissension. The Eastern Presbytery having seceded from the Synod, a minority of the Derry congregation sympathised with the separatists, and formed a new congregation. Having among them the only surviving trustee of the congregation's property, the attempt was made, at law, to wrest this from the majority. Mr. Nevin was as unlike a man of strife, fitted for such an emergency, as it is possible to conceive; and the immediate prospect of a legal conflict, with its uncertainties, vexations, and expenses, must have been revolting to his gentle spirit. But this state of matters served to bring out at once the latent courage and capacity of the man. The wisdom and boldness he manifested in council, in addition to his other qualities, commended him so much to the acceptance of the people that they determined immediately to present him with a call. In answer to a petition to Presbytery, on the 3rd of November, the Rev. A. Britton was appointed to moderate in a call on December the 10th. This unanimous call—the only objector being Mr. John Munn, the trustee who was trying to wrest the property from them—was presented to Mr. Nevin at a meeting in Strabane on the 23rd of the

same month, and was at once accepted. His pieces of trial were delivered before the Presbytery on the 11th of January, 1842, and his ordination took place on the 1st day of February thereafter. Mr. Nevin and ten members of the congregation filed a bill, in chancery, in defence of their property, in the following June, and in July the Synod unanimously "engaged to use their influence with their congregations, that the rights of the Derry congregation be defended, as our own rights, against the hostile proceedings that had been taken." When costs had been incurred on either side, amounting to about the value of the property, the suit was terminated by mutual consent, the congregation retaining the property.

The house of worship, which was a most inartistic and unattractive building, erected in 1811 in a gloomy court called Wapping Lane, off Fountain Street, had, arising from an insufficient foundation, fallen into a bad and even dangerous condition, and it was not thought proper to spend more money upon it. In 1856 an admirable site was secured at the corner of Clarendon Street and Queen Street, on which has been erected the present handsome church, with a commodious schoolroom and manse. On the first Sabbath in January, 1858, the church was opened for public worship. The whole burden of superintending the work, and of raising the large amount necessary to its completion—about £2,000—lay exclusively on Mr. Nevin; and while the congregation and the city of Derry responded nobly to his appeals, he had to traverse the entire Church in these countries, and spend nearly six months in the United States before the burden could be discharged. While in America he travelled, on this mission, 8,291 miles. The whole pile of church buildings stands as an

enduring monument to the fine taste, the dauntless energy, and the indefatigable exertions of the Rev. Robert Nevin.

But while forced thus, from the commencement of his ministry, into work most uncongenial and distracting, it must not be supposed that this was allowed to alter the natural tendency of his habits and the steady development of his character, or to prevent the conscientious discharge of his ministerial functions. He was essentially a self-contained man, with faculties so keen, and convictions so deep, and aspirations so lofty and unquenchable, that he was not to be turned aside from the even tenor of his course by temporary circumstances, however clamorous and engrossing. His well-stored and disciplined mind had taken a strong bent towards quiet persistent thinking, an all-round research, and the keenest analysis of every subject that interested him ; so that, amid all distractions, he found his way into the study, resumed his investigations with readiness, or completed his careful and minute preparations for some religious service. The pulpit never found him in a state of bewilderment or uncertainty. His quiet, clear, self-possessed manner indicated to all that he came with a message which he thoroughly understood, and the gravity and importance of which he had already prayerfully considered. Occasionally the urgency or the grandeur of his message would suddenly propel him from the quiet, gentle, even tone of his usual delivery into an outburst of lofty vehemence, or soften him into a vibrating, tearful tenderness of tone and manner that revealed deep in his own breast the play of unlooked-for and almost uncontrollable emotions, and which would penetrate and thrill and leave lasting impressions in the hearts of others. If called on in the course of his expositions to denounce some public

scandal or some glaring violation of God's law, he would do it with a sternness and indignant force of eloquence, as if the mantle of one of the ancient prophets had descended upon him. Or if some new-fangled heresy obtruded itself on his notice, he would show himself to have mastered the latest literature on the subject, or to have taken the measure of the most vaulting and random flights of the newest criticism; and, stripping it of its meretricious adornments or concealments, he would scathe the plausible but dangerous fallacy or misleading doctrine with the fire of a remorseless sarcasm, or grind it to powder between the massive stones of his inexorable logic.

I have never known any man so exact and methodical in all his habits. He has left two Note Books—the one chronological, the other topical—in which he kept a double record of all his public ministrations. They were planned and ruled by himself from the first in a way that served him to the last without the slightest alteration. In the first he has noted every day on which he conducted or took part in public worship, from his first sermon in Dervock, May 16th, 1841, till the last, in which he officiated, with much pain and difficulty, in Londonderry, October 2nd, 1892. With the subjects of discourse he registers also all baptisms, and sometimes deaths. In the second he has left a record of every discourse he prepared, with the different times and places in which each was delivered. From this we learn that he had three sermons written out before the one which he first delivered. His last is numbered 1,888. On an average he must have given each discourse at least six times, so that he preached no fewer than 11,298 sermons, besides lecturing through the principal books of the Old

Testament and the New. We know from his recently published "Studies in Prophecy" with what careful scrutiny of the originals and of the several versions and leading commentaries these lectures and discourses were prepared. Far from being an easy-going preacher, harping upon familiar and popular topics, he grappled with the profoundest mysteries, and often singled out the most difficult and perplexing passages, bracing himself to the task of making them clear and restful to the common intelligence. Under his skilful handling, "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness."

Notwithstanding his modest and retiring disposition, Mr. Nevin was no sooner a member of the Church courts than he was drawn to the front by his sound judgment, his ready wit, and the unselfish interest he displayed in all public affairs. Immediately on the demise of the Rev. A. Britton, on the 31st May, 1846, he was appointed to succeed him as clerk of Presbytery; and he continued to discharge the duties of that office with unfaltering efficiency and unsurpassed neatness and accuracy until the near approach of death compelled him to desist. In 1864 he entered on his duties as clerk of Synod, and never were more uniform diligence, correctness, and urbanity brought to the service of such an office, and never were the records of any court written out in a more evenly, legible, stainless, and beautiful style. It was in January, 1868, that Mr. Nevin undertook the arduous and unprofitable task of editing and issuing the *Covenanter*, and for twenty-three years he bore the irksome yoke almost without a murmur. In his opening address he said:—"The former editor kept it up with admirable ability, zeal, and earnestness for not less than

thirty-five years. The amount of time and toil thus gratuitously expended few people even think of, and no one can properly estimate. The Church owes a debt of gratitude to Dr. Houston which can never, on her part, be adequately repaid." The same may be said, with equal reason, of the editorial labours of Dr. Nevin. Many of his articles have deserved, and some of them have obtained, an abiding place in the classic literature of the Church. None of the controversies that arose during that period affecting the doctrines or position of the Church failed to receive a searching and masterly treatment at his hands. The only fault to be found with the *Covenanter* under his editorship was that occasionally it was overmuch loaded with weighty and controversial materials.

We have said that Dr. Nevin was essentially a self-contained man. We mean by that that he possessed, in an eminent degree, a round of qualities any one of which, in full development, would have given distinction to an ordinary man. In society, at times, he would lapse into a prolonged and painful silence, yet when roused he could become a most vivacious and entertaining conversationalist. Usually plain, plodding, prosaic, he yet had a humour that could electrify, an imagination that could flash into brilliance, and a refinement of taste and manner that was never at fault. Some fragments of poetry have been found among his papers which show that with due cultivation he could, even in that line, have made his mark. His mechanical taste and skill, too, were ever ready to compete for ascendancy with his intellectual prowess and studious habits. So gentle and self-forgetful was he, that a little child could lead him, a plausible friend make him appear to consent to anything, and a needy acquaintance

involve him to his damage. But, on the other hand, he had a spirit so independent—so instinct with the love of truth, of freedom, and of honour, that no personal considerations could restrain him from casting all his might into an assailed and imperilled cause against whatever odds. The *Londonderry Standard*, on the day after his death, wrote truly of him:—“His ideal was a high one, and he knew no weariness in the service of the Master, whom he loved. By both pen and tongue he expounded and defended the truth; keen in controversy, but gentle and child-like in private life.” No wonder he was both loved and respected by all who knew him!

It was in the arena of public controversy that the salient and counterbalancing properties of the man came into fullest light and most harmonious action. No one could be less ready to provoke a conflict or to take offence. But when the clarion call of battle sounded in his ears, then, instantly, his neck became clothed with thunder, and like the war-horse described in the Book of Job—“As oft as the trumpet soundeth he saith, Aha! And he smelleth the battle afar off: the thunder of the captains and the shouting.” Yet never, even in his severest moods, would he permit personal pique or passion to obtrude, or forget the claims of justice, of fair, honourable dealing and true Christian courtesy. His method will be best portrayed in his own words, taken from the preface to *ANESIMASTIX*, one of his earliest and ablest productions. “To some the severity of our critique and the tone of sarcasm may not be altogether pleasing. There are some things for which ridicule is the proper and most effectual mode of treatment. For the severity we have no apology to offer. We put in a plea of complete justification. When we must strike, in

a case of this kind, we hold it to be the best policy, and no bad Christianity, to strike hard and home, as much so as justice warrants. We would render the antagonist incapable of renewing the onset." And this, too, was the result he invariably secured. We cannot remember an instance in which a reply was attempted to one of his trenchant and thorough-going assaults. The above-named pamphlet of 72 pages was called for by a sense of public duty. At the time it was published (1859) many wanton, malicious, and offensive attacks and sneers were being made against the Reformed Presbyterian Church, because, forsooth, she would not extinguish herself in the General Assembly. The year before, a Prize Catechism on the "Principles and Position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church" had been published by the Rev. S. Simms, of Loughbrickland. This brought out a local brochure called "A Review of Modern Covenantism," by Anesis. In a style of the haughtiest insolence and most provoking and reckless flippancy, all the old slanders, misrepresentations and dishonest charges against Covenanters were reproduced, and although several confutations of it were published, the utmost efforts were made to push it into wide circulation. Mr. Nevin resolved to crush the thing, and lay an arrest on this continual dribbling of vulgar and venomous abuse. And it was done. The charges against the Church were not only refuted and their falsity exposed, but her distinctive principles and attitude so conclusively vindicated, and Anesis himself so effectually pounded and brayed, as in a mortar with a pestle, that neither he nor his coadjutors have since ventured, in a like manner, to chirp or to mutter.

In the year 1857 the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian

Church in Scotland began to discuss the question of the exercise of "The Elective Franchise" by members of the Church. When a Covenanted Church increases in numbers and wealth some of its members are strongly tempted, under worldly or party influences, to abandon their principles, and to incorporate with the anti-Christian constitution against which they had solemnly protested. Then the question arises, Will the courts of the Church wink at this dereliction of duty, and so concur in the tacit abandonment of the Church's position and testimony? It very soon became evident that this was the course the majority of the office-bearers in Scotland were bent on pursuing. But a minority was as resolutely opposed to it as their fathers had been from the time of the persecution. All that trained talent, ingenuity, and social influence could command to extenuate, excuse, and garnish over deliberate apostacy, was exerted on the one hand; and all that integrity, love of truth, and fidelity to vows could do, on the other hand, to thwart the course of treachery and avert the impending crisis, was unsparingly employed. Shorthand reports of the principal discussions were published, and, when it was seen that a disruption was inevitable, in order that, at least, the truth and testimony of Christ, for which their fathers had suffered the loss of all things, might be preserved intact, Mr. Nevin was requested to write a full review, and deliver a solemn judgment on the whole discussion. This REVIEW was published in 1863, and extended to 93 pages. In it, after collecting every nugget that had been thrown up, and crushing every fragment of quartz and of sandstone, he swept away the dross as utterly worthless, while he carefully gathered every particle of the imperishable ore of

truth, that it might be stamped afresh with the image and superscription of the King.

His later controversial writings are more accessible and not less important. When the rage for the use of human hymns and instrumental aids or substitutes in the worship of God, which had seized upon other large Presbyterian Churches, began to infect and to deteriorate the Irish Presbyterian Church, he could no longer remain silent. Almost every published plea for these innovations contained some covert or mocking challenge to the Covenanting Church, because of her unflinching resistance to all tampering with the purity and spirituality of divine worship. Mr. Nevin's first contribution to this controversy was in 1870, when he issued "The 'Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs' of Scripture: with strictures on certain articles which recently appeared in the *Londonderry Guardian*, entitled 'The Service of Praise—Notices of its History.'" In this he discusses first the exegetical, then the historical, and lastly the theological and devotional aspects of the question in a thoroughly conclusive manner. The whole subject of "Instrumental Music in Christian Worship" was discussed by him in an elaborate and exhaustive pamphlet of 87 pages, published in 1872, and which reached the third edition. This was in answer to publications by the Rev. Professor Wallace, the Rev. A. C. Murphy, and the Rev. J. A. Robson, and it is not less caustic and convincing in its exposure of popular delusions and unsound reasoning than any of his former productions. A condensed statement of the Scriptural argument on this question was prepared by Mr. Nevin, and issued by a Committee of Synod in 1873, in conjunction with three similar tracts for the times by other members of Synod,

and was largely circulated under the title, "The Voice of the Reformed Presbyterian Church." His last publication of a polemic character was "The Hymn Question : a Review of the Speeches of the Rev. J. Macnaughton and the Rev. T. Y. Killen at a meeting of the Belfast Presbytery on the 19th April, 1875." This supplements his first pamphlet on the Hymn Question by an examination of common-place sneers and objections, and by an exposure of the groundless assertions and dangerous assumptions concerning the worship of God, so readily endorsed and reiterated even by some of the ablest advocates of innovation. In these powerful critiques on subjects still of pressing importance he has taught us the art of conducting one department of an effective Christian warfare, and has furnished an arsenal of proved and polished weapons, ready to the hands of future defenders of the faith. And through them "he, being dead, yet speaketh."

To intrude much into the sacred privacy of the home-life of one who was so notably undemonstrative and unobtrusive would seem to be an unwarrantable impertinence. Suffice it to say, the home, in its varying aspects, was the reflection of the man. Peace and quietness reigned supreme, order and neatness pervaded the establishment; genuine hospitality smiled, rather than uttered, her cheery welcome; kindness, sympathy, and good counsel filled it with the holy fragrance of a healthful repose. Dr. Nevin was first married at Dervock, 31st May, 1848, to Margaret Loughlin, of the Clunties—not far from his former home—a lady fair, mild, cultured, beaming with a goodness and a wisdom not inferior to his own. They had seven children. Although Mrs. Nevin was never very robust, yet her death came so unexpectedly, on the 26th of December, 1863, that if he

had not learned a submissiveness far beyond what earthly philosophy can teach, and been borne up by a strength and a hope far above what is human, he could not have bowed with such resignation to the stroke. I stood at his side when they were married; and as we walked arm-in-arm into the New Cemetery on that clouded and threatening December day, the sun burst upon us with unwonted brightness and warmth. He said: "That is just an emblem of our whole married life; amid cloud and storms it was all sunshine. We never had even a misunderstanding." The widow who now laments his removal can testify that such also has been her experience. In the spring and summer of 1868 three of his loved children, in the sweet bloom of ripening youth, and in the far sweeter bloom and fragrance of a heavenly ripeness, were taken to the home above. His entries on these sad occasions were—"Help, Lord!" "Have pity, Lord!" "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be His name!" Three more of his "dear little bodies," as he was wont to call them, were removed from his tender care to the brighter presence and more glorious surroundings of their Heavenly Father. On the 30th March, 1869, Dr. Nevin was married in Glasgow to Katherine Manson, a native of Wick, who brought to his home not only the abounding good-nature and equanimity to which he had been accustomed, but much of that energy, activity, and resourcefulness which are so much needed in the manse. Ten children have been born to them, of whom one was taken away as an infant of days. Dr. Nevin had but two or three visitations of illness, which caused a temporary cessation from his loved employ. In his latter years he became quite robust and restful in his appearance. He was happy in his work,

happy in his family, and happy in the consciousness that he had not laboured in vain. All who knew him were delighted when the Geneva College conferred on him the well-earned distinction of Doctor of Divinity. Somewhat early in the year 1892 Dr. Nevin discovered a small tumour in his mouth, under the tongue, which for a considerable time caused him neither uneasiness nor pain. But as summer approached, the growth increased and became portentous. At length it was known to be a malignant tumour, that might occasion much suffering, and that would be ultimately fatal. When deeply interested in his work or in conversation he almost forgot its existence. When Synod met in Derry, on the 30th of May, he appeared so hearty and healthful that every one was glad of the opportunity of bestowing on him another token of their high esteem by appointing him to the Moderator's chair, which he hopefully accepted. But no sooner was the excitement of the Synod's meeting over than his suffering became more frequent and intense, and at times even excruciating. In August Presbytery supplied his pulpit while he visited his children in Scotland and England, and consulted physicians. But after attempting to preach one Sabbath in September, and one in October, his pulpit thenceforward was to know him no more for ever. Then gradually he retired, like a stricken warrior, into his study, and his chamber, and his closet, and lay down to die. As his suffering increased, and speaking and swallowing became more painful, and at length impossible, he crept closer and closer into the bosom of his God, and drew all his nourishment through his little well-worn pocket Bible, which had long been the companion of his life-journeyings; so that while the

outward man was rapidly decaying, the inward man was renewed day by day. As he lay there, with his back to the world and his gaze fixed on the Celestial City, waiting for the command to pass over, what fascinating and transforming visions he must have had of "the King in His beauty," and "the far-stretching land!" The Rev. S. Ferguson, his most frequent visitor in the chamber of death, records one of his characteristic sayings, referring to the open Bible that lay at his hand: "Once he remarked to me that the passages that had formerly charmed him by closeness of reasoning or beauty of style, now delighted him by the living Christ they revealed, and the bright hopes they unfolded." On the morning of Tuesday, the 7th of February, his sun, which had been obscured for a little, glided serenely away out of our dim and narrow horizon to shine in a vaster firmament, and amid a boundless galaxy of other radiant stars, to realise at once "Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love Him." But let his own pen attempt the description. In Alleghany, U.S., July 3, 1857, on the fly-leaf of his Bible he thus expressed the forecastings and yearnings of his placid soul:—

“ There is a land beyond the grave,
Oh how bright !
There is a day of cloudless sky,
And no night.
There is a rest from earthly ill,
Sin and strife.
There is a joy unspeakable,
Endless life.
Darkness cannot enter there,
Death or pain.

Sorrow is for ever banish'd
 That domain.
 Narrow the way and straight the gate ;
 Subtle the snares our steps await,
 And enemies are strong.
 May grace enable us to strive
 That land to gain, those foes to drive,
 Eternal, then, our song !”

 PSALM XXIII.—A NEW VERSION.

[By the Rev. ROBERT NEVIN, D.D. Written years ago on the fly-leaf
 of his pocket Bible.]

Rendered as closely to the original as possible.

1. Jehovah's my Shepherd ; my wants He'll supply ;
2. In pastures of verdure He'll make me to lie ;
 By streams of repose He will lead me along ;
3. My soul in its weakness He'll cause to be strong.

- In right paths He'll lead me, for His own name's sake ;
4. And when through death's valley my journey I take,
 No evil I'll fear, for Thou with me wilt be ;
 Thy rod and Thy staff they will still comfort me.
 5. My table Thou'lt spread in the presence of foes ;
 My head Thou anointedst, my cup overflows.
 6. Pure goodness and mercy shall still follow me,
 And God's house my dwelling for ever shall be.

The above is identical, in several points, with the version
 in the New Psalter adopted by our Church in America, and,
 on the whole, will bear comparison with the best versions
 that have been published.

[Another specimen of his poetic gift was written in an hour of meditative leisure, amid the weariness and worry of his travels in America.]

For gold how many toil and bleed,
Yet toil and bleed in vain ;
To climb ambition's giddy height
Some every nerve will strain.

For dregs of pleasure's madd'ning cup
Fools barter joys divine,
And revel in the sensuous maze
From youth till life's decline.

They only are the truly wise
Whose treasure is in heav'n,
Who aim in all to please their God,
Their heart to Jesus giv'n.

In wisdom's race none run to fail,
Although unknown to story ;
The *fight* of faith is victory,
The prize, a crown of glory.



SERMON IN MEMORIAM,

*Preached in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Londonderry,
on the occasion of the death of the late Rev. R. Nevin, D.D.,
by Rev. Professor Dick, M.A., Ballymoney.*

Hebrews xiii. 7—"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."

The Revised Version gives the meaning of the original of this inspired injunction very much more accurately than the Authorized Version, "Remember them that had the rule over you, who spake unto you the Word of God; and, considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith." The original might be rendered more correctly still, "Remember your leaders [or guides] who spoke to you," &c. The reference is manifestly not to living leaders or rulers, but to leaders or rulers now deceased, whose life and ministry and fidelity have reached a triumphant issue. As God requires obedience and submission to such rulers while they live, so He requires dutiful remembrance of them when they are dead. The reason for the remembrance of a faithful minister departed is substantially the same as for obedience to the faithful minister who is still among his flock: it is not that the man may be glorified, for the man is nothing in himself and nothing by himself; his relation to God—to God's grace and to God's work—is everything. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." The true minister

is but the visible instrument of God; he is ordained to deliver God's message and to do God's work. Therefore obedience to him while he lives and ministers resolves itself ultimately into obedience to God; and remembrance of him after he is dead becomes remembrance of the divine power that raised him up and equipped him graciously for the place he was to fill, and for the work he was to do. While he lives he lives by God's grace for God's glory; when he is "dead he yet speaketh" for God: his memory, dutifully cherished according to the divine ordinance, exercises a sanctifying influence upon the Church; and thus God's work goes on to its accomplishment, not only by the active instrumentality of the living, but even by the wise remembrance of the righteous dead.

The nature of the work with which the Gospel ministry is concerned suggests at once the importance of the ministry itself, and the necessity for recalling its lessons, that the influence of a particular ministry may not cease with the cessation of the ministry itself. The work is God's greatest work, for the accomplishment of the gracious purpose which fills earth and heaven, time and eternity, with glory. It is a work which must go on, in the case of the individual, until "the very God of peace" sanctifies him wholly, and makes him perfect in every good work to do His will. It is a work of edification that must go on, in the case of the whole Church, until "all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord." All the way up from sin and misery to holiness and blessedness sinners are brought by the effectual working of God Himself; and in the whole work God would have the faith and hope of the Church fixed upon Himself. But Gospel ministers are co-workers with God, appointed to

contemplate with Him the accomplishment of His holy purpose, and to place themselves in His hands to be used by Him as willing and intelligent instruments. It is by His words as the main instrument that God performs His work. His official servants are, therefore, employed to preach His Word, and to exemplify its holy principles in their lives; and they are required to be faithful in all this Word and work of God even unto death. The more thoroughly God's official servants realise the dignity and importance of their relations to Him and to His purpose of grace, the more is God Himself glorified and the Church blessed. And when they themselves no longer live upon the earth God would have their memory to live, and transmit its holy influences to all generations. Hence He says, "Remember your leaders who spoke to you the Word of God; and, considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith."

The truth that is taught in this passage may, for our present purpose, be expressed in this way: The dutiful remembrance of faithful ministers departed is a powerful stimulus to faith and fidelity.

I. DECEASED MINISTERS OF CHRIST ARE TO BE HELD IN DUTIFUL REMEMBRANCE,

1. *For their doctrine.* They have spoken "the Word of God." The faithful minister receives his Master's commission to deliver a message of infinite importance to his hearers. That message is nothing less than the Word of the Lord—the whole counsel of God—"concerning man's salvation, faith, and life." Its origin in the spontaneous grace of God, its nature as it reveals God in Christ in His holiness and righteousness, and yet in infinite mercy and loving-kindness, its extent as it is a Gospel to be preached

to every creature for the restoration to holiness and happiness of a great host which no man can number, who have sinned and come short of the glory of God; its great purpose, as it is all this and does all this to exalt God and make Him a glorious name—these and many other considerations serve to show that the message entrusted to the Gospel minister is above every other message, and that the Word of the Lord is incomparably greater than any other word that a man may speak to his fellow-men. The unspeakable dignity of the message secures the dignity also of the messenger; and, when he has delivered his message during his allotted time, and is gone, message and messenger are to be remembered—the message for its own sake and for the sake of God who graciously sent it, the messenger for the sake of his message. Therefore the injunction is laid upon the Church, “Remember your leaders who spoke to you the Word of God.”

2. Faithful spiritual leaders must be remembered also *for their exemplary faith and fidelity*. The Scriptural doctrine as to what the life of a minister ought to be is expressed briefly in the charge given to Timothy, “Be thou an example of the believer in word, in conversation [that is, in life], in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” And this ideal seems to have been realised in the case of the leaders whom the Hebrews are here exhorted to remember. They exercised a “faith” that it was profitable to “follow.” They had lived such a life, and their life had had such an issue, that it was stimulating and strengthening to consider how they lived and how they died. Their own faith had been fixed on the message which they delivered to others. They had gone forth believing the truth, filled with the truth, and seeking to exemplify the holy doctrine of their Master in

their lives. And when the end came, probably through tribulation and martyrdom for Christ's sake, and they had ceased to preach in person the truth of Christ, their example of faithfulness even unto death continued to preach the power of that truth, and to fix attention on Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Next to the all-important doctrine that Christ's ministers preach, these are the points worthy of remembrance in any part of the world and in any generation. If a man shows unmistakably that he believes what he preaches ; if he shows that he is faithful to the whole trust committed to him, declaring the whole truth, and surrendering himself in heart and life to the service of the truth, and counting all things but loss in comparison with the knowledge of Christ, the experience of His saving power, and the blessed privilege of working for Him and with Him, his preaching is so much the more influential at the time, and is fitted to leave more influential memories behind it. This is what the true minister of the Gospel has set before him as his ideal—knowing Christ, believing in Christ with mind and heart, preaching Christ, accepting and enforcing all the obligations of the kingdom of Christ, and resolving and endeavouring to maintain the honour of Christ and the integrity of His truth without letting go a single jot or tittle of Christ's testimonies. The faith that honestly accepts Christ the Saviour must take the form of fidelity to Christ the King. Such an ideal is unhappily seldom realised, is perhaps too seldom even formed or contemplated. There may be faith that is not very strong or very intelligent, and this leads to a narrow conception of what fidelity means. Unpopular truth is, therefore, not preached ; difficult duties are not done ; the glory of Christ

is either not sought at all, or Christ's own methods are not followed. The divine ends are supplanted by selfish or worldly ends. In such a ministry there may be little or no faith to follow; little or no fidelity to consider; nothing profitable to remember, unless in the way of warning against selfish unfaithfulness.

But, on the other hand, when a ministry is conspicuous for faith and self-sacrificing fidelity it has the approval of Christ and of all His faithful servants. "Them that honour Me I will honour" is a divine statement that applies with special emphasis to such a ministry. And no small part of the honour divinely bestowed consists in securing everlasting remembrance of the faithful servant of the Lord for a permanent stimulus and blessing to the Church.

II. Truly dutiful remembrance of faithful ministers is PRACTICAL. It is not mere sentiment. It does not find all its expression in words of admiration or of love. It takes intelligently into account God's purpose in the appointment of the ministry and the manner in which a particular ministry has fulfilled that purpose, in order that the fulfilment of the purpose may go on still, though the faithful minister is resting from his labours. Hence dutiful remembrance

1. *Thoughtfully recalls the doctrines preached.* If the minister is to be remembered for the Word of God which he spoke, then the Word of God itself is to be remembered. The Word spoken appeals to thought; it is not a mere sound, intended to make a momentary impression, and then cease and be forgotten. In the presence of the spoken Word the mind is to be open to instruction as well as the ear to sounds. The heart is to be reached, the life is to

be permanently influenced for good by the enlightening and sanctifying power of a gracious revelation from God. And, therefore, memory is required to treasure up the instruction received, even while the preacher lives, and much more when he is gone the way of all the earth, and speaks to us no more with the living voice, that the Word of the Lord may endure for ever. The remembrance of the truth preached is thus the first element in profitable and becoming remembrance of a deceased preacher.

It may be that through his instrumentality that truth first became truth to us. It may be that through his instruction the light of spiritual revelation shone for the first time upon our dark minds. It may be that the holy doctrines preached by him brought joy into our hearts, and were the sustenance and strength of our growing spiritual life. And so the preacher and the truth must be ever associated in our minds. But the faithful preacher lived for the truth as it is in Jesus, as the only saving light shining in a dark place; he held up that truth for the spiritual brightening of individual lives, and for the enlargement of the area of enlightened subjection to Christ in the world; and hence the truth itself must stand out most prominently before our minds in all intelligent remembrance of the departed preacher. The Apostle Peter says, "Yea, I think it meet as long as I am in this tabernacle to stir you up by putting you in remembrance, knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover, I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." His absorbing desire, on the near approach of death, was not to be remembered himself—although, doubtless, it would have cheered him to

think that he had so helped any fainting soul on in the spiritual race as to be gratefully and lovingly remembered after his decease—but to have “these things,” that is, these blessed doctrines and facts of divine revelation, “always” fresh in the remembrance of the Church. On the principle, therefore, that the truth is greater than the man, we honour the memory of the man best by laying up in our hearts the truth he taught from the mouth of the Lord.

Moreover, by the truth of God delivered to us by His faithful servants we shall be judged. Our responsibility for a particular sermon or other exposition of divine truth does not end when the exposition ends; our responsibility on account of the work done by a particular ministry, under which we have lived, does not end when the ministry ends. God, who sent the ministry, still lives to take account of how that ministry has been received, and of what the results have been, are now, or are to be. Hence, while there is a grateful remembrance of our teachers who spoke to us the Word of God, it is absolutely essential for us to remember the substance of the lessons they taught, for which we must render an account to God. “Remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast.” “Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.”

2. A second element in dutiful remembrance of deceased guides is *imitation of their faith and fidelity*. “Considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith.” The Word of God spoken calls for faith and for remembrance in order to the growth of faith; the faithful minister of Christ sets an example of faith that shows the blessed working of the

Divine Word in the life. We have thus not only the command or invitation to believe, but the illustration of the obedience of faith. And God would have the Church so to remember the illustration as to copy it. In the case of the guides spoken of in this passage, their faith had had a strengthening and sustaining power; they had lived out their life of faith to a blessed issue, faithful to the truth and cause of their Master, and willing to sacrifice life itself rather than prove false to Him or to the faith once delivered to the saints. The Church addressed in this passage heard not only a voice behind, saying, "This is the way; walk ye in it," but a voice going before, saying, "Come with us and we will do you good." Earlier in this same epistle, where we find the commendation of a work and labour of love showed towards God's name, it is added:—"And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end, that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." The Church remembers her departed guides well, she remembers their doctrines, she remembers their faith and patience and steadfastness to good purpose, when she follows them in the holy imitation of their graces, and so strives to bear and transmit the image of their Christian manhood that they may be remembered for ever.

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We are met to-day for the purpose of remembering one of our spiritual guides—I do not say, one of *your* spiritual guides, but one of *ours*, for Dr. Nevin was a guide to more than you. He belonged to the whole Church; and, during a ministry of fifty years, he was an intellectual and theological guide to every congregation and to every minister

of the Church, by his clear and scholarly exposition of the Divine Word, and by his powerful defence, on many an occasion, of sound doctrine and pure worship. But while we meet thus to refer to his life and ministry, we do not meet to exalt man, but to exalt Christ. Our remembrance of your late pastor must be Scriptural remembrance. If we inquire of the Lord how we can best remember him, the answer is furnished to us in these words, "Considering the issue of his life, imitate his faith." If he himself could be asked how we may remember him, his answer would doubtless be, Believe the Word of God which I spoke to you, and be faithful unto death.

Let him be remembered, then, as a minister of Christ *who spoke the Word of God*. He gave ample evidence in his preaching and in his writing that he studied the Divine Word—not to make some vain-glorious use of it, but simply in order to understand it himself, and be instrumental in leading others to understand it for the glory of God. His study of it was painstaking, devout, and successful, and his expositions were uniformly thoughtful and scholarly, without a trace of pedantry, profound and yet clear, the result of clear thought on his own part, and leading to clear thought on the part of his hearers, conspicuously intelligent and always intelligible. He did not make sermons, moreover, merely in order to deliver them before an audience. He had no thought of posing for display as a brilliant orator. He came forth, we believe, from his Master's presence, and with his Master's Spirit upon him, to deliver his Master's message to saints and sinners. He did not think that sinners could be converted or saints edified by fine words or beautifully-rounded and polished sentences. One might safely defy any hearer or any reader to recall

one single sentence in all his ministry that was uttered or written for the purpose of display. It is not meant, of course, that his style was bald or uninteresting, or that his sentences lacked refinement. On the contrary, the simplicity and directness of his style, flowing out of his clear thinking, constituted a real ornament, more attractive to the appreciative mind than all the veneer and gilding of studied rhetoric. His aim was to make the truth of God appear before the minds of men in all its beauty and glory and essential eloquence, without the drapery of excellency of human speech or wisdom. It is no small tribute of honour to pay to a departed servant of the Lord to say that thoughts of personal display did not enter into his calculations either in what he spoke or in what he wrote, and that he preached not himself but "Christ crucified" and "Christ Jesus the Lord."

In preaching Christ, Dr. Nevin preached the doctrines of grace. He had firmly grasped the Calvinistic system, and taught with no uncertain sound the great Scriptural verity of God's sovereign grace in the salvation of the sinner. He felt that that doctrine constituted an important part of the truth of God—indeed a central and vital part—he believed, and therefore he spoke. It has, of course, always been an unpopular doctrine. Men do not like a doctrine of sovereign election, because it humbles their lofty self-sufficiency to the dust, and regards them in their fallen state as the children of wrath. They for the same reason dislike all the other doctrines that necessarily and logically and Scripturally link themselves with that doctrine. And many a minister who believes these doctrines to be true nevertheless thinks it prudent to keep them back for fear of giving offence, or of hurting his own popularity. But

not so Dr. Nevin. No one could accuse him of studied vagueness or concession to the prejudices of the corrupt heart and mind. He believed that system of doctrines to be most necessary for man's salvation and for the display of the divine glory; he believed it to be a self-consistent system, meeting all the claims of the most enlightened reason, and therefore he conscientiously held those doctrines and fearlessly proclaimed them, whether men would hear or whether they would forbear.

Having in early life accepted and professed the distinctive principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Dr. Nevin was not long in giving evidence that he understood those principles and could defend them. His powers as an exceptionally acute and exhaustive controversialist were again and again called into play on behalf of the truth which he held dear. His criticism of fallacious argument and erroneous doctrine was peculiarly keen and cutting, but he bore no ill-will personally to any opponent. Enemies might charge him with bitterness or with bigotry when they could not otherwise answer him. But he was singularly free from bitterness of spirit, and if he chastised an opponent with great severity at times, the severity had no more malignity in it than the severity of a loving father who chastises a wayward child. And as for bigotry, those who knew the man know there was not a shadow of ground for such a charge. His was no blind traditional attachment to his Church. He believed the doctrines of his Church, because those doctrines commended themselves to his enlightened mind as thoroughly Scriptural and defensible; and he maintained them during a long ministry, not with unreasoning narrowness and dogmatism, but with intellectual power too great, and with arguments too logical

and Scriptural, for any one who ever ventured to assail them in his time. But with all his intellectual attainments, and with all his controversial keenness, he was courteous and loving, and gentle as a child.

He spoke the Word of God with voice and pen against many an error and corruption of the times. He was ever ready to speak out as a witness for God and His cause in the matter of sound doctrine, and pure worship, and Christian practice, and thus bore an honourable part in many a controversy that did not immediately concern his own Church or congregation. His arguments against the supplanting of the Divine Psalms in worship, in whole or in part, by human hymns, and against the use of instrumental music in the worship of God, were very helpful to those in another Church who were struggling against these innovations. The learning and conclusiveness of his arguments on these points were frankly, thankfully, and most publicly acknowledged by the advocates of purity of worship in the Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

Dr. Nevin, however, will be longest remembered throughout the Church to which he belonged as a singularly able and skilful defender of her doctrine of political dissent. That, indeed, may be said to be *the* distinctive doctrine of the Reformed Presbyterian. It may be asked, Is that all you have to exist for as a separate Church? The question seems to imply that that is a trifling thing after all. But to Dr. Nevin's mind the doctrine of political dissent was no trifle; nor could it be a trifle to any intelligent and devout mind that would seriously consider it. He saw that that doctrine affected two great interests—first, the glory of Christ the King of kings, against whom the nation is in rebellion, and that was no trifle or infinitesimal

point to a religious mind such as his ; and secondly, the well-being of the nation itself, and neither is that a trifle to any truly patriotic mind. He saw that while it was the duty of the Reformed Presbyterian Church to maintain every Scriptural principle that is maintained by all other Churches, it was her special duty to maintain this commanding principle, which is held by no other Church, and to maintain it, not only by outspoken testimony, but by a position of public separation from a rebellious nation, and from Churches who are, in violation of their obligations, in league with the sinning nation, and who do not utter even a word of protest against its awful sin in dethroning its divine Lord. He believed, and acted on the belief, that the separate position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church served to call attention more earnestly to the sin, and to summon the erring nation back to God and to His law, though the summons should be but as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness." To this great cause he devoted himself ; and ministers who entered the ministry about the time that he entered it, and ministers of the younger generation, were strengthened, and are strengthened to this day, by his noble leadership.

On two recent occasions he showed how dear our Church's testimony for Christ the King still was to his heart. One was when a deputation came to our Synod from the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, about two years ago, to make proposals for union. All who were present on that occasion will remember how nobly and faithfully he spoke, and how, while bearing signal testimony to the importance of Christian union, he showed that our Church was not at liberty to give up a single article of Christ's truth and of her testimony to Him, even to secure an

apparently advantageous union. Every word of his address on that occasion was straightforward and manly and Christian.

The other occasion was very near the end of his life, when, through unexampled political pressure, his congregation had been seriously injured. He spoke then—you will, doubtless, remember it was one of the last times he did speak before his death—with all earnestness against the sin of departing from a covenanted position, and on behalf of the honest maintenance of the law of the Church, and of her distinctive testimony, in the matter of political dissent. His dying words, as we may call them, on that occasion, in which he went against the boisterous current of unreasoning public opinion and feeling, did much, we believe, by the grace of God, to strengthen and encourage his people in the way of steadfastness and fidelity to Christ.

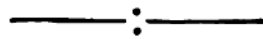
His ministry and his life exemplified faith and patience and fidelity to the end. A man of his powers, as an acute reasoner, as an accurate and accomplished scholar, and as an able and effective speaker, might have shone in any Church or in any assembly of men. Yet he never once gave the slightest evidence that he entertained the thought of personal ambition, and of separation from the Church he loved, to join a more influential body. He had taken the position of a witness for forgotten or despised truth, and death found him in that position after fifty years of inducements and temptations to turn aside. When we find such a man denying himself, sacrificing, as the world would say, his intellectual attainments, attaching himself and keeping attached to the numerically small and financially weak Church of his fathers, and maintaining her unpopular but most needful testimony for Christ's sake,

we have strong presumptive evidence that, by the grace of God, he was what he was, and that as he lived and suffered for Christ he is now reigning with Him in glory.

How can he be best remembered? Not by kindly or sympathetic words can his congregation or the Church discharge its debt to his memory; not by rearing a monument of granite or marble in his honour. The noblest monument, because everlasting, is to be found in covenanted and consecrated lives. "Considering the issue of" his "life, imitate" his "faith." Let those whose privilege it was to wait on his ministry, whether in this congregation or in the Church at large, follow intelligently, lovingly, and faithfully in the footsteps of his fidelity to a holy cause, and to the whole truth of a gracious Master, and their fidelity will be at once to them and to him for a crown of glory, that fadeth not away.



P R E F A C E .

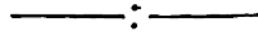


THE English Authorized Version of the Bible is a standing monument to the learning and integrity of the translators. It has given a fixity to our language which perhaps no other has retained, at least in an equal degree. Yet, as might naturally be expected in the lapse of nearly 300 years, from the more correct readings of the originals which critical research has brought to light, from changes in the meaning and usage of certain words and phrases, and from a more correct estimate having been formed in the course of time in respect to the real meaning of some passages—it has been long felt that an attempt should be made to revise our Version, admirable as it is on the whole. The attempt has been made, as our readers know, and the result has been improvement, but only in matters of minor importance. The English edition, we must say, has surprised us. It was ridiculous,

for example, at this time of day, to retain *which* for *who* when applied to persons; and this is only one instance out of a multitude. The American edition is free from such blemishes.

But in both editions there are renderings of certain passages which have given occasion for much discussion and diversity of opinion as to the true construction and meaning; and in respect to these, instead of improvement there is what is much the reverse, as we believe the following pages will show to the intelligent reader who follows our reasoning. It is really astonishing that able, erudite, and orthodox men should have come to conclusions and fancied interpretations that are demonstrably absurd, and inconsistent with Scriptural doctrine and common sense in more than one instance. This has arisen, it would seem, from fixing the attention on a phrase in itself, without taking into account the drift, bearing, and connection of the whole passage in which it occurs. These may seem strong allegations, but let the reader judge if they be one whit too strong.

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MISUNDERSTOOD SCRIPTURES.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE SOJOURN IN EGYPT.

IN Exodus xii. 40 we read, "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt (literally, *whicli they sojourned*) in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years." This seems as explicit as language can well be, and yet commentators, with scarcely an exception, would reduce the time of the actual sojourn to one-half. They have been led to do so from various considerations. It has been generally taken for granted that Amram was the immediate father of Moses and Aaron. So Exod. vi. 20 has been understood—"And Amram took him Jochebed, his father's sister, to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses." But this could not have been the case, if the period of the sojourn extended to 430 years, since Amram was but the grandson of Levi. The 430 years have, therefore, been computed to commence with the call of Abraham. From this to the birth of Isaac 25 years elapsed. Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born, and Jacob was 130 when he stood before Pharaoh. Adding these together, they make 215, leaving 215 out of the 430 for the time of the actual sojourn. In favour of this view the Septuagint is quoted, which in Exod. xii. 40 reads—"Now the sojourning of the children of Israel which they sojourned in Egypt [and in the land of Canaan] was four hundred and thirty years." But the words in brackets are an interpolation of the Alexandrian translators, who, as we shall see, in this instance (one out of many that might be adduced) took a most unwarranted liberty with their text. More plausible is the reference to Paul's reasoning in his Epistle to the Galatians, when he says (Gal. iii. 17), "A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which

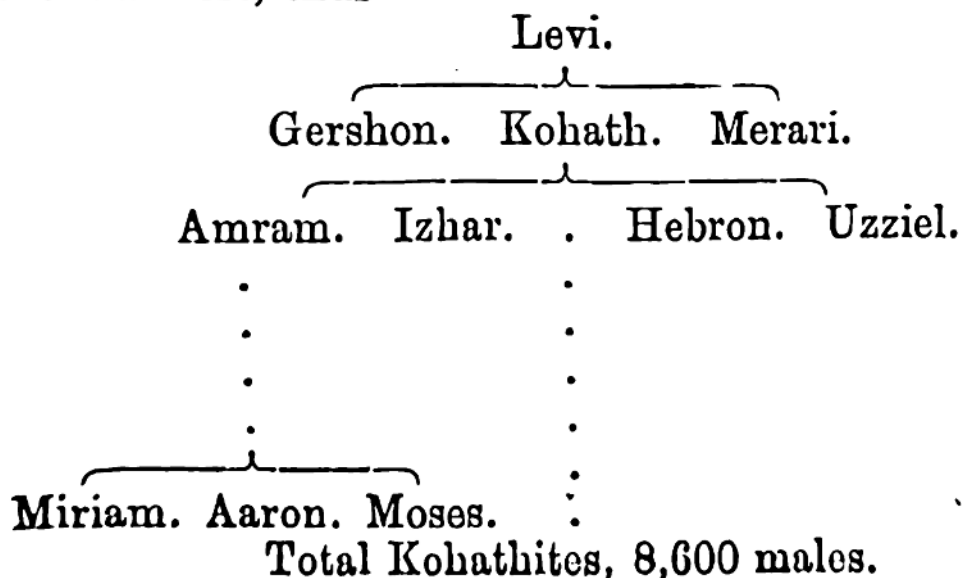
came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect." But let us see what may be said on the other side of the question.

In the account we have of the birth of Moses, in the beginning of the Book of Exodus, it is worthy of note that neither Amram nor Jochebed are mentioned. "And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi."—Exod. ii. 1. This certainly, if we had nothing else, would not be decisive; but there are two other considerations to be adduced, either of which seems to amount to demonstration.

1. Moses was commanded, in the second year after the exodus, to take the number of all the males in Israel (the Levites excepted) who were twenty years old and upwards. This was done, and the total amounted to 603,550 souls—Num. i. 45, 46. Add to these the women and children, the descendants of Levi, and the whole census of those who came out of Egypt could not have been less than two millions. At the time of the descent into Egypt they numbered but seventy, including those born there during Jacob's life, and exclusive of the females, except Dinah, who is mentioned by name—for that seems to be the manner in which we are to understand the lists in Genesis xlv. If these multiplied to 2,000,000 in 215 years, that would be doubling their number every 14 or 15 years—a rate of increase which is incredible under any circumstances. But if we take 430 years for it, then they doubled their number every 30 years—a rate of increase which is by no means incredible, under specially favourable circumstances, even without taking into account what seems clearly indicated, that the divine blessing rested on them to this very end. That the circum-

stances were specially favourable is manifest. They had abundance of nourishing food. They were kept at constant work in the open air. And they were not exposed to the decimating results of war, for the jealous Egyptians would doubtless take good care to keep all weapons of war out of their hands. They would thus be generally healthy, strong, and vigorous.

2. Amram was the son of Kohath, and grandson of Levi. After the other tribes had been numbered, Moses was commanded to take the number of the Levites, males only, from a month old and upwards. This was also in the second year after the exodus. The Kohathites, at that time, were found to amount to 8,600—Num. iii. 27, 28. Kohath had four sons, of whom Amram was one; and if we distribute the 8,600, in an average way, amongst the four, then Moses, on the supposition that Amram was his immediate father, must have had, instead of one brother and one sister, at least 2,000 brothers, and of course about as many sisters! Nor will it mend the matter, but make it worse, to suppose that Amram had only three children; for then the whole 8,600 males must be given to his three brothers, minus only the three. A diagram may make this more manifest, thus—



It appears perfectly manifest, then, that we are to take the statement in Exod. xii. 40 according to the plain import of the terms—the actual sojourn was for 430 years—and we must suppose a number of links in the genealogical chain between Amram and Moses, although no mention is made of them. Supposing Amram to have been born not long after the descent into Egypt, as is highly probable—say, within 20 years—Moses being 80 at the time of the exodus, the three intervening centuries would give ample time for ten or a dozen such links.

The statements in Scripture, which may seem at first view to militate against this conclusion, must be interpreted in a sense consistent with it, and we think it is not very difficult to reconcile them. When it is said—Exod. vi. 20—that Jochebed bare to Amram Aaron and Moses, this can only mean that *Aaron and Moses were descended from Amram by Jochebed*. When, again, God made a covenant with Abraham, He said to him, “Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years.”—Gen. xv. 13; quoted by Stephen, Acts vii. 6. It seems impossible to understand this in any rational way that will be consistent with a sojourn of only 215 years. But we have to account for the difference between 400 and 430, and this may be done in one of two ways. Either the 400 are to be regarded as a round number, or, if they are to be taken strictly, which we think is the truth, then they denote the period during which the Israelites were “afflicted” by the Egyptians. At the end of 30 years a new monarch may have ascended the throne, who pursued a different policy from his predecessor; and, although Joseph lived 40 years after this, he may have found himself without influence

sufficient to obtain redress for the grievances of his kindred. "And in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."—Gen. xv. 16. This presents greater difficulty. It is plain that the "generations" here cannot be understood *genealogically*. There were certainly far beyond four generations reckoned in this way, whether we count from Abraham or Jacob, before the people came back to the land of promise. After what has been already said, it is needless to begin to count them. Owing to the longevity of the patriarchs in Abraham's time, a century was considered equivalent to a generation. So Gesenius understands it, and there is a manifest reduplication upon the statement in the 13th verse which confirms this. The people were to be afflicted in a strange land 400 years; but when those four centuries (generations) had passed, they would return to Canaan. It is observable that there is no preposition in the original corresponding to the *in* of our translation. We may supply *after* as legitimately as *in*—"After the fourth generation, &c."—and that is clearly the meaning. It remains that we notice Paul's expression in Gal. iii. 17, "A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul." The word is a *covenant*. This was made with Abraham, ratified by oath to Isaac, and confirmed for a statute to Jacob, as we read, Ps. cv. 9, 10. So long as the patriarchs resided in the land of promise this seemed sure. They had, as it were, the earnest of a fuller accomplishment. But after the descent into Egypt the promise seemed to be in abeyance, and during the period of oppression was probably lost sight of by the majority of the people. It is very likely they were not permitted to have any public observances of

their religion, such as the weekly Sabbath and sacrifice. If they had attempted to offer sacrifice, then, as Moses said to Pharaoh (Exod. viii. 26), they would have been sacrificing the abomination (that is, *the idol*, viz., the ox) of the Egyptians before their eyes, and would they not have stoned them? We understand the apostle, then, to refer to the whole period, from the time the promise was first given to Abraham till the descent into Egypt, which might be denominated *the period of the covenant* or *of the promise*. The Law was given 430 years after the *termination* of that period. On any supposition, it was *at least* 430 years after the covenant. Thus, we think, all the apparent discrepancies may be harmonized. One thing seems abundantly clear—the sojourn in Egypt must have been 430 years, and not merely 215, as has been generally supposed. The only difficulty in the case seems to be in conceiving how 70 persons could multiply into such a number even in 430 years. But polygamy, and the great probability of many Hebrews having Egyptian wives, fall to be taken into the account. In respect to this last item also, it may be well supposed that, as it was supposed at the time of the exodus so it was before, “the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians.”—Exod. xii. 36.

II.

AZAZEL, OR THE SCAPE-GOAT.

THE sacrificial rites and ceremonies observed under the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, in accordance with the revealed will of God, in His worship, were all typical of that one great atoning sacrifice of Himself which the Son of God in our nature should offer to God once for all on Calvary for the remission of the sins of those who had believed or should believe in Him. They had no efficacy in themselves to take away sin. They were but finger-posts adown the ages, pointing to the Lamb of God—only shadows of the good to come : the substance was of Christ. Hence they were multiplied and continued by divine prescription till the fulness of time, God leading men on step by step and instructing them as He saw they were able to bear. Not only so, but the one all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ presented so many aspects, all of them important, that the types were also, by divine prescription, of various kinds, in respect to the species of creatures used and the ceremonies observed, so as to make the prefiguration as complete as the circumstances admitted, one kind of offering presenting one aspect of the anti-type and another a different. No one by itself would furnish a complete prefiguration of the one absolutely perfect propitiation. Indeed we may say with truth that all of them together furnished but a very imperfect representation.

One of the most significant of the offerings under the law of Moses was that of the two goats on the day of atonement, the 10th day of the 7th month, about the end of September, according to our mode of reckoning, as enjoined in the 16th chapter of Leviticus. Two he-goats

were to be taken of and for the congregation "for a sin-offering." Aaron was to cast lots upon them, one to be wholly burnt, after its blood had been carried into the most holy place, sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat, then put on the horns of the altar and sprinkled seven times upon it. The high priest was next to "lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, even all their sins; and he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a man that is in readiness [or appointed]: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a solitary land; and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness."—Ver. 21.

The typical import is, or ought to be, sufficiently plain to us now. The two goats constituted together *one sin-offering*, and that *to God*. Let this be borne in mind. It will be well to keep it in view in the subsequent discussion. The first goat slain and wholly burnt prefigured Christ bearing the penalty due to the sins of His people, in the character of their surety and substitute. The priest was not commanded to lay his hands on the head of this goat, and confess over it the sins of the people, but it was manifestly implied that it was regarded as bearing them, inasmuch as it bore the penalty. This form was used in the case of the live goat, and not required in regard to the other, because, as noted, the two together formed one sin-offering, and the unity of the one great anti-typical offering was thus clearly exhibited. The second goat prefigured Christ obliterating the record of the believer's guilt, doing away for ever with the obligation to suffer the penalty, so that his sin should, in a manner, be forgotten, never again

to be called up to his condemnation. Thus each threw its own light typically on the one really atoning sacrifice.

The original for scape-goat is *azazel*. This name occurs only four times, all in the one chapter, the 16th of Leviticus, once in the 8th verse, twice in the 10th, once again in the 26th, and nowhere else in the Bible, there being no reference to it elsewhere. Critics have raised difficulties about its derivation and application without much reason. It seems evidently a compound word, from *ēz*, a goat, and *azal*, to go away, to depart, the *ēz* becoming *az* in the compound, the difference being only in the vowel points, not in the radical letters. Turning up *ēz* in Gesenius' Lexicon, we find the following:—" *ēz* pl. *izzim* f. a she-goat." We deem this a mistake, and that the word is not feminine but of the common gender, a mistake into which others have fallen on his authority. Hebrew masculines usually have their plurals ending in *im*, feminines in *oth*, the feminine singular usually ending in *ah*, *ath*, or *eth*. A common noun naturally has the masculine form rather than the feminine, there being no distinctive form for one of the common gender. A phrase occurs frequently in our Authorized Version, "kid (or kids) of the goats," which is sometimes incorrect.* The Revised has, in these instances, he-goat or he-goats simply, but the original rendered fully and literally is "he-goat (or he-goats) *izzim* of the goats." The Hebrew for kid is a different word, *gedi*. Dr. Fairbairn (Imp. Bib. Dic., art. Scape-goat) says, "*ēz* is never used precisely of a goat; in the plural it bears the sense of *goats*, but in the singular it designates only *she-goat*." But for this no authority is adduced. With more plausibility it might be said that the

* e. g. Gen. xxxvii. 31, Lev. iv. 23, Num. vii. 87, &c., &c.

plural always bears the sense of *she-goats*. There are three instances, Gen. xxx. 35, xxxi. 38, xxxii. 14 (in the Heb. Bib. 15), where it seems to refer to such distinctively. But this is plainly because in the first and third instances cited it is used in immediate connection with one always denoting *he-goats*—it is, as it were, *he-goats and goats of a different sort*, which could only mean females—in the second instance, in immediate connection with one denoting *ewes*. On the other hand, we find in Lev. iv. 28 the expression, “a she-goat of the goats (*seirath izzim*),* an unblemished female.” A similar in Lev. v. 6. In Num. xv. 27, *ēz bath-shenathah*, “a goat, the daughter of a year.” Surely such apparently redundant and circumlocutory forms were not required if *ēz* were feminine in itself. The English word *goat* is of the common gender. We have no single word for he-goat or she-goat. The Hebrew is before us in this, for it has several. This fact of itself refutes the dictum of Gesenius. If an English lexicographer inserted in his dictionary *goat* pl. *goats* f. surely every one would see it to be a mistake.

But more serious error is found in the interpretations that have been put upon the word *azazel*. Gesenius would make it signify some heathen object of worship. Dr. Tregelles, his translator and editor, interjects the just remark, “No such idea as this can be admitted by any one who indeed believes in the inspiration of Scripture; God could never mix up idolatrous rites with His own worship.” And yet there have been those, some of whom profess to believe in inspiration, and of whom better might have been expected, who make *azazel* a name for Satan. The idea

* This, by the way, according to the lexicography of Gesenius, would be a *she-goat of the she-goats*!

would seem to be that God commanded the goat laden typically with the sins of the people to be sent to the devil, cast in his teeth as we would say, inasmuch as he was the prime mover in sinning. But if that be it, is the notion at all consistent with any proper conceptions of the dignity and majesty of the Most High? Would He command His people to have ought to do, in any form or manner, with Satan, unless to resist him? The notion might appear to get some countenance from the fact of Christ being led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted. But that was a totally different case. No, no, the two goats, we repeat, plainly formed one sin-offering, and that was an offering to God alone, the only object of all worship.

The interpretation, whether heathenish or Satanic, is based on the supposition of an intended contrast or opposition in Lev. xvi. 8 between the words *Jehovah* and *azazel*—“one lot for Jehovah, and the other for *azazel*.” Antithesis has its use in interpreting when applied within rational bounds. But, as in the case of other principles, the application may be carried to a vicious extreme, and sometimes is by verbal critics.* We have an instance here, and we dwell upon it for the sake of other instances. It is absurd to suppose that, even where contrast is designed, it is to be extended to every conceivable particular or circumstance, or to be applied in every conceivable respect. In the present case there is nothing to hinder us from understanding it to be designed to apply to *the uses* to which the two goats were to be put respectively, as the translators of

* We have been told that a certain learned divine, an author in Biblical criticism, understood to be evangelical, but who thinks *azazel* means the Evil One, was, while residing in a certain collegiate town, known among the students there by the sobriquet of “*Antithesis*—.”

our Authorized Version took it, not personally to the two words specified, after the manner of the interpretations we have referred to. And it is to be regretted that the authors of the Revised Version have inserted *Azazel* with an initial capital in their text, as though it were a proper name, thus giving countenance to the erroneous interpretations on which we have been commenting. They have also put for it in their margin "or *dismissal*," which we do not regard as a correct rendering of the evidently compound word.

Dr. Fairbairn makes it a 'fatal objection' to the explanation we have presented, though he admits it to be "of great antiquity," that "in Lev. xvi. 10 and 26 the goat and Azazel are expressly distinguished from each other." But is this a fact? On the contrary, we look upon the express distinction as merely imaginary. The phrase 'a goat for a scape-goat' makes perfectly good sense. He adopts the view that the word is "a *pealpal* form of the Arabic verb *azal*, to remove, formed by modification from *azalezal*, so that the meaning comes to be for a complete removing or dismissal." We rather think there is a fatal objection to this, namely, that it ignores the presence of *aleph* in *azazel*, evidently a radical letter. Besides, what has the Arabic to do with it? Leviticus was not written in Arabic.

On a review of the whole subject we come to the conclusion that *scape-goat* is one among the very happiest renderings of our Authorized Version; and we venture to predict that it will never be left to fall into abeyance.

III.

IS THE TITLE "MOTHER OF GOD" WARRANTED ?

Wonderful are the compensations of Providence ! A woman was "first in the transgression," and a woman was the chosen instrument in bringing the Saviour from sin into the world. When the angel Gabriel was sent to announce the Advent to Mary of Nazareth he saluted her, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee." Elizabeth, too, the mother of the Baptist, when Mary visited her, was inspired to address her with a loud cry, "Blessed art thou among women." She did not say *above* women, as we hear it sometimes referred to, for, notwithstanding the high favour shown to Mary, she remained a woman still. It was indeed a transcendent honour, such as no other creature could aspire to, yet she was and continued to be no more than a creature. Mary herself, in her song of praise, doubtless under the impulse of the Spirit, declared, "From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." But all this does not give the remotest sanction to an apostate Church in making Mary an object of religious worship, providing books of devotion in which there are fifteen *Ave Marias* for one *Pater Noster*, thus bringing herself under the denunciation of the apostle against those who "worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen." The apology for this worship is, that Mary may be expected to be more merciful in respect to the weakness and frailties of humanity than her Son who is God, and therefore Judge. But this is to disparage the intercession of Christ. "For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the

feeling of our infirmities ; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin." It is to exalt in some sense and measure a human being above Him " who is over all, God blessed for ever." Christ's intercession is all-sufficient. " Wherefore, also He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." There is no precept in Scripture, neither is there any approved example for addressing any mere creature, however exalted in heaven, as an intercessor with God. Mary is not omnipresent to hear the petitions of her numerous votaries in all parts of the world at the same time ; nor could she have such perfect knowledge of their circumstances and wants as Christ has. On the most lenient view of the matter, then, that can possibly be taken, prayers to her are will-worship. On the other hand, the command is explicit and without exception, " Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

It is in order to exalt Mary as an object of worship that Romanists delight in giving to her the title " Mother of God." Our readers of course know perfectly well that it occurs expressly nowhere in Scripture. Nor is it there even by implication or legitimate inference, as we shall proceed to show. It is not to be wondered at when those we have referred to are found frequently employing it ; but we were surprised beyond measure, and not a little shocked, when we found such a clear-headed theologian as the late Dr. Charles Hodge, of Princeton, New Jersey, in his magnificent work on Systematic Theology, putting his imprimatur upon it. After referring to some texts, he says, " The forms of expression, therefore, long pre-

valent in the Church, 'the blood of God,' 'God the mighty maker died,' &c., are in accordance with Scriptural usage. And if it be right to say 'God died,' it is right to say 'He was born.' The person born of the Virgin Mary was a divine person. It is, therefore, correct to say that Mary was the mother of God. For, as we have seen, the person of Christ is in Scripture often designated from the divine nature, when the predicate is true only of the human nature."* This seems very plausible. The best way to test the legitimacy of the conclusion is to put the reasoning in the syllogistic form, thus—

Mary was the mother of Christ.

Christ is God.

Ergo, Mary was the mother of God.

But this is altogether fallacious; for it takes the middle term, Christ, in two different and utterly incompatible senses or applications. In the major premiss, Mary could be called the mother of Christ in respect to His human nature only. In the minor, Christ is God in respect to His divine nature, solely, exclusively. The divine nature was not transformed into the human, nor the human into the divine. As the Westminster Confession tersely puts it, "two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion." With all deference to Dr. Hodge, we must say that he could not have thought very profoundly on the subject, or with his usual logical discrimination, else he never had written as he has done. "The person born of the Virgin Mary was a divine person." That is assuming that *the person* was born, which we say it could not be, and for the

* System. Theol. Eng. ed. Vol. II. p. 393.

simple reason that it was divine. As divine, it existed from eternity, and therefore could not be born in time. Christ had not, nor has, a *human person*. It was a *nature* that was born, not a *person*. *Two persons* did not meet in him. It would be absurd to say so : and even if it were conceivable it would invalidate the orthodox theory of the atonement. The person, existing from everlasting, in the fulness of time took the human nature, at the moment of its formation, into inseparable union with the divine, with itself ; but neither the divine nature nor the person could with any propriety be said to be born. Only the human nature, which had not a separate subsistence even for a moment, could be said to be born. It is not right to say "God was born," or that "He died." It makes us shudder to write the words. It is positively untrue to say that these phrases "are in accordance with Scriptural usage." They seem to us perilously near, if they be not downright blasphemy. God is from everlasting, without beginning of days or end of years. There is a relationship between the first and second persons in the Godhead, inscrutable and incomprehensible to us finite creatures, which, in condescension to our capacity, is revealed to us under the designations Father and Son. But the relation is co-eternal. To make the title Mother of God in any sense or manner applicable to Mary we must suppose her to have existed from eternity. But we know such was not the fact, and any designation given to her must be consistent with fact to be correct or right.

Some texts have been quoted by way of justifying the title. One is 1 John iii. 16, which, in our Authorized Version, stands thus—"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us." The transla-

tors have put the words *of God* in italics, as they usually did when they supplied a word, or words, not in the original. They are found in one manuscript of comparatively late date, a cursive of A.D. 1286. The reading has "hardly any authority," as Alford puts it—we would say has no authority at all. The Revised Version renders—"Hereby know we love" (literally *the love*, emphatic), "because He" (*i.e. Christ*, emphatic again) "laid down His life for us." This does not make it proper for any one to say God laid down His life for us. John's heart, his thoughts and affections, were so full of Christ that he did not always think it necessary to name Him explicitly, but seems to have taken it for granted that, by his use of the pronouns *he, him, his*, all his readers would know to whom he referred.

Another text cited is that in which the Apostle Paul, addressing the elders of the Church of Ephesus at Miletus, says, "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood." Ac. xx. 28. In this instance there are two readings in ancient manuscripts, some having *tou Kuriou*, of the Lord; and others, *tou Theou*, of God—these so balanced that Alford, who had the former in his first two editions, altered it to the latter in subsequent editions. Without taking upon us to decide this point (though we confess to a leaning), supposing *of God* to have been the actual words used by the apostle and recorded by Luke, yet they do not, in our judgment, justify the expression *the blood of God*. God is a spirit, from the absolute perfection of His nature, not having flesh or bones or blood as we have. There is no material element in His nature. How then

account for the expression, His own blood? Very simply and easily. It was His, in a peculiar, most emphatic, exclusive sense—and that whether you read *tu Kuriou* or *tu Theou*, for Christ is God—His in a sense in which no mere creature, however exalted, can call his life (and ‘the blood is the life’) his own—His to dispose of absolutely according to His sovereign pleasure. This no creature has a right to do. He is responsible to his Maker for the use to which he puts his life and all the powers, whether of mind or body, bestowed upon him. In the use of His indefeasible right as a divine person, Christ gave His life a ransom for many. No creature, however exalted, had a right to do this. Or, the pronouns *He* and *His* may be understood to refer to Christ, after the manner of John.

In His discourse with Nicodemus, Christ said to him, John iii. 13, “No man hath ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, *even* the Son of Man who is in heaven.” Christ had the two natures, the divine and the human, mysteriously united in His one person. But His person was divine, existing from eternity. It is a mistake, therefore, as already noted, to speak of His person as being born. We assent most cordially to the admirably precise statement of the Westminster Confession, that, “by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in Scripture attributed to the person denominated by the other nature.” But Mary was a human person, and however distinguished and honoured by the fact of having been chosen to be the instrument of bringing the human nature of the Saviour into the world, could never, with any propriety, be designated the mother of God.

On such a theme as the Incarnation, so far transcending the comprehension of mortals, it is wisdom to adhere as far as possible to the language of Scripture. Much error, both in doctrine and practice, has arisen from pursuing a different course.

IV.

THE KINDRED OF OUR LORD.

(A NEW HYPOTHESIS).

CALVIN, in his comment on Matt. i. 25, with reference to the question, Whether Joseph and Mary had a family after the birth of the Saviour, says, "Certainly, no man will ever raise a question on this subject, except from curiosity; and no man will obstinately keep up the argument, except from an extreme fondness for disputation."* Although this was written in reference to the one question indicated, it would equally apply to every question connected with the subject we propose to discuss. But was the great Reformer to be justified in pronouncing such unqualified condemnation? We presume to think, decidedly not. True, we are not to seek to be wise beyond what is written; but we are surely warranted in seeking to understand, as far as possible, *up* to all that is written, and that not only in respect to what is 'expressly set down in Scripture,' but also to what 'by good and necessary consequence may be deduced' therefrom. Critical investigations are looked upon as dry and uninteresting by most readers, but surely nothing affecting the life of Christ on earth should be so regarded by a believer in Him. Certainly all discussion of Scriptural subjects should be conducted with sobriety of mind and reverence; and when so conducted, in dependence on the guidance of the Divine Spirit, it may surely be expected to issue in important practical instruction. The subject announced forms no exception, as we hope to show. When the Son of God assumed our nature, and

*Harm. of the Ev. in Calv. Transl. Soc. Vol. I. p. 107.

appeared in it on earth, He did so, we may be well assured, to set us an example, not only in suffering—though that had another and primary purpose—but also in His life and conduct as man, and in those human relationships into which He entered, so far as was compatible with His absolute sinlessness.

It has been the generally received opinion that Mary, the mother of our Lord, had a sister who was also called Mary—an utterly incredible supposition at the very threshold of the inquiry, resting on one misinterpreted verse—that this sister was the wife of a man called Alphaeus or Klōpas; and that two of the apostles, James called The Less (properly *The Little*, *ho mikros*, Mark xv. 40, probably in reference to his stature, and to distinguish him from James, the son of Zebedee,) and Jude, were sons of this sister. The last statement is not held by any means so generally as the former. But all the views hitherto presented are encompassed with difficulties and improbabilities, and have given occasion for much discussion.

In contradistinction, we lay down the following positions:—

1. Joseph and Mary, after the birth of Christ, had a family of sons and daughters; and two of these, James the Little and Jude, were called to be apostles.

2. There was a sister of Mary called Salome, wife of Zebedee and mother of James and John.

3. Alphaeus or Klōpas was an alias of Simon, brother of our Lord.

4. Mary, called by translators the *wife* of Klōpas, was not his wife, but his sister, and so one of the daughters of Joseph and Mary.

The first and second of these statements are not new.

They have been held by many. A brief consideration of them, however, seems necessary as a preliminary to that of the other two. These latter, so far as we are aware, have not been propounded before; and, considering their great probability, on the evidence which we propose to adduce, as well as the manner in which they simplify the whole subject, removing long-felt difficulties in dealing with it, it seems rather marvellous that they have not occurred to some one long ago.

L. Joseph and Mary, after the birth of Christ, had a family of sons and daughters; and two of these, James the Little and Jude, were called to be apostles.

The unbelieving Jews of the synagogue in "His own country" on one occasion asked of Christ, "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brethren, James and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us?"—Matt. xiii. 55, 56. The parallel passage, Mark vi. 3, is in similar terms, except that, instead of "Is not this the carpenter's son?" it has "Is not this the carpenter?" and, instead of the name "Joseph" (the reading preferred by Alford in Matt., not in Mark) it has "Joses." As regards the first question, the difference is no inconsistency. There were numbers in the synagogue. One person probably put the question in one of the forms, another in the other. The same explanation will apply to the differing forms of the name. Even to this day we often hear the name *Joseph*, in colloquial speech, take the form *Josey*.

But what of the relationship? The plain natural construction of the language is, that those called Christ's brethren were the sons, and those called His sisters were the daughters of Joseph and Mary. We may well presume

that it was only when ascetic notions began to prevail in the professedly Christian Church, when the superior sanctity of celibacy began to be preached, when the absurd dogma of the perpetual Virginity of Mary was promulgated, that such a conclusion was questioned. Mary was indeed "highly favoured," "blessed among women," honoured of God above all others of her sex throughout all time, in that she was the chosen vessel for bringing into the world the human nature of the Saviour of men. But she was not immaculate, the decrees of popes and councils notwithstanding. She needed, as other mortals, to look to Christ for salvation from sin. On more than one occasion was she rebuked by Him. When Joseph, who is called "her husband," after they were betrothed, "being a righteous man," ascertained her condition, he was disposed to repudiate the contract privately. But an angel, appearing to him in a dream, said to him, "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife;" and he "did as the angel of the Lord commanded him."—Matt. i. 18—20, 25. No proper ground can be assigned, either from reason or Scripture, why we should not understand that, after the birth of Christ, they lived together in every respect as husband and wife. Not a hint to the contrary is anywhere to be found in the sacred record, but not a little to favour the conclusion.

Two of the brothers, moreover, were called to be apostles. This is controverted by those only who find that it will not fall in with their scheme of the Kindred. Alford, for instance, finds it necessary to suppose two families, in each of which there were two brothers bearing the same names—not an extravagant supposition certainly in itself—but it is pure conjecture, not a hint of such a thing in the record, and rendered necessary simply by his scheme.

Nay more, he finds it necessary to assert that none of the Lord's brothers were among the Twelve: James (The Little) and Jude were apostles, only in an inferior sense (!) "Consistently with the straightforward acceptation of Scripture data, we cannot believe any of those who are called the brethren of our Lord to have been also of the number of the Twelve."* According to our scheme there is no difficulty. James is expressly called "the Lord's brother," Gal. i. 19: and Jude expressly styles himself "the brother of James," Jude 1.

It is objected that we are informed, John vii. 5, "His brethren did not believe on Him." But it is not said that *all* His brethren did not believe, or that *none* of them believed. Suppose two of them already apostles, who had accompanied the Saviour in His journeys and labours, with little intermission, and that during an earlier time, the application of the verse in John to the two brothers, Simon and Joses, who remained at home, pursuing their usual worldly avocations, and to them alone, is perfectly natural and *conceivable*, the strong assertions of Alford to the contrary notwithstanding. Let any one turn up the verse in John and compare it with the context, and we think this will be the more apparent. Even the two, Simon and Joses, came afterwards to believe, as we learn from Acts i. 14. To us it seems really inconceivable that Christ should have four brothers intimately conversant with His sinless life, from His youth up till the time that He entered on His public ministry, when He "was about thirty years of age"—acquainted with the incidents of that ministry, when even His enemies declared "never man

* Proleg. to Jas., ch. ii., § 1, 3.

spake like this man," when for three years He was going about continually doing good to the souls and bodies of men—inconceivable, we say, that these four brothers should *all* remain unbelievers until the crucifixion.

It has been also objected that, if Christ had two brothers who were apostles, He might have been expected to commit the charge of His mother to one of them, rather than to John, as He did when on the cross. But Christ, who 'needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man,' understood the peculiarly affectionate disposition of John. He was the beloved apostle. Besides, the brothers who were apostles were probably married men, as appears from a hint of Paul in 1 Cor. ix. 5, "Have we no right to lead about a wife that is a believer, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" But there is no hint anywhere else that John was ever married, and this question of Paul's does not necessarily imply it with respect to him in particular.

II. *There was a sister of Mary called Salome, wife of Zebedee, and mother of James and John.*

In Matthew's narrative of the crucifixion we read, "And many women were there beholding from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto Him: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee"—Matt. xxvii. 55, 56. The parallel passage in Mark reads thus, "And there were also women beholding from afar: among whom *were* both Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Little and of Joses, and Salome," ch. xv. 40. In John xix. 25, again, "But there were standing by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sistor,

Klōpas's Mary,* and Mary Magdalene." The precise time referred to by John was doubtless a little later than that referred to by the other two Evangelists, but the women referred to by all were as clearly the same. At first they stood at a distance, but within view, fearing the Roman soldiers and mob; but after a time, and the interval may have been very brief, seeing that no one was being molested but Jesus, they were emboldened to come close to the cross. On a comparison of these passages, it seems clear enough that Salome was the name of "His mother's sister," and that she was the mother of Zebedee's sons; and we are not aware that any one has ever attempted to identify Zebedee and Klōpas. Matthew and Mark mention three persons, and there are those who make John also mention only three, taking "His mother's sister" and "Klōpas's Mary" to be in apposition, denoting one and the same person. But this is plainly inadmissible. Who ever heard of two sisters living at the same time and bearing precisely the same name? And then are we to suppose for a moment that "Klōpas's Mary" was Klōpas's wife, and at the same time identical with Salome, or "the mother of Zebedee's sons?" The enumeration of John is clearly not that of three but of four persons, in two pairs, after the manner of Matthew and Luke in their catalogue of the Twelve. Klōpas's Mary was not his wife, but his sister, but of this afterwards.

But who, it may be asked, was "Mary, the mother of James and Josos," manifestly the same as she who is

* In the translations, both Authorized and Revised, this Mary is called the *wife* of Klōpas. But this is unwarranted. There is no word for *wife* in the original. Wherever a word was supplied by the translators, as in this instance, they were careful to print it in italics.

spoken of as "the other Mary" in Matt. xxvii. 61, and xxviii. 1? See also Mark xvi. 1, and Luke xxiv. 10. We answer unhesitatingly, the mother of Jesus. We learn from John that she was at the cross, and we cannot think she would not be one of those who came to the sepulchre on the morning of the third day. John indeed tells us that, when on the cross, Jesus said to her, "Woman, behold thy son," and to Himself, "Behold Thy mother!" adding, "And from that hour the disciple took her to his own." The word *home* is added by the translators. But that does not imply more than that he from that moment regarded himself as her guardian. It by no means necessarily implies that she was immediately taken away from the scene of the crucifixion, not to return. But why, it may naturally be asked, should not the three other Evangelists have called her the Lord's mother? We might not be able to give a very satisfactory answer to this query, yet that would not in the least invalidate our position, the relationship indicated by the three being a fact. They could distinguish Mary from all others bearing the same name in the one way as well as in the other. Yet we think we can give a very probable answer. John had a special reason for calling Mary the mother of Jesus. It was indeed almost a necessity in his case, as any one can see in reading the narrative. This did not exist in the case of the other Evangelists, since they do not record the same circumstances. Then we may well conclude that none of the Apostles or Evangelists had any very clear or definite conception of the proper deity of Christ until the outpouring of the Spirit. Writing after that, and guided by the Spirit's influence, they would write with reverence of One whom they now looked upon as truly and

really God. May it not be also that they were thus guided to use the distinctive description they did, by way of an anticipatory counteractive and rebuke to that tendency to Mariolatry which soon began to manifest itself in the professedly Christian Church?

III. *Alphæus, or Klōpas, was an alias of Simon, brother of our Lord.*

Our whole hypothesis hinges upon this, and so we bespeak special attention to the evidence we may be able to adduce for it. But before coming directly to the question, some further preliminary explanations seem necessary to an estimate of the relevancy of the evidence.

There are two names, *Kleopas* and *Klōpas*, that resemble each other very much, and have been confounded by some. Yet they are of different derivation and significance, and cannot be understood to denote the same person. Each name occurs only in one place. *Kleopas* is the name given to one of the two whom Christ joined, as they walked from Jerusalem to Emmaus, on the afternoon of the day of His resurrection.—Lu. xxiv. 18. The name is evidently of Greek derivation, signifying *all glory*. *Klōpas* is of Hebrew origin, having a very different meaning, as we shall see.

Alphæus and *Klōpas*, again, are only different forms of the same name, although they look so different. This is generally conceded. Some indeed have cast doubt upon it, among whom has been the late Dr. Eadie. The paragraph in which he treats of it is not long, but it is not necessary to quote it all. The following gives the gist of it:—“The Syriac *Cheth* may pass into the Greek *Alpha* with the *spiritus lenis*, as in *Alphaios*, for the Hebrew *Cheth*, is so treated by the Seventy, *Charra*

becoming *Eua* [Eve], though often it is represented by the Greek *Chi* or *Kappa*. But would *Alpha* have any alliance with the consonantal *Kuph* in *Clopas* or *Klopas*? At least the Hebrew *Koph* seems never to be represented by a vowel in the Septuagint, but by *Kappa*, *Chi*, or *Gamma*.* This reasoning of the learned doctor seems strangely wide of the mark. The proper names among the Jews had a Hebrew, not a Syriac original. And, even apart from such a consideration, we have actually nothing to do in this case either with "the consonantal *Kuph*" or "the Hebrew *Koph*." The name *Klōpas* is derived from the root *Chalap*, with the initial *Cheth*; and this, it is admitted, in rendering into Greek, may be represented by either *Alpha* or *Kappa*. Of the initial *Cheth* being represented in Greek by *Alpha* there are numerous instances. Thus *Chaggai* (*Haggai*) becomes *Aggaios* (pronounced *Anggaios*), *Chazael* (*Hazael*) becomes *Azael*, *Chananiah* (*Hananiah*) becomes *Ananias*. Of *Cheth* as the initial letter becoming *Kappa* we have not found an instance in the Bible, but as a final we find it in the name *Phasek*, for *Paseach* (*Paseah* or *Phaseah*), Neh. iii. 6, Sept.

In ancient times men had but one name. Although mention is made sometimes in the New Testament of a *surname*, the word is not to be understood in the sense or application in which we use it now. With us a surname is a second name, common not only to a whole family, but, as may be and as it very generally is, to a number of families descended from one in more or less remote times. But in Scripture a surname means a name or epithet applied to an individual to distinguish him from all others

* Eadie on Galatians, p. 65.

bearing the one name already given to him. It thus corresponded to what we would call *an alias*. Jewish parents were largely disposed to give to their children the names of the patriarchs. Thus in the number of the twelve apostles there were two Judahs, two Simons or Simeons, and two Jameses. It may seem strange to some that Jacob's name does not appear as well as those of his sons. But James and Jacob are really the same. James in Greek is *Iacobos*, in Latin *Jacobus*. Parents also, as has been the case in all ages and nations, were accustomed to give to their children the names of near relatives, or persons whom they admired or wished to honour.

From the circumstances mentioned it became necessary to have means of distinguishing persons having the same name. Various methods were adopted to this end. One was the use of a patronymic. Thus Peter, whose first name was Simon, was called the son of Jonas; and Nathanael was denominated Bar-tholomew, that is, son of Tolemaeus or Tolmai. Other methods were—from occupation, as Simon the Tanner, Matthew the Publican; from place of birth or residence, as Mary Magdalene, that is, of Magdala, Judas Iscariot, that is, of Kerioth; or by a characteristic epithet, as Simon the Leper, that is, who had been such, but probably cured by our Lord; Simon the Kananite, not "Canaanite" as in A.V.—he certainly was not a Gentile—but a word of Hebrew origin, having the same significance as the Greek *Zelōtēs*, a Zealot. As the names among the Israelites were chosen because of their import, one way of distinguishing was by an alias of the same or similar meaning. One example of this will be seen to be most apposite to our purpose. Judas, not Iscariot, it would seem from the lists of the apostles,

Matt. x. 3, Mark iii. 18, had two aliases, *Thaddaeus* and *Lebbaeus*. The Authorized Version has both in Matthew. The Revised excludes *Lebbaeus* in both places, while Alford has it alone in his text of Matthew. It would appear from this that there is really manuscript authority for both. Leah named her fourth son *Judah*, from the root *iadah*, to praise, as expressive of her thanksgiving. *Thaddaeus* (what this and *Lebbaeus* too "are," Alford strangely avers, "it is impossible to say") is evidently taken from what grammarians call the *Hithpael* conjugation of the same verb. This conjugation has generally a reflexive sense. So the name would be indicative of one who would *make himself to be praised*, or furnish occasion for others to praise him. We find also the Hebrew noun *todah* from the same root, signifying *confession* or *thanksgiving*. *Lebbaeus*, again, is of cognate significance, derived from the Hebrew *lēb* or *lēbah*, the heart, denoting *a man of heart*, *a hearty man*. These names correspond with Jacob's blessing, Gen. xlix. 8, "Judah, thee shall thy brethren praise." In this the dying patriarch was doubtless guided by the Spirit of God to refer to the characteristics of his son as an individual, and also prophetically to those of the tribe that should descend from him. The heart, in the language of Scripture, is indicative of the emotional part of man's nature, but of the intellectual as well. That Judah, at least in his maturer years, whatever may have been the errors of his earlier days, was a superior man every way, is very evident. His pathetic pleading on behalf of Benjamin before Joseph, when he did not know that the latter was his own brother, is a standing proof that he was a born orator.

Applying this illustration to the case in hand, Leah named her second son *Simeon* (*Simon* is the same), which signifies *hearing*, Gen. xix. 33. *Alphæus* or *Klōpas* (*Chalpai*) is derived from the root *Chalap*, which signifies *to pass by or through, to pierce*, as in hearing the sound passes through the ear. The opening of the ear, in Hebrew usage, was synonymous with hearing or causing to hear; and this again was united in sense with obeying. Thus we read, Isai. xlvi. 8, "Yea, thou heardest not: yea, thou knewest not: yea, from of old thine ear was not opened." And again, ch. l. 5, "The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious."* We may notice in this connection, and as corroborative of our view, the expression in Ps. xl. 6, "Mine ears hast Thou opened." This Psalm is clearly Messianic, and so referred to in the New Testament. The Septuagint renders this, "A body didst Thou prepare for me," and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, whom we take to have been Paul, quotes these precise words, ch. x. 5, which he certainly would not have done had he not believed them to convey the very meaning of the expression in the Psalm. He does not, in other instances of quotation from the Old Testament, always adhere to the rendering of the Septuagint. The meaning of the original then is, 'Thou didst put me into a capacity for rendering obedience, by giving me a body,' and this is indicated by the opening of the ears. Some have supposed an allusion to the law, Exod. xxi. 6, about boring a bond-servant's ear to the door-post, when

* The cognate expression *uncovering the ear*, as indicative of *showing or revealing*, occurs as the marginal or literal rendering in the following passages:—1 Sam. xx. 2, 12, and xxii. 8, 2 Sam. vii. 27, 1 Chron. xvii. 25, Job xxxvi. 10.

he wished to continue in his master's service at a time he might otherwise have been set free; and that seems to have been the impression of the writer of the Scottish metrical version of the Psalm—"Mine ears Thou bored." But there is no such allusion. The word *ear* in the law is singular, in the Psalm it is plural, *ears*, and the original for *opened* in the Psalm (primarily *digged*) is different from that in Exodus. It is most remarkable that such a rendering should be found in the Septuagint; and it seems as if the translators of that version were guided by Providence in a way that they knew not—like Caiaphas, Jo. xi. 49—52—to give that rendering which the apostle could adopt as conveying most clearly the very idea of the Psalm.

The conclusion we arrive at is, that Alphaeus, or Klōpas, was an alias for Simon, who was the brother of our Lord, and we shall have yet further corroborative evidence of a probable kind to adduce for the inference. Meanwhile it may be worth noting in passing that the form *Alphaeus* occurs in the writings of Matthew, Mark, and Luke; *Klōpas* in John's Gospel only, and only in the one place. John may have been more conversant with those who were in the habit of using the latter alias, because of its Hebrew origin; the other Evangelists more conversant with those who used the former, because of its Greek form.

IV. *Mary, called by translators the wife of Klōpas, was not his wife, but his sister, and so one of the daughters of Joseph and Mary.*

Besides the ways already adverted to in which, among the Jews, one person was distinguished from another bearing the same name, there remains one yet to be mentioned, the *elliptical method*, as it has been called, derived

from some relationship or connection of the parties, as Alphaeus's James, James's Jude, and in the present instance Klōpas's Mary. Critics and commentators have generally restricted the application of this method, in the case of a man to a son or brother, and in the case of a female to a wife or daughter. Why not, in the latter case, extend it to a sister, to be in analogy with that of a brother? We can find no certain instance in the New Testament of its application to a daughter, nor can the restriction be justified. The genealogical lists in Matt. i. 1—16, and Luke iii. 23—38, give us a little help here. It is true Matthew adopts a different form of expression, "Abraham begat Isaac, &c.," but this is equivalent to the elliptical; and had he traced the genealogy upwards like Luke, instead of downwards, we may be sure that like him he would have employed the same method. Taking up Matthew's list, then, we find some links in the chain dropped, for what reason it is not our present purpose to inquire. Thus we read, ver. 8, "Joram begat Uzziyah," whereas there were no less than three monarchs in lineal descent between these two, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, as we learn from the Old Testament record. So Uzziyah, instead of being the son of Joram in the strict sense in which we use the term, was the great-great-grandson of Joram. In ver. 12, again, we read, "Shealtiel (or Salathiel) begat Zerubbabel," where one link is left out, as we learn from 1 Chron. iii. 18, 19, namely, Pedaiyah, so that Zerubbabel was the grandson of Shealtiel. We do indeed find one exemplification of the elliptical method in Matthew's list, in regard to a female. In ver. 6 we read, "David begat Solomon of her of Uriah," that is of her who had been *the wife* of Uriah. We know this was Bathsheba, although

she is not named. "Alphaeus's James," we find in Matt. x. 3, Mar. iii. 18, Lu. vi. 15, Ac. i. 13; and in these instances the translators have made James the *son* of Alphaeus, although in Gal. i. 19 James is expressly styled "the Lord's brother," and he is there classed with "the apostles." "James's Jude" occurs in Lu. vi. 16, and Ac. i. 13. The Authorized Version in these passages makes Jude to be the *brother* of James, rightly as we think, since Jude expressly so calls himself in the first verse of his Epistle. But the Revisers have made Jude *the son* of James, putting this reading in their text, while they have a marginal reading "Or brother. See Jude 1." Thus they would make Jude *the grandson of Alphaeus*. Is this credible? It would have been well if translators, in all instances of this elliptical method, had given an exactly literal rendering, and left their readers to judge for themselves in regard to the precise relationship or connection intended. "James's Mary" is found in Lu. xxiv. 10 and Mar. xvi. 1. Both Versions make Mary in these instances to be the *mother* of James, rightly as we believe, and meaning, as we take it, the mother of Christ. But why did not the Revisers in those instances act consistently, and make this Mary to be the *daughter* of James?

The truth is, as already intimated, these restrictions cannot be sustained. The very fact, admitted on all hands, that the method was applied to more than one relationship, and not to one only, would be sufficient, in our estimation, to lead to this conclusion. The instances of its use are comparatively few, and the means of verifying the connection intended scant. It is a method which would be employed in a case where the parties and their relationship were well known. In such a case *any rela-*

tionship or connection actually existing and known, such as of consanguinity, business, or even living in the same house, would answer the purpose designed, that is, to distinguish one from another of the same name. We make our appeal to reason and common sense; and in illustration and corroboration we take up one more instance. Let it be distinctly understood, however, that we plead for what is probable. Certainty in the case is out of the question.

In Mark ii. 14 we read of "Alphæus's Levi" being called to the apostleship. It is conceded that this is the same who is denominated "Matthew the Publican" in Matt. x. 3, that is, a collector of taxes or tribute for the Roman government. The translators have made him the son of Alphæus, but to this we demur. There is really nothing for it but conjecture, and one conjecture may be as probable as another, or a great deal more so. We suppose then that Simon, the brother of our Lord, alias Alphæus, alias Klōpas, was a publican. Is there anything improbable in this? The family was in very humble worldly circumstances. The collectorship was lucrative. And although it was held in great detestation by the Jews generally, publicans being classed with "sinners," that is, persons of notoriously evil life in Jewish estimation, yet Simon may have been induced to engage in it for the sake of a livelihood. If Matthew or Levi, then, was his partner in the business, or his assistant or clerk, or a sub-collector, that would suffice for his being distinguished as Alphæus's Levi. Or we might perhaps reverse the supposition. Matthew may have been the employer, and Simon the subordinate, and he may have continued in the office, or been promoted, when Matthew became an apostle, for

he did not believe in Christ till after the crucifixion. In the passages referring to the matter (Matt. ix. 9, 10; Mar. ii. 14, 15; Lu. v. 27—29) Levi is stated to have invited Christ to eat meat “in his house,” and there were present many publicans and sinners besides His disciples. If Levi were the employer or chief, and Simon the subordinate, yet he might still be distinguished as Alphaeus’s Levi, because of Alphaeus being the more widely known of the two. At all events we may well suppose that Simon or Alphaeus had a house of his own. His brothers would probably insist on this when he became a publican, the office being so generally odious. And if so, his sister Mary may have gone to keep house to him. This would be enough to distinguish her as “Klōpas’s Mary.” Sisters living at the same time do not bear the same name, but nothing has ever been more common in the case of mother and daughter. If James, too, from special fraternal affection, or other reason, chose to live in his brother’s house, this would be enough to distinguish him as Alphaeus’s James.*

We conclude that Klōpas’s Mary means his sister, daughter of Joseph and Mary, and so one of Christ’s sisters.

This brings up another matter for consideration. It will be remembered that in Matt. xiii. 55, 56, the Jews in

* We may suppose that James, being the eldest of the brethren after Christ, remaining at home and so regarded as the head of the house, the father being no more, after having resided for a time with his brother Simon or Alphaeus, returned to the paternal abode. This would furnish reason for Jude being distinguished as “James’s Jude.” An additional reason may be found in Ac. i. 13; for, by the time referred to there, the mother had gone to reside with John. Let it be observed that Jude is *nowhere* called *Alphaeus’s Jude*.

the synagogue in "His own country" are represented as questioning respecting Christ, "His brethren James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas : and His sisters, are they not all with us ?" It is plain from this that there were at least two sisters, if not more.* The gentler sex is proverbially more susceptible of religious impressions than is the sterner. Strange it would be, passing strange, if we did not find somewhere in the Gospel narratives references to Christ's own sisters, even by name, in a way implying that they were believers in Him. And do we not ? In Lu. viii. 1—3, we read that Christ was in Galilee, going "about through cities and villages, preaching and bringing good tidings of the kingdom of God, and with Him the twelve, and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary that was called Magdalene, from whom seven devils had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who ministered to them [or Him] of their substance." It is by no means necessarily implied here that Joanna and Susanna were among those who required miraculous healing of any bodily distemper, but they were with "many others" who ministered. The Magdalene is named obviously because her case was a specially remarkable one. But why are Joanna and Susanna thus singled out by name ? Would we be astray in inferring that it was

* Alford (Proleg. to James, in a footnote at p. 97, Vol. IV., 4th ed.) assumes that the word *all* in this place applies to the sisters alone, because the original for it (*pasai*) is feminine. This we think not only contrary to common sense, but uncritical as well. Surely the neighbours cannot be understood to have said this of the sisters exclusively, but of the brothers also. By a well-known rule in Greek syntax, called *attraction*, the adjective is feminine, to agree in gender with the noun nearest to it, while it plainly refers to the brethren inclusively.

because they were sisters of Jesus? We learn from Lu. xxiv. 10 that Joanna was among those who took part in the events connected with the crucifixion, and Susanna may have been among "the other women" that are there referred to, although she is not named anywhere except in the passage already cited. We know that Klōpas's Mary was.

We thus come to the conclusion, on a retrospect of all the considerations presented, that the whole family to which the Saviour belonged, according to the flesh, were sooner or later the subjects of saving grace. Joseph, the husband of Mary, was probably considerably older than she, and dead before Christ entered on His public ministry, as we never find him referred to afterwards, at least as being alive. But we have this record of him, that he was "a righteous man." As to Mary, who can for a moment entertain a doubt? Two of His brothers were left to themselves to resist the evidences for His Messiahship for a time. Yet we may well believe that very strong impressions must have been made upon their minds even then by His unparalleled life. These would be deepened and strengthened by the equally unparalleled events connected with the crucifixion and ascension, so that, under the operation of the Holy Spirit, there was no longer room for doubt or hesitancy; and accordingly we find in Acts i. 13, 14 "His brethren" mentioned, in addition to a full list of the eleven apostles, "the women" also, in addition to "Mary, the mother of Jesus," as being all assembled in an upper room in Jerusalem, after the ascension, where they "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" for a time, evidently implying that all were believers.

The practical lesson lies upon the surface. It is especially

for parents, brothers, and sisters, constituting one family, and for those who may be living together under circumstances more or less similar. The family is God's ordinance for most wise and holy ends, and lies at the foundation of human society. Hence Satan's attacks upon it, directly, or by his agents systematically, under the names of Socialism, Communism, Mormonism, not to speak of other methods equally diabolical. It is a trite remark, that everyone has an influence, even a child, and that influence is exercised either for good or for evil; while it should be borne in mind that for the manner in which it is exercised we must all one day give account to God. Members of the same family should regard it as at once their duty and privilege to be helping each other onwards towards the better country, even the heavenly. They should be constantly seeking to advance each other's welfare and interests, especially in that which is beyond comparison the highest and most important sense, that is, the spiritual. For this they have opportunities, motives, inducements immensely greater than can be found in any other sphere. Their lives are in contact at many more points; their intimacy much closer; their periods of intercourse, and exchange of views and feelings, more frequent and prolonged, while they can unbosom themselves to one another with a freedom and frankness they could not use to one outside the circle. A sense of duty should impel, natural affection should prompt, the commands of God, the satisfaction and happiness which He in His infinite wisdom has connected with doing His will, the contemplation of His glory as the chief end, supreme love to Him—all concur in enhancing the obligation. It rests in a special manner on parents. Childhood and youth are the

periods when the mind is ductile, when character is moulded and formed, when impressions may be made that shall be lasting as eternity. True it is that without influence from on high, that of God's Spirit, all human efforts will be vain. The Holy Spirit is sovereign in applying redemption, even as the Father is sovereign in sending the Son, and the Son is sovereign in undertaking and accomplishing the work. But God ordinarily works through secondary causes, means, and agents; and He has promised the influences of His Spirit to them that ask in faith. In thus employing men as His agents, under the guidance of His Spirit, He is, to speak after the manner of men, consulting for their own happiness. We have the highest authority for saying it is more blessed to give than to receive, and this is specially true in spiritual things. *There giving does not impoverish, nor withholding enrich. Quite the reverse.* The giver, if he give in the right spirit, is sure of the blessing, whereas he to whom it is sought to impart—in this case he cannot be said to receive *blessing*—may spurn the gift, and thus have his heart hardened by the very effort to do him good. How earnest, therefore, should members of the same family be in their prayers with and for one another, and for the influences of God's Spirit with the efforts they put forth for each other's good! But alas! in how many families professedly Christian is the influence of the parent, both by precept and example, especially the latter, exercised for evil rather than for good! In how many are not almost the whole intercommunications, cares, anxieties, labours, efforts about worldly things, of the earth earthy; great concern for obtaining a good secular education and accomplishments for the children, while their instruction and training in things spiritual

are neglected! In how many such might be witnessed the miserable exhibition of unruly temper, uncompliant obstinacy, unreasonable self-seeking, mutual recrimination, strife, contention about trifles! These things ought not so to be. May God dispose us all to think upon our ways in the respects alluded to, to repent of our shortcomings, humbly seeking the guidance of His Spirit in the use of our influence, that we may walk in the footsteps of Him who, when on earth, went about continually doing good! If what we have written have the effect, under the Spirit's blessing, of leading anyone who reads it to reflect seriously on his duty, privilege, responsibility in the premises, and to act upon his convictions, we shall not have written in vain, we shall have our reward, and one great end of the writing will be attained.

BAPTISM AND REGENERATION.

“EXCEPT a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”—John iii. 5.

These are the words of Christ Himself to Nicodemus, and it is generally understood that in the mention of water He was referring to baptism as the initial sign and seal of a public profession of faith in Him as the promised Messiah. The Jewish Rabbis were accustomed to speak of a proselyte to their religion, when he submitted to the initial rite required under the old dispensation, as having been born anew. But why did He give the prior place to an external observance, while at the same time He made it clear that the work of the Holy Spirit was essential to salvation? Were the two invariably associated, so that submitting to baptism secured the saving agency of the Holy Spirit? To answer these questions we must take all the circumstances into view.

Various shades of meaning may be properly attached to the phrase ‘the Kingdom of God’ or ‘the Kingdom of Heaven’ as used in the New Testament, according to the connection in which it stands. Without entering into details, there are two which stand forth prominently. It sometimes manifestly denotes the visible Church of Christ on earth, consisting of all those who make a public credible profession of faith in Him as the Saviour. In other instances it just as clearly includes all those—not necessarily all those included in the former—who have been savingly illuminated by light from on high. Baptism furnishes the ordinary door of entrance into the kingdom of God in the first sense. We shall assign reason after-

wards for the use of this word *ordinary*. But entrance to the kingdom of God in the second sense can only be by the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit. Nicodemus, who, like Joseph of Arimathea, with whom he was probably on terms of close friendship and intimacy, was a member of the Sanhedrim, and like him a God-fearing, justice-loving, good man, waiting for the consolation of Israel. He was convinced of the reality of Christ's miracles, and by these and His whole conduct that He had a divine mission, although as yet he probably regarded Him as no more than man. Christ, who needed not that any should testify to Him of man, for He knew what was in man, and who adapted in infinite wisdom His communications to those with whom He conversed, saw a great defect in his character. He was constitutionally timid. He comes to Jesus under the clouds of night for fear of the Jews. Christ strikes directly at this defect in His opening words. He would have him to come out in a bold public profession of faith in Him, of which being baptized would be the sign and seal. This seems to be the reason for mentioning the requirement of being born of water before that of being born of the Spirit. Then the Saviour graciously proceeded to exhibit the Gospel to him in language of remarkable force and fulness. That he profited by it, that his faith, which had been but like a grain of mustard seed, grew in its measure, is borne out by recorded references that follow. When the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to apprehend Christ, when they returned without Him, assigning as the reason, "Never man spake like this man," Nicodemus stood up manfully and asked, though the demand was met only with clamorous derision and scorn, "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what

he doeth?"—Jo. vii. 51. When the insensate cry was raised in the Sanhedrim, "Not this man, but Barabbas, away with Him, crucify Him, crucify Him," he and Joseph would seem to have been the only dissentients. Then when night had closed over the awful scene on Calvary, the most awful the sun had ever hid his face from, Joseph came to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him leave to take it. Nicodemus also came, bringing clean linen and spices amounting to a hundred pounds in weight. They wrapped the body in the linen with the spices, and laid it in a new tomb which Joseph had prepared for himself hewn in the rock. After this we have no account of the subsequent life of either, but as Christ said of her who expended the very precious ointment on Him in anticipation of His burial, what is recorded of them will be spoken of wherever the Gospel is preached throughout the whole world, for a memorial of them; and we can have little or no doubt that their self-sacrificing devotion had its gracious recompense of reward, that their life thenceforth was consistent with their profession, and that they are now living and reigning in glory with Him to whom they had given their hearts' love.

Reverting to the subject of baptism, there are two or three remarks to be made, and which it seems necessary should be well understood. In the first place, *baptism is not essential to salvation*. True, it is a plainly commanded duty to seek it, and a privilege to obtain it, when circumstances are favourable. But if the circumstances are such as not to admit of it, and we can easily conceive of such, then if there be heartfelt love to Christ, and true faith in Him, the want of baptism will be no hindrance. The case of the thief on the cross is a decisive illustration and proof

of our position. He had probably heard of Christ and His claims, but evidently had never hitherto believed in Him or professed to be His disciple. He was impressed by all he witnessed, which made even the Roman centurion to cry out, "Truly this was the Son of God," an exclamation which he doubtless heard. The Holy Spirit's influence was also, we may be certain, operating to open his mind and heart to the reception of the truth. So turning his eyes in his agony to the Saviour he cries, "Jesus, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." This was met by the death-conquering assurance, "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise."

Secondly, *baptism, as an outward act and by itself, by whomsoever and howsoever it may be administered, does not secure salvation.* The instance of Simon Magus is proof positive of this. He "believed," that is, gave an intellectual assent to the truth of the Gospel, and, having professed this, was baptized. We may be sure the rite was administered in a perfectly Scriptural, or in what in modern phraseology would be called a *canonical* manner. Yet Peter, who had the miraculous power of discerning spirits, could say to him afterward, "I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity."

Thirdly, *baptism is not regeneration.* We put it in this negative form because we hear the reverse affirmative very often enunciated nowadays, either in so many words, or in very politic but transparent enough inuendo. The original word for regeneration (*palinggenes*) occurs in only two places of the New Testament. In one of these, Matt. xix. 28, it has no reference to or connection with baptism. "In the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory," &c. There it manifestly means

the reconstruction of all things at the end of time, when the new heavens and the new earth shall appear. The other is Titus iii. 5, where it is said of God, that "according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." The original there for washing is *loutron*, "a meaning the word never has," says Alford; but this is questionable. The Revisers have not scrupled to put *washing* in their text, while they have put "or *laver*," in the margin, the allusion being to the laver in the court of the ancient tabernacle. "Not 'washing,'" Alford insists, "but always a vessel or pool in which washing takes place. Here the baptismal font." And further, "Observe there is here no figure—the words are literal." No figure! Why there are most manifestly two. The laver is one, even on his own showing, and regeneration is another. Yet again, "'BAPTISMAL REGENERATION' is the *distinguishing doctrine of the new covenant* (Matt. iii. 11),"—the capitals and italics his own. This reference to Matthew is rather unfortunate for the author's purpose. There is there a prediction by the Baptist of a future baptism, not by water, but *with fire*. If any man should take it into his head to exhibit a fulfilment of this prediction in a *literal* way, the inevitable consequence would be to burn his own fingers, or the person operated upon, or both. It might seem from the expressions we have quoted that this expositor laid the chief stress on the "vessel or pool," rather than on the water contained. When he comes to details, however, he is better. "But let us take care that we know and bear in mind what 'baptism' means: not the mere ecclesiastical act, not the mere fact of reception by that act among God's professing people,

but that completed by the divine act, manifested by the operation of the Holy Ghost in the heart and through the life." Very good so far. But he leaves it to be suspected that he would regard 'the divine act' as invariably connected with the 'ecclesiastical act,' when duly performed and by the proper person. As a pronounced Arminian, too, he would probably have been prepared to say that one might be regenerated to-day, have his name registered in the Lamb's book of life, and to-morrow give occasion for its being blotted out, and eventually fall away for ever. This is not the teaching of Scripture. It says of God, "He is in one mind, who can turn Him?" "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that hath mercy." "Who hath resisted His will?" "The gifts and the calling of God are without repentance." Paul could say, in writing to the Philippians, "Being confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ." And again, "It is God who worketh in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure." There are some things which, with all reverence, we may say God cannot do. He cannot lie. He cannot change. He cannot deny Himself. This is but a negative method of expressing the positive idea of His absolute perfection. And it surpasses our comprehension how any one who admits merely the omnipotence of Jehovah, not to speak of the perfect truth of Scripture, can conceive of Him creating a rational being, and endowing that creature with a power of veto on His own purpose, that is, a power greater than omnipotence! Surely that is much more than a contradiction in terms. It is contradiction in matter of fact, the very climax of absurdity.

The ritualists, we opine, will be quite ready to accept Alford's literalizing statements about baptism, while they will cast all his cautious explanations and drawbacks to the four winds. Will they not have some ground?

Returning to the consideration of Titus iii. 5, it may be noted that there is another passage in which the word *loutron* occurs, which may be brought into comparison with it. In Eph. v. 26, the apostle says of Christ, "That He might sanctify it (the Church) by the laver (*tō lōutrō*, the dative of instrument) of water, in the word (*en rēmati*)." Does he in these instances refer to Christian baptism? Interpreters generally answer in the affirmative. Even Calvin thinks there is at least allusion to it, but only as a sign, symbol, the means of confirming faith, the whole efficacy being ascribed to God's working. Reasons of a critical kind may be adduced for a somewhat different view. In Titus iii. 5, the only place where the word regeneration occurs in such connection that it can be even supposed to have such reference, the grammatical construction seems plain. It may be understood as an instance of what is called the genitive of apposition, common to all the languages, as when we speak of the city of London or the city of Paris, meaning thereby simply London or Paris. So the laver of regeneration and renewing may mean the laver *which is* the regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Both are "of the Holy Ghost." Not that the two signify exactly the same thing. Regeneration is the initial act of the Spirit creating the new man in union with Christ. See Rom. vi. 4, 2 Cor. v. 17, Gal. vi. 15, Eph. iv. 24, Col. iii. 10, 11. The renewing is the subsequent work of the Spirit in progressive sanctification. So again in Ep. v. 26, the laver of water is said

to be *en rēmati*, in (or by) the word, the word of truth of the Gospel being the instrument which the Holy Spirit ordinarily employs in His operations. Does the introduction of the word *water* here point certainly to baptism? We know that water was made of old a figure for the influences of the Spirit. Thus the Prophet Isaiah, speaking in the name of the Lord, could say, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and streams upon the dry ground. I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring," Isaiah xliv. 3, where God's Spirit and His blessing are evidently the explanatory synonyms of the water and streams. And why, we may ask, did the apostle in these instances use the word *laver*, a thing belonging to the old shadowy typical dispensation, when he could have used another, if it was not with the very design of leading away the mind of his readers from the thought of Christian baptism to the more comprehensive idea of spiritual purification in the general sense? But if any one prefer the interpretation which makes the apostle in these instances allude to baptism, be it so. The statement still holds good, the whole efficiency is ascribed at the same time to God's working. It was evidently far from the mind of the great apostle of the Gentiles to make God's decision in any case dependent on any independent willing or acting, any *opus operatum* by man.

Sufficient reason, we apprehend, has been shown for reversing Alford's statement. Baptismal regeneration is not the distinguishing doctrine of the new covenant. So far from its being so, it is no part of the teachings of Scripture. Regeneration is exclusively by the operation of the Holy Spirit. Let us hear the divine Teacher—
"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the

sound thereof, but knoweth not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: SO IS EVERY ONE THAT IS BORN OF THE SPIRIT."

WAS PAUL ORDAINED ?

IN the beginning of the 13th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we read :—

“ Now there were at Antioch, in the Church that was *there*, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.”

This passage is often quoted as a proof for Presbyterian ordination. Dr. Thomas Smyth, of Charleston, in his work on Presbytery (we quote from the edition published by Collins, of Glasgow, 1844) makes it his first “ proof from Scripture facts,” and spends about ten pages of his book in an elaborate argument upon it. He says, “ There is in this transaction all the elements which constitute ordination. There can be no other interpretation put upon the whole transaction.”—p. 141. This is strong language, yet we take leave to hold a different view, and we think he is far from having made good his conclusion. He refers to a whole host of writers, from Chrysostom and Theophylact, down to Whately and Neander, who coincide in his view. We dare say quite as respectable a list might be made out of authors who are of a contrary opinion. It is not in this way the question is to be decided. We must judge for ourselves. He puts the question, What is ordination? and answers, “ It is a public act by which any individual, who

has been lawfully called and found qualified, is initiated into the ministry, and by this external commission receives authority to preach, to rule, and to administer ordinances in the Church.”—p. 140. We have no fault to find with this definition, but we think the author forgets a part of it, when he goes on to specify, in answer to the further question, What is essential to ordination? merely the forms of imposition of hands and prayer as “the only essential rights of ordination.” There is something surely, according to his own definition, besides and beyond forms or rites in the case. It matters not what the forms may be, if there be no design *to initiate into the ministry*, it is not ordination. It behoved Dr. Smyth, we submit, to show that such was the *design* of the transaction at Antioch. This he has not done, and could not do. He has merely inferred the design from the external forms used on the occasion. These are not proof, yet that is what is chiefly relied on. We cease to wonder at this when we find him actually confounding things so diverse as *ordination* and *installation*. Referring to the view that the work to which Paul was set apart at Antioch was a mere temporary mission, and therefore no ordination, he says (p. 146), “Besides, even supposing that Barnabas and Paul had been previously ministers, and that this ordination” (this ordination! assuming the very thing to be proved) “referred only to their first subsequent mission of three years, are not Presbyterian ministers solemnly set apart or installed with prayer and imposition of hands *every time* (!) they are called to enter upon some new charge?” Here, by the way, we have a complete answer by himself to a previous part of his argument, where he founds on the circumstance, that Barnabas and Paul, in their second tour, “employed

some four years more *without any renewed ordination*, and then, having returned on a visit to Antioch, they again went forth upon a third mission." This, by the way. Dr. S. continues, "Whether, therefore, these words had reference, as we think plain, to their whole ministry, or only to a special exercise of it, this record must be considered as describing their ordination. Either view of the words does not alter the case, nor make that to be no ordination which includes every thing that has ever been considered as the constitutive and essential parts of ordination. And, besides, if God Himself orders a *temporary* mission of His own apostle to be given by a plurality of presbyters or teachers, and that too by solemn ordination, is there not much more reason to conclude that He would require the same order to be followed when the mission is to be for a whole life? Every way, therefore, does this precedent enforce the law of Presbyterian ordination." We confess to have read these statements, in the first instance, with no little astonishment. We had thought it was a settled axiom, not only amongst Presbyterians, but with Christians of every name, that no man could be ordained a second time to the same office. This proceeds on the definition of ordination as meaning the conferring of office. But, according to Dr. Smyth, ministers may be ordained many a time—"every time"—(the italics are his own)—"they are called to enter upon some new charge." We know not what may be the practice in South Carolina, or the Southern States of America generally—even Presbyterian ministers of that region have *laid hands* on men in a more culpable way than what is here implied, in times not long gone by—but, so far as our knowledge of Presbyterian practice extends, we never heard or read of the

imposition of hands in the case of the installation of a minister translated from one charge to another. That ceremony is omitted, with the very design of making it the more apparent that it is not ordination.

We might certainly infer from the external forms used at Antioch the design to ordain, if Paul and Barnabas had not been ordained already, or if Paul were not already in a higher office than that of the ordinary ministry, an office in respect to which human ordination is out of the question, namely, the apostleship.

Was Paul ordained before this? If he were ever ordained, or needed to be, we think there is much better reason to conclude that he was ordained by Ananias in Damascus—having others associated with him in the act, though that is not recorded—than that it was by the presbyters of Antioch. In *The British and Foreign Evangelical Review* for July, 1870, there is an article on The Two Purifications of the Temple, in which we find the following:—“ ‘ Devout men, according to the law,’* carried Stephen to his burial,

* We give this precisely as we find it, under quotation marks. Paul, in his address to the Jews, describes Ananias as a “devout man according to the law.”—Ac. xxii. 12. This was, doubtless, in the circumstances, to disarm prejudice, in accordance with the principle he expresses, 1 Cor. ix. 20, “To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law.” The description would be applicable, we apprehend, to most of the Jewish converts to Christianity in the apostles’ days. They observed Moses’ law; many of them, only on Paul’s principle, as a matter of expediency. Where the writer referred to above got his quotation we know not. In Acts viii. 2, it is said, “And devout men buried Stephen.” The “according to the law” is an unauthorized addition. Is this mere careless and random quotation? The writer

and made lamentation over him; while Judaism, in the person of one of its last representatives, Ananias, set its seal, and laid its hand upon the Apostle Paul, dedicating him to the Christian ministry.”—p. 476. Was this meant to be an assertion that Paul was ordained by Ananias, acting in the matter, moreover, as the representative of Judaism? It certainly looks very like it. We can scarcely put any other construction upon the statement. If so, we must express our disapprobation of the sentiment, in every part of it, as strongly as may be compatible with propriety. Our Lord was, according to the flesh, a Jew. He was made under the law, and rendered a perfect obedience to it, in its ceremonial as well as its moral department. This was necessary to his fulfilling all righteousness. But the old economy, as a whole, converged, centred, terminated in Him—*terminated* in every sense of the word. “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”—Rom. x. 4. “Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and He hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.”—Col. ii. 14. He is the Head, Centre, and

seems to eschew particular reference to chapter and verse, even where it would seem specially called for in this article. In another part of it he says, “On the occasion of the second purification of the temple, however, we are expressly told that He had no scourge, no symbol of authority in His hand.”—p. 479. This is positively untrue. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke we are not told that Christ had such a thing in His hand, but neither are we expressly told that He had *not*. Such statements detract considerably from the impression likely to be produced by an otherwise able article. Such careless referring to Scripture is not good to the use of edifying. It is misleading to writer and reader alike. For that reason we allude to it so particularly.

exclusive Source of authority in the new dispensation, just as He was the sole Lawgiver under the old. To say, therefore, or to insinuate, that there was any necessity, or even any fitness or propriety in the remotest degree, in any representative of Judaism, other than and besides the Lord Jesus Christ, setting a seal or laying a hand upon an apostle, in the way of dedicating him to the Christian ministry, is to broach a doctrine as unscriptural and groundless as it seems to be novel, yea, somewhat dangerous withal. It appears to shoot far beyond the High Church figment of apostolical succession. When Ananias laid his hands on Paul he was not acting as the representative of Judaism, nor was the act one of ordaining to office. It was the impressive form in which he, simply as a 'disciple' of Christ, became the instrument of effecting a miraculous cure, and imparting miraculous powers. He put his hands on him "that he might receive his sight," Ac. ix. 12, "and be filled with the Holy Ghost," Ac. ix. 17. Such is the record, and we dare not go beyond it.

The position we take is this—Paul was an apostle, in the highest sense which may be attached to the term, from the date of his conversion, and so needed not ordination from man. Barnabas, we conclude, had been ordained to the ministry long before, although we have no record of the fact. The transaction at Antioch, then, explain it as we may, was not an ordination.

The first mention we find of Barnabas is in Acts iv. 36, 37, "And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, Son of exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race, having a field, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet." When Paul was converted, "straightway in the

synagogues" (at Damascus) "he proclaimed Jesus, that He is the Son of God."—Ac. ix. 20. At his first visit to Jerusalem "he essayed to join himself to the disciples: and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that He had spoken to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus."—Ac. ix. 26, 27. That is, as we understand it, Barnabas introduced Paul to the apostles as one who had received an apostolic commission equal to their own. The next we read of Barnabas, he is at Jerusalem: news arrives of a great awakening at Antioch, and Barnabas is the person selected out of the whole Church, and sent forth "as far as Antioch. Who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. And he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul: and when he had found him he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the Church, and taught much people."—Ac. xi. 22—26. A famine was predicted. In prospect of it the Christians at Antioch were determined to make a contribution for the brethren in Judea. "Which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul."—Ac. xi. 30. This was Paul's second visit to Jerusalem since his conversion. Let the reader mark that, for we shall have a further use to make of it. It was after this, and when they had returned from Jerusalem to Antioch, that the alleged ordination took place.—Ac.

xi. 25. We ask any one to note the several circumstances thus presented in detail, and then say—Is it probable or credible that these two men should have been engaged in such work for such a length of time, and entrusted with such important commissions, without having been, in one way or other, regularly inducted to the ministerial office till now?

The apostleship was a temporary and extraordinary office, requiring extraordinary qualifications, and necessary in the first setting up of Christ's kingdom on earth. An apostle had his commission directly and immediately from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. We read of no form of ordination in the case of the twelve. When Matthias, in a way that was extraordinary only in part, was appointed to take the place of Judas, the record stands simply, "and he was numbered with the eleven apostles."—Ac. i. 26. Whether Paul was called, like Matthias, to take the place of one of the twelve, on his decease, or whether we are to regard him as a supernumerary, a thirteenth, we have no data on which to decide. Nor is it material. He was, he himself tells us, "as one born out of due time."—1 Cor. xv. 8. It is unquestionable that he was an apostle in the highest sense. He claims to have been "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles."—2 Cor. xi. 5. Whatever qualifications of a personal kind might be deemed necessary for the office, these he possessed beyond all others; and "the signs of an apostle," whatever these might be reckoned to be, were pre-eminently conspicuous in him.—2 Cor. xii. 12. In writing to the Galatians, he claims to have been "an apostle, not from men, neither through man."—Gal. i. 1. This is not a tautology. It is a plain intimation that there was no intervention of

human agency or authority in conferring office upon him. The force of this passage Dr. Smyth could not afford to overlook. Here is his comment :

“ But it is further objected, that this could not have been an ordination, because Paul assures us that he was made an apostle not of men, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father. But it is one thing to say he was not made, called, commissioned, or qualified by man, and quite another to say he was not publicly *recognised*, that is, *ordained* by man, in obedience to a positive divine command. The former the apostle denies; the latter he affirms.” [Indeed! where? Not in Gal. i. 1, most certainly, no, nor anywhere else.] “ The former does not conflict with the latter, but, on the contrary, formed the ground upon which the latter was based, so that it was because he *had been* thus called of God he was afterwards ordained by man. Neither was the latter necessary to constitute Paul an apostle; nor had it any virtue by which to qualify and fit him for the office. We know not that any other apostle was thus ordained. But Paul's case was peculiar. He had not companied with Christ and the other twelve. His conversion and vision of the Saviour were both miraculous. He was generally suspected and mistrusted.” [Not, certainly, at the time of the alleged ordination.] “ He was to be the great apostle of the Gentiles, and the first link in that ministerial chain which was to extend to the end of time.” [How? Were not the twelve in the apostleship before him, and was not Peter before him in preaching the Gospel to Gentiles?] “ It was therefore necessary that Paul, not as an apostle, but as a minister, should be thus formally and openly set apart by ordination.”—p. 145.

It is here most strangely assumed that public *recognition* of office—even as already existing, it would seem—and *ordination*, that is, *initiation* into office, are one and the same thing. That is surely a contradiction in terms. If public recognition be ordination, then why make the distinction between “as an apostle” and “as a minister?” Why not contend for his ordination as an apostle? Whatever public recognition he had it was in his character of

apostle, not in that of an ordinary minister. Let us take the statement, however, as we find it. Paul—such is the allegation—was ordained at Antioch, not as an apostle, but as a minister; and it is even pleaded that there was a *necessity* for this. The question, then, presents itself, Was his commission as an apostle prior to this or subsequent to it? Was he in the apostolic office already at the time of this transaction, or was he first ordained to the ministry and then made, called, or commissioned an apostle at some subsequent period? The extraordinary office, naturally, we might even say *necessarily* from the nature of the case generally, takes the precedence of the ordinary, not only in point of rank but in point of time. If Paul were first ordained to the ministry, and after that called to the apostleship, this natural order would be reversed. We may save ourselves the trouble, however, of pursuing the consideration of this alternative of the question we have propounded. It is virtually conceded that Paul was already in the apostolic office at the time of the transaction at Antioch. Dr. Smyth says—“Lord Barrington has endeavoured, and we think conclusively, to show that it was at his second visit to Jerusalem, in A.D. 43, Paul was first commissioned as an apostle.”—142. We have not access to Lord Barrington’s Works, so as to be able to judge for ourselves whether his reasoning be conclusive or not. We think we have better ground than he or any other could show for coming to a different conclusion. The narrative of his conversion, and immediate entry upon labours in Christ’s cause, by Luke, and all the subsequent allusions to it by Paul himself, both in the Acts and in the Epistles, plainly imply that it was at that time that he had his commission to be an apostle. There is really nothing that

can be properly construed as pointing to a different date. The first chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians alone we take to be conclusive of the point. One design Paul had in writing that epistle, it is universally admitted, was to assert and vindicate his apostolical authority in opposition to the Judaizers in Galatia, who sought, for their own selfish and unworthy ends, to undermine it. Accordingly he starts with the clear claim to be an apostle, "not from men, neither through man." In proof of this he enters upon details of his previous life, showing that he owed nothing, as respected authority, to those who were apostles before him. If Lord Barrington's hypothesis (for it can be nothing more) were correct, we should expect to find Paul referring, in the most unmistakable way, to his second visit to Jerusalem, and dwelling with all due emphasis and minuteness on the circumstances connected with this his *first* commission, as it is alleged to be. We find nothing of the kind, but, instead of this, we find, as we have said, details of his previous life, from the period of his conversion. What is the gist and bearing of all this but to show that he had been clothed with the apostolic office at that very date and no other? In the admirable work of Conybeare and Howson on "The Life and the Epistles of St. Paul," it seems taken for granted, as a thing no one should think of questioning, that his call to the apostleship was at his conversion. They make no allusion, so far as we have seen in their work, to any other time as the date. (See volume I, People's Edition, pages 88, 89). Take another proof from Paul's own address before Agrippa:—"And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But arise and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose to appoint thee"

(Conybeare and Howson translate, *to ordain thee*,) “a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen Me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Me.”—Acts xxvi. 15—18. This passage, again, would suffice of itself to establish the point. Could anything be much more express? Lord Barrington’s idea is no more than the theory of a subtle mind—a subtlety without any real foundation.

But suppose we admit it, what then? Paul’s second visit to Jerusalem in A.D. 43 preceded the alleged ordination at Antioch, by a whole year at least, if not two. It must be granted, then, that, at the latter juncture, he was already clothed with apostolic office. If so, the alleged ordination must be given up. The steps to the conclusion are very plain and easy. Ordination properly signifies induction or initiation to office. The higher office includes the lower—the apostleship includes the ministry. Paul could not, then, being already an apostle, be ordained, that is, *initiated* into an office which he already held, as involved in his apostleship. To assert that he could is to assert a contradiction in the terms as defined. If this be not demonstration it looks very like it.

Writing to Timothy, and speaking of the Gospel, Paul says of himself, “Whereunto I was appointed a preacher and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not,) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.”—1 Tim. ii. 7. Again, in the second epistle, “Whereunto I was appointed

a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher.”—2 Tim. 1. 11. Do these texts militate against our view? Not in the least. It is plain that the word *ordained* in the first, as in A.V., cannot be taken in the usual modern technical sense. In the original it is the same word that is rendered *ordained* in the first, and *appointed* in the second; and, of the two, we think, for the sake of clearness, *appointed* is the more appropriate. But translate the term as you may—made, commissioned, constituted, ordained, or appointed—by whom was this done? Gal. i. 1 must be taken to furnish the answer—“An apostle, not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead.”* The two texts, moreover, we have quoted from the Epistle to Timothy are sufficient to brush away the fine-spun and

* In Dr. Smyth’s comment on this text, which we quoted and animadverted on before (page 60), by the awkward introduction of one little word *not*, he really says the very opposite of what he manifestly intended to say. “It is one thing to say he was not made, called, commissioned, or qualified by man, and quite another to say he was not publicly *recognised*, that is *ordained* by man, in obedience to a positive divine command. The former the apostle denies.” He *denies* that he was *not*—that is, he declares that he *was* made, &c., by man. “The latter he affirms.” He affirms that he was *not* publicly recognised, that is, ordained by man. We preferred not to interrupt the course of our argument by noticing this lapsus before, but to remark upon the passage, according to what was clearly designed rather than what grammatical construction would make it. There seems no little confusion of ideas, indeed, in the whole section. Thus he says, page 143 of the volume, respecting Paul, “He is enumerated as one of five others (*sic*) of the same class of ministers, and he is introduced as the last of the five.” Already a minister before his ordination! and this in the middle of a section designed to prove his ordination *to* the ministry!!

unwarrantable distinction—utterly unwarrantable so far as the matter of ordination is concerned—between the apostleship and the ministry. They show unmistakably that the call, commission, or appointment to both was simultaneous. Nay, we find that, in both texts, the term *preacher* is put before *apostle*, the idea, rising from the lower and ordinary office to the higher and extraordinary, which really includes the other. The notion, indeed, of its being needful for Paul to have ordination from man as a minister, after being commissioned by Christ as an apostle, is about one of the most preposterous we can conceive.

Five names are mentioned in Acts xiii. 1 as being prophets and teachers at Antioch. It is assumed that three of these, Simeon Niger, Lucius, and Manaen, of whose labours, before or subsequently, we have absolutely no record, had been already ordained; while it is assumed, at the same time, that the remaining two, Barnabas and Saul, of whose preaching and teaching before this, for a length of time, we have repeated mention, had never been regularly inducted to the ministry till now. Does this stand to reason? Suppose that Simeon and Lucius had been the persons chosen for the work, would not the same forms have been gone through? and would it not be assumed equally in that case that they had never been ordained till now, but that Barnabas and Saul had been already inducted to office?

We are told “that the imposition of hands and of prayer (*sic*) are the only essential rights of ordination;” and, because these forms were used in the transaction at Antioch, the inference is confidently drawn that here was a case of ordination. Very well, Jacob, before his death, laid his hands on the heads of Ephraim and Manassch,

praying at the same time, "The Angel which hath redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." *Ergo*, Ephraim and Manasseh were ordained by Jacob! The inference is quite as legitimate in the one case as in the other. The evidence that is relied on, "the only essential rites," are precisely the same in both.

But it will be asked, for what purpose were the forms of prayer and imposition used at Antioch, if not to ordain? We reply, it was simply a solemn method of responding to the divine call upon the two ministerial brethren to go forth on a special mission. "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." In what particular way the divine will was intimated—whether by dream, or vision, or audible voice, or inward impression—whether to one of the number, or to all when assembled together—we are not informed, and it is vain to inquire. In some way the intimation was conveyed, so that none doubted of its being divine. It was a call not to the ordinary work of the ministry, such as Barnabas and Saul had been already engaged in, but to a missionary tour. It seems to us that the nature of the work, probably the very route they were to take and the places they were to visit, were supernaturally revealed to them. So much seems implied in the 4th verse of the chapter—"So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, went down to Seleucia, &c." The laying of the hands on the head was a most ancient form employed among the Hebrews when pronouncing a benediction. The early Christians everywhere follow their example. It was a most important enterprise that Barnabas and Saul were sent upon. It was fitting and proper that, in solemn public

assembly, such forms should be used. It was calculated deeply to impress the minds of the missionaries themselves, and prepare them for their work; and it was eminently fitted to enlist the warmest sympathies, and most earnest continuous prayers, of the whole Church at Antioch on their behalf, and for the success of their mission. Thus did the Church, through its ministers, bid them God-speed. This furnishes a sufficient explanation, and to suppose that more is implied—that it is an example of initiation to office, whether apostolic or ministerial—is to involve ourselves most needlessly in insuperable difficulties, if not in positive contradictions.

There is at least one very popular commentator who takes what we regard as simply the common sense view of the transaction at Antioch. Barnes's notes on the record in Acts xiii. are so eminently judicious that we shall make no apology for transcribing them at some length. He says:—“*Separate me. Set apart to me, or for my service. It does not mean to ordain, but simply to designate, or to appoint to this specific work. For this work whereunto I have called them.* Not the apostolic office, for Saul was called to that by the express revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. i. 12), and Barnabas was not an apostle. The ‘work’ to which they were now set apart was that of preaching the Gospel in the regions about Antioch. It was not any *permanent* office in the Church, but was a temporary designation to a *missionary enterprise* in extending the Gospel especially through Asia Minor and the adjacent regions. Accordingly when, in the fulfilment of this appointment, they had travelled through Seleucia, Cyprus, Paphos, Pamphylia, Pisidia, &c., they returned to Antioch, having fulfilled the work to which they were

separated; see Acts xiv. 26, 27. *Whereunto I have called them.* This proves that they received their commission to this work directly from God the Holy Spirit. It is possible that Paul and Barnabas had been influenced by the Spirit to engage in this work, but they were to be sent forth by the concurrence and designation of the Church. . . .

And prayed. This enterprise was a new one. The Gospel had been preached to the Jews, to Cornelius, and to the Gentiles at Antioch. But there had been no solemn and public and concerted plan of sending it to the Gentiles, or of appointing a mission to the heathen. It was a new event, and was full of danger and hardships. The primitive Church felt the need of divine direction and aid in the great work. Two missionaries were to be sent forth among strangers; to be exposed to perils by sea and land; and the commencement of the enterprise demanded *prayer*. The Church humbled itself, and this primitive missionary society sought, as all others should do, the divine blessing to attend the labours of those employed in this work. The result showed that the prayer was heard. *And laid their hands on them.* That is, those who are mentioned in ver. 1. This was not to set them apart to the apostolic office. Saul was chosen by Christ Himself, and there is no evidence that any of the apostles were ordained by the imposition of hands. And Barnabas was not an apostle in the original and peculiar sense of the word. Nor is it meant that this was an *ordination* to the *ministry*, to the office of preaching the Gospel. For both had been engaged in this before. Saul received his commission directly from the Saviour, and began at once to preach.—Acts ix. 20; Gal. i. 11—17. Barnabas had preached at Antioch, and was evidently recognised as a preacher by the apostles.—Acts ix. 27; xi.

22, 23. It follows, therefore, that this was not an *ordination* in the doctrinal sense of this term, either Episcopal or Presbyterian, but was a designation to a particular work—a work of vast importance; strictly a *missionary appointment* by the Church, under the authority of the Holy Ghost. The act of laying hands on any person was practised, not only in ordination, but in conferring a favour; and in setting apart *for any purpose*; see Lev. iii. 2, 8, 13; iv. 4—29; xvi. 21; Num. viii. 12; Mark v. 23; xvi. 18; [Mat. xxi. 46?]. It means in this case that they appointed *them* to a particular field of labour, and by laying hands on them they implored the blessing of God to attend them.”

Having thus disposed of the main argument, the subsidiary considerations, by which it is sought to be corroborated, are easily dealt with. These are totally irrelevant to the issue. Thus we are told, “Up to this time the apostle was called Saul, and then only was he denominated Paul (Acts xiii. 9).” What has that to do with it? Is it the practice to give the man a new name when he is ordained to the ministry? The name *Paul* is of Latin origin. It signifies *little*. It was, perhaps, for one reason given to the apostle because of his personal appearance—his diminutive stature. He was a little man, but one of the greatest souls that ever existed was encased in that small body. He was now about to enter upon a much wider field than he had yet occupied, in pursuance of his destined work as the great “Apostle of the Gentiles.” It was henceforth natural that he should be known by his Latin name, by which he had probably been known long before amongst those who spoke the Latin language, rather than by his Hebrew name Saul. Here is explanation sufficient, without having recourse to

the preposterous idea of his suppositious ordination having anything to do with it.*

“Neither is he ever called an apostle till after this event.” Well, how often after, in the whole subsequent history contained in Acts? Just twice. At Iconium, “the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.”—Acts xiv. 4. At Lystra, Paul cured one who had been a cripple from his birth. The people took him and Barnabas for gods, and were about to offer sacrifices to them. “But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, &c.”—Acts xiv. 14. If there were any force or validity in the argument founded on these instances, it would go to prove that the transaction at Antioch was an ordination, not merely to the ministry, but to the apostleship; and that Barnabas was an apostle, in the highest sense, as well as Paul. There have been some who thought that Barnabas was such, and that he was probably called to occupy the place of James, the brother of John, who was slain by Herod.—Acts xii. 2. But anything like evidence of this is wholly wanting. It is pure conjecture, and very improbable conjecture. The term *apostle*, according to its derivation, primarily signifies

* The name *Saul* is used *after* the alleged ordination—“Barnabas and Saul.”—Acts xiii. 7. They visited and travelled through Cyprus. The Roman proconsul in the island became a convert to Christianity. His name was *Sergius Paulus*, and it is in the account of this visit and conversion that Luke introduces the name *Paul* as being applied to the apostle. May it not be that he chose to be called only by that name thenceforth, partly in the way of doing honour to his illustrious convert, or at his request, although he may have been known by it to some extent before, as being *literally applicable*? See Acts xiii. 6—12; and *Conybeare and Howson*, Peo. Ed. Vol. I. pp. 45, 46, and 143—147.

one set out upon any errand, a messenger. We find it sometimes employed in this primary sense in other parts of the New Testament. Paul, writing to the Romans, says—“Salute Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also have been in Christ before me.”—Rom. xvi. 7. In two instances the original term is rendered by our translators *messenger*. “Or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the Churches (Gr. *apostoloi*), and the glory of Christ.”—2 Cor. viii. 23. “But I counted it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and fellow-worker, and fellow-soldier, and your messenger (Gr. *apostolon*), and minister to my need.”—Phil. ii. 25. It seems clear enough that, in Acts xiv. 4—14, the term *apostles* is applied to Paul and Barnabas, not with reference to their special mission from Antioch. They had been sent out on this special mission by the Church there. Our word *missionaries* would express the ideas exactly.

“Up to this time, too, Barnabas is always mentioned first, and Paul second, while subsequently Paul is as constantly named first, and spoken of as the chief speaker.”—Acts xiii. 43—46, and xv. 39. This is very slender ground to go upon truly, the mere order of the names—scarcely worth notice—but it is in keeping with all the rest. We do not see how an argument can be made out of it at all, unless it can be made to appear that in the transaction at Antioch *Paul only* was ordained and Barnabas not. It has not even the merit of being true in the matter of fact, as Acts xiii. 7, and xiv. 14, testify. Singularly enough, too, in the last quoted reference, Acts xv. 39, it is Barnabas that is mentioned first. He had been known and honoured as an eminent Christian for at least two years before Paul’s

conversion, and had been engaged, no doubt, and blessed in ministerial work before Paul came into much notice. He was, indeed, the instrument of bringing Paul into the foreground. But once the latter was fairly embarked, by his transcendent abilities and force of character he speedily took the lead of all others.

“It was, too, only after being thus ordained (?) we read that Paul and Barnabas exercised their official power, and ‘ordained elders in every city’—(*church* is the word, Acts xiv. 23). Neither do we know that Paul ever, before that time, baptized or administered the Lord’s Supper, or engaged in any other ecclesiastical function besides preaching.” There are several instances of baptism recorded in connection with Paul’s labours—Lydia and her household, Acts xvi. 15; the gaoler of Philippi, ‘and all his,’ ver. 33; ‘many of the Corinthians,’ ch. xviii. 8; and ‘certain disciples’ at Ephesus, ch. xix. 1—5. There is only one reference to his being present at a dispensation of the Lord’s Supper, at Troas, Acts xx. 6—11. The circumstances, in all these instances, were manifestly such as naturally to bring out incidental mention of the ‘ecclesiastical functions.’ There is one remark generally applicable to these secondary arguments we have been considering—they are of a purely *negative* kind, founded on the silence of the previous record. Now, silence is just simply *nothing*; and, with nothing for the foundation, no superstructure can be raised; from nothing as a premiss, the legitimate can only be nothing. The previous narrative in the Acts is manifestly brief and cursory, in comparison with what follows, from the 13th chapter. From aught that appears to the contrary, Paul may have been called an apostle many a time before in the strictest and highest sense; and

we have no doubt he was—both he and Barnabas may have taken part in many an ordination, baptism, and dispensation of the Lord's Supper; and we have no doubt they did. It will scarcely be contended, surely, that Paul and Barnabas, prior to the transaction at Antioch, had only the status of a modern Presbyterian Licentiate or Probationer. Preaching the Gospel is recognised by Paul himself as the chief function of his ministry and apostleship. Writing to the Corinthians, we find him actually saying, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, save Crispus and Gaius; lest any man should say that ye were baptized into my name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel."—1 Cor. i. 14—17.

There is a modification of the recognition theory of ordination which insists on its not being initiation to or conferring of office, but only *recognition*. This has been propounded and defended with an amount of wordy sophistry that was amazing. When we ask, Recognition of what? Is it of office already conferred from another source; or is it only of fitness or qualification for office?—as it is manifest it must be either the one or the other, if it be as alleged no conferring of office—we get only pertinacious and irrelevant wordy confusion for answer. Whether it be the one or the other it is clear that, according to the theory, there must be multitudes who, as possessing the requisite qualifications, are already in office, though never yet recognised as such, and never may be. But it is surely not necessary to discuss this theory, so silly, absurd, and uncritical, not worthy of a minute's consideration by any person of intelligence.

In our treatment of this question, Was Paul ordained? it has been far from our purpose to disparage Dr. Smyth's work on Presbytery as a whole. Our remarks apply only to one small section of the volume. Nor are we to be set down as helping the cause of the enemies of Scriptural Presbyterianism. That form of Church government we firmly believe to be of divine right and original. Presbyterianism, and as part and parcel of the system, Presbyterian ordination, have firm footing in the Word of God. But they do not rest on one passage alone. It is always damaging to any cause to adduce Scripture proof for it which can be shown to be inapplicable. And we think that we have done real service to the cause of truth, yes, and to a Scriptural Presbyterianism, when we have shown that the transaction at Antioch, recorded in the thirteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, is certainly not to be taken as a case of *ordination* in the proper sense of that term.

VII.

RECEPTION "NOT TO DOUBTFUL DISPUTATIONS."

"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations."—Rom. xiv. 1, *Auth. Vers.*

Interpreters of Scripture sometimes err in confining their attention to a single expression, without taking into view the context, which often limits or otherwise modifies the import and bearing of the statement or exhortation. An example is furnished by this verse, the meaning and application of which have given occasion to much discussion, and have, we believe, been much misunderstood and misinterpreted. It is a matter of some importance that we should try to arrive at a true exegesis. The passage commencing with this chapter, and continued to at least ch. xv. 7, manifestly relates to one subject throughout. It is requisite that we endeavour to have clear ideas of the whole passage, its drift, the subject and the parties to which it refers, in order to come to a true interpretation of the first verse. Three questions may be propounded. 1. Who were they described as "weak in the faith?" 2. What was the nature or kind of the reception enjoined? 3. What is the real meaning of the phrase rendered "not to doubtful disputations"—so rendered in both the Authorized and Revised Versions?

1. *Who were they described by the apostle as "weak in the faith?"* Were they ascetics or Judaizers? Some take the one view, some the other. Alford thought the truth lay in a combination of the two. "The over-scrupulous Jew," he says, "became an ascetic by compulsion." In this Moses Stuart concurs. Asceticism is a somewhat vague term.

The apostle is sometimes more intelligible than his commentators. The fact is indisputable that the party alluded to abstained from the use of flesh as food, eating only herbs; and they did so for some reason not specified by the apostle, but which would be perfectly well understood by those to whom he wrote. What was that? We are not aware that it was for the same reason or reasons as our modern *vegetarians* allege. But some have concluded it was lest they should wittingly or unwittingly partake of that which had been offered in sacrifice to an idol; and thus the subject would be the same as that taken up in 1 Cor. chaps. viii. and x. But that is to travel out of the record. Abstinance from meats offered to idols rested on *moral* grounds. Those who did so abstained that they might not be participators in or give countenance to the *sin* of idolatry, and Paul would not speak of such as weak in the faith, rather would he have described them as strong in the faith. We need not, therefore, spend a word more on this view of the case, in favour of which there is not a word or a hint in this passage in Romans. But there is another view which meets all the requirements of the case. Let us come to it at once.

In the transition of the Church of God on earth from the old dispensation to the new it was natural, what was to be expected, what history gives us to understand was the fact, that among the Jewish converts to Christianity—and we know there were such in Rome—there would be a difference of opinion, at least for a time, in regard to the continued obligation of the Mosaic law with respect to the distinction of meats as clean and unclean, with regard also to certain times as holy. These were the weak in the faith, the word *faith* in this instance being used in the

objective sense, as it usually is when it has the article prefixed, meaning the doctrine to be believed.* This was the fact, although they were expressly taught, and might have been fully persuaded that the ceremonial law was wholly abrogated by the advent of Christ, and was no longer obligatory upon any one. Yet while abrogated in point of obligation, there were reasons why compliance with its requirements, on the part of Jewish converts, should not be wholly abandoned for a time. In the first place, it was respectful to the law and the Law-giver. It was becoming and proper that what had been so clearly promulgated and stringently enjoined by the Most High, what had been observed so long with divine approbation, should not be laid aside in practice all at once. The Mosaic ritual indeed was dead, but there should be no indecent haste in its interment. It was every way fitting and proper that it should have an honourable burial. This reason might not have much weight by itself with some. But secondly, there was a motive from Christian policy. The Gospel was to be first preached to the Jews. The first preachers of the Gospel were themselves Jews. If they had wholly abandoned the observance of the Jewish ceremonies, a strong prejudice would have been excited in the minds of many of their unbelieving countrymen against their doctrine, preventing them from entertaining it for a moment. This is what Paul means when he says, "I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some." "To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law as under the law," of ceremonies to wit, "to them that

* The Revised Version strangely omits the article, though it is in the original.

are without law," that is, the Gentiles, on whom the ceremonial law was never enjoined, "as without law," in respect to his doctrine and converse with such, never requiring of them, when they received the Gospel, that they should in any way observe the Jewish ritual; "not being without law to God, but under law to Christ," namely, the moral law, which is of perpetual obligation upon all, a rule of life in the hand of the Mediator, "that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak."—1 Cor. ix. 20—22. The weak here, as in Rom. xiv., means such Jewish believers as were not yet fully persuaded of the abrogation of the Mosaic ritual. The apostle would by no means induce such to violate any lingering convictions regarding it which they might still entertain, but would go along with them in practice, so far as his concurrence could have no misleading effect. Nay more, he had laid it down as a rule, that every Jewish believer should continue to observe the Mosaic ritual, and that no Gentile believer should do so. "Was any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Hath any been called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised."—1 Cor. vii. 18. It is not possible to affix any other interpretation to the first part of this verse than that which we have put upon it. Of course that part of the rule was designed to be only temporary and transitional.

Paul's own conduct was in exact accordance with such teaching. He observed the Jewish festivals. He took upon him the vow of a Nazarite.—Ac. xviii. 18.* When he

* Some think it was Aquilla that had the vow. The verse might be so construed, but Alford has shown reason that seems sufficient for the opinion that it was Paul.

would have Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess, to accompany himself in preaching the Gospel, he circumcised him, avowedly from that motive of expediency to which reference has been made.—Ac. xvi. 1—3. For a similar reason, when he was come to Jerusalem, viz., that he might conciliate the Jews there, he “purified himself” with four men who had taken a vow, and was “at charges for them.”—Ac. xxi. 17—26. In all this there was no compromise or dereliction of principle. Whenever principle came to be involved in any way, no man could take his stand upon it more decidedly than Paul. When Peter “dissembled,” exhibiting a *practical* inconsistency on this point, he “resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned.”—Gal. ii. 11—14. There was a party of *Judaizers* in the early Church who insisted on Gentile converts being circumcised and keeping the law of Moses. Paul set himself most determinedly against this party. Although he had himself circumcised Timothy at Lystra, as we have seen, yet when some at Jerusalem proposed that Titus, who was a Greek by descent on both sides, should be circumcised, he “gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour.”—Gal. ii. 3—5. While asserting that the Mosaic economy was glorious, he teaches that the Gospel dispensation is greatly more so. “For verily that which hath been made glorious hath not been made glorious in this respect, by reason of the glory that surpasseth.” He compares the Jewish people, in their dim perception or ignorance of the typical and temporary nature of the ceremonies of their religion, to Moses with the vail upon his face, but this vail “is done away in Christ.”—2 Cor. iii. 7—15. When the Judaizers represented circumcision and the keeping of the ceremonial law as necessary to salvation,

he indignantly denounced such a doctrine as subversive of the Gospel. Writing to the Galatians, who were Gentiles, he thus exhorts—"Stand fast, therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage. Behold I Paul say unto you that, if ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing. Yea, I testify again to every man who receiveth circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace."—Gal. v. 1—4. When the matter is presented in this light we find him using a vehemence of language in regard to the "carnal ordinances" (Heb. ix. 10) which might seem unjustifiable but for the circumstances. Not contented with designating them a yoke of bondage, he speaks of them as "rudiments of the world," and "weak and beggarly rudiments."—Gal. iv. 3—9.

"Him that is weak in the faith." These words are to be construed in the closest connection. Dr. Wardlaw, unless we misunderstand him, seems to separate them as if the meaning were, Him that is in union with Christ by faith, although he is weak, receive ye. What he says is—"Those, observe, whom they are enjoined to 'receive' are persons 'in the faith'—believers in Christ."* This makes the apostle speak of persons as weak without indicating wherein the weakness lay; and altogether the construction is so forced, strained, and unnatural that, if Dr. Wardlaw really meant it, he stands, we believe, alone in it. On the contrary, commentators are generally agreed that saving faith in the subjective sense is not meant, and with reason. A weakness in that is not so leniently treated elsewhere in the New Testament. "If God so clothe the grass of the

* Wardlaw on Romans, vol. III., p. 213.

field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"—Matt. vi. 30 ; comp. Lu. xii. 28. "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?"—Matt. viii. 26. "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"—Matt. xiv. 31. "O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have no bread?"—Matt. xvi. 8. The word is frequently used in the former sense, as already noted, especially when as here the article is prefixed. Thus in the phrase "Obedient to the faith."—Ac. vi. 7. "He that once persecuted us now preacheth the faith of which he once made havoc."—Gal. i. 23. "Striving for the faith of the Gospel."—Phil. i. 27. "Exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints."—Jude 3. And in many other places. There is no weakness in the truth itself, considered apart from the person who does or should believe it. The particular doctrine in respect to which the weakness is predicated is that of the abrogation of the Mosaic law of ceremonies, as is clear enough from the whole passage. The weakness, again, may contemplate deficiency in the capacity to apprehend the truth in all its bearings; or directly it is deficiency in the persuasion of it. The language seems designedly comprehensive. The case supposed is that of one who is lacking in the 'full assurance' referred to in ver. 5, whether this spring from defect of mental capacity, from neglect or want of time and opportunity to study properly the evidence on which the truth rests, or from strong lingering prejudice.

2. *What was the nature or kind of the reception enjoined?*

It has been very generally taken for granted that the reference is to the admission into the membership of the Church of such as had not been in membership before.

Almost every writer one takes up who makes any allusion to the verse understands it thus, without any attempt to reason the matter. So far is it, however, from being self-evident, it is abundantly plain that such is not the reference. The whole scope of the passage shows that the apostle speaks to the several parties as all in the membership of the Church already, and he addresses his exhortation to all alike with perfect impartiality. The original word *proslambanesthe* (receive ye) in the active voice signifies *to take in addition to* something else. Its use in the middle voice, which is that employed here, is thus exhibited by Robinson, "1. *to take to one's self*: g.d., to take by the hand and draw aside, Matt. xvi. 22. Mark viii. 32. So to take to one's company, intercourse, house, &c." References follow. Then as a second meaning, "2. *to receive to one's self*, i.e., to admit to one's society and fellowship, to receive and treat with kindness." The references are to the 14th and 15th chapters of Romans, where it is repeatedly used, and to Philemon, ver. 12 (Rev. Vers.) and 17, where it is applied to the reception to be accorded to Onesimus, who was clearly at the time a member of the Church already. It is not, then, *ecclesiastical* reception that is meant, but *brotherly*. The apostle himself makes this perfectly plain in the next chapter, where the subject is continued. Summing up his exhortation on the subject, he says, ch. xv. 7, "Wherefore receive ye one another, even as Christ also received you, to the glory of God." Receive ye *one another*. Reception into Church fellowship is not *mutual*. Church courts receive members, suspend, or exclude. But how could there be any similar action or reaction on the part of those received? Presbyterians at least cannot comprehend this, and even on Congregationalist principles it is

simply unintelligible. Haldane, however, seems to think it quite the reverse. On ch. xiv. 1 he says, “*Receive ye, That is, into the Church, to the fellowship of the brethren, in all the ordinances of Christ’s house.*”^{*} When we read this we turned with some curiosity to his comment on the 7th verse of the 15th chapter, and were not a little surprised to find the following: “*Receive—Mr. Stuart understands this as signifying to show kindness. But the word means only receive. It expresses nothing of kindness. It refers to the reception of each other as Christians to the fellowship of the Church. They ought, indeed, to manifest kindness with respect to all who are thus received, but the word does not express this. This method of giving, as is thought, a more emphatic meaning to words than usually belongs to them is attended with the worst effects. Here it conceals a most important part of the will of God respecting the grounds on which Christians should receive each other to Church fellowship. The command to receive into fellowship is turned into a command to show kindness.*” All this is dogmatic enough. It is mere assertion, without the shadow of an attempt at proof; and every single statement in it is positively untrue, not only without reason but contrary to reason. Had it been a person of less note who wrote in this rather dictatorial style, seeking to thrust upon us his own interpretation as a divine command, absurd as that interpretation demonstrably is, we might have deemed it enough to treat it very summarily, meeting assertion with assertion. We have already done more, and presented what we believe should be sufficient. But, since it is one to whom we, in common with the whole evangelical world, freely and delightedly acknowledge our-

^{*} Hald. on Rom. ed. 1842, vol. III., p. 189.

selves so largely indebted—one, moreover, who usually is so logical, precise, and accurate as Robert Haldane—we must, it seems, sift the matter more thoroughly, and the more especially as a principle is deemed to be involved, “a most important part of the will of God.”

We believe Stuart's rendering of *proslambanesthe*, show kindness, to be perfectly correct. Suppose, however, for a moment, that we consent to be tied down to Haldane's one meaning, *receive*, what then? Are there not many kinds of receiving besides receiving into the fellowship of the Church? One man may be described as receiving another to his house, his hospitality, his friendship, his service, partnership in his business, his home, his love, or his heart. Royal and noble persons have what they call their ‘receptions.’ The connection must decide what particular kind of reception is meant in each case, when the word is used. We have seen that Paul uses this identical Greek word twice in his Epistle to Philemon respecting the reception he would have him to accord to Onesimus, whom the connection clearly shows to have been already received into the fellowship of the Church. “Receive him as myself.” In the present instance there is a connection, too, which ought to be decisive. “As Christ also received you.” On these words Haldane remarks—“The manner in which Christians are to receive one another to Church fellowship is as Christ has received them,” and then he goes on to descant on the manner in which Christ has received them, not seeming to perceive that he is employing the word in two totally diverse acceptations or applications, wholly unconscious apparently of the utter incongruity. “The manner”—yes it is the manner or *mode* of the reception, and not merely the fact, that is the

very point to be noted. This is plain, not only from the apostle's use of the words *kathōs kai, even as, in like manner as*, but from the whole tenor of the previous exhortations— not to despise, not to judge, not to put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in the way, to bear the infirmities of the weak, not to offend, grieve, destroy, not to please themselves, but every one to please another for his good to edification. It is the mode of the reception that furnishes the very matter and substance of the exhortation throughout. This being admitted, it must be further manifest that the mode in which Christ has received them is made the exemplar, test, standard of their reception of one another. The only question that remains, then, is, *How* did Christ receive them, the persons designed to be included in the apostle's word "you?" Not certainly into the membership of the Church on earth as a visible organization. That cannot be the meaning. Take the case of Paul himself. Christ manifested Himself to him on the way to Damascus in a miraculous manner, and converted him from being a bitter persecutor to be a disciple. Was that his reception to the Church visible? No, his formal reception into the visible Church was, not by Christ, but by Ananias, when he baptized him.—Ac. ix. 17, 18. *How*, then, we ask again, did Christ receive them? Why, clearly, to His love and favour. He *showed kindness* to them, according to Stuart's definition of the term. The exhortation, therefore, is simply another form of that given by the Redeemer Himself, Jo. xiii. 34, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." The apostle of the Gentiles seems to have had these words before his mind when he wrote. The resemblance in the mode of phraseology is

striking, and we are far from thinking it accidental. The commandment in itself was an old one, but the test or standard was new. The old test was, Thou shalt love thy neighbour *as thyself*; but now that Christ has come, He says, *As I have loved you*, that ye also love one another. Comp. Jo. xv. 12. That, we think, should settle the question of the apostle's meaning in the case we are discussing. But if not, there are other very plain considerations leading to the same conclusion.

The epistle was formally addressed to the Church in Rome, that is, to the persons constituting the membership, who, of course, were all already received in that sense, although (this also of course) other Churches besides that at Rome, and other persons besides those already members, may and should benefit by the perusal of it. In it he bids them to receive one another. Now, if he were intending to lay down a rule for the admission of persons not hitherto in the membership, has this any resemblance to the form it would take, so far as relates to them or any one else—'Ye who are already in the membership of the Church, receive one another into the membership of the Church?' Is not this a palpably impossible construction? In the apostolic age, when candidates for membership were converts from Judaism or heathenism, the ordinary method of their formal admission was by the administration of the initiatory rite of baptism on a profession of faith. If any one says it was *always* so, and should be always so still, that only strengthens our argument. By means of Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost 3,000 souls were added to the Church in Jerusalem undeniably by baptism.—Ac. ii. 41. Did these 3,000 baptize one another? Our Anti-paedo-baptist friends of the close communion section

still insist upon adult baptism as the only door of admission to the enjoyment of Church privilege with them. Do they baptize one another, and by immersion too? If so, it necessarily follows that every man and woman of them must be *twice baptized or oftener*, and so received into the membership after they have been received into the membership, which is absurd. Let the reader reflect a moment, and he will see that what we state is literally so, that is, if "receive ye one another" be taken to mean baptize ye one another. Not to waste many more words on a matter so obvious, let us suppose a case of reception to Church membership, and we will take one the most favourable we can imagine to the view we oppose, one, namely in a Congregationalist Church. A candidate or a number of candidates are to be admitted. The congregation is assembled, that is, the Church in the only sense they allow to the word *church* as a visible organization. The power of admission, we believe, according to their order, rests with the whole body. The candidate, or candidates as the case may be, make a profession of their faith, and answer any questions that may be put to them. Then, by voice or vote, the congregation intimate their willingness to receive them, and do so formally by giving them the right hand of fellowship, or in some other way. Try to apply to such a case, if you can, the apostle's exhortation, "Receive ye one another." The Church receives the candidates; but how could it be said that the candidates receive the Church—"into the Church"—"to Church fellowship"—receive those into the Church who already constitute the Church? The candidates, in that case, must be already a Church by themselves, even before they are in the Church, and the Church is received into the

Church after it is a Church! View it as you may, the thing is replete with the most glaring absurdity—so glaring indeed that one can only wonder how any man possessed of even a tithe of Mr. Haldane's mental power could fail to perceive it.

The plain conclusion is that already indicated. However or from whatever quarter the will of God may be gathered as to the terms or conditions on which persons are to be admitted to the fellowship of the Christian Church—we are not now discussing the general question, but merely the application of this passage—and whatever may be the conclusion arrived at, most clearly and certainly this passage in the 14th and 15th chapters of Romans has nothing to do with it. The apostle is laying down rules as to the manner in which those, who are all alike already of acknowledged standing in the Church, should demean themselves towards each other, and that with reference to one particular point of difference of opinion, in the special circumstances of the period. To understand the passage as Mr. Haldane and others have done is not to interpret and apply, but to misinterpret and misapply; and this is always a serious matter, however good the cause may be imagined.

3. What is the real meaning of the phrase *mē eis diakriseis dialogismōn*, rendered “but not to doubtful disputations?”

This is the clause which presents the greatest difficulty. That our translators felt the difficulty is manifest from the circumstance that they have put another rendering in the margin. The renderings that have been proposed are various, but we have nowhere met with one that we consider satisfactory as exhibiting the apostle's idea. For the

sake of condensation and clearness we will classify. It will be observed that the two last words in the original are both nouns. The renderings turn chiefly on the meaning affixed to the former, and to this, therefore, our attention shall be mainly directed.

The first class of renderings we notice is that which takes *diakriseis* to signify *doubts*. "It is taken in this sense in our version, *not to doubtfulness of disputes*, not for the purpose of doubtful disputation. That is, not so as to give rise to disputes on doubtful matters. Luther (und verwinet die Gewissen nicht) and many others take *diakriseis* in the sense of doubt, and refer the *dialogismois* to the weak brethren: 'Not so as to awaken doubts of thought, *i.e.* scruples.'"—*Dr. C. Hodge*. The fact is, however, as *Dr. Hodge* proceeds to remark, that the word never has this sense in any other instance in the New Testament or in classic usage. The Greek, one of the most copious of languages, had plenty of other words expressive of doubt, so that, if the apostle had designed to express the idea he could be at no loss for a word respecting the significance of which there could be no question. The translators of our Authorized Version of the Scriptures were unquestionably men of great erudition. How then, it may be asked, came they to assign a meaning to the word which it never has elsewhere? The explanation is easy. The verb *diakrinō*, from which the noun is derived, signifies primarily *to separate*, then, *to distinguish*, &c. Naturally it comes in the middle voice, which has a reflexive sense, to mean "*to be in strife with one's self, i.e. to doubt, to hesitate, to waver*"—*Robinson*. Thus doubt appears to have been suggested as a signification of the noun. But it seems to have been forgotten that a noun has no modification corresponding

to the middle voice of a verb. It is perilous to give a translation to a word in Scripture from mere conjecture, in contravention of established usage, *quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi*. The only case in which conjecture is allowable is that in which no such usage can be adduced.

A second class of renderings and expositions takes *diakriseis* to mean judgments. "Not to judge his doubtful thoughts."—*Marg. Auth. Vers.* "Or for decisions of doubts."—*Marg. Rev. Vers.* "Sit not for scrutinizings of thoughts, *i.e.*, not with searching and pronouncing judgment on their opinions: comp. v. 3—15: [but the verb there is the simple *krinō*.] Others, *doubts, scruples*."—*Robinson, Gr. Lex.* "Not so as to make decisions in respect to his opinions."—*Stuart*. Afterwards paraphrased thus—"Let not this (*viz.* the reception spoken of) be such as will lead you to sit in judgment upon the opinions of those who are weak in the faith in respect to the matter that follows." "It is therefore better to take the word in its ordinary sense, which gives a meaning to the passage suited to the context, not to the judging of thoughts; *i.e.*, not presuming to sit in judgment on the opinions of your brethren. *Grotius*: 'Non sumentes vobis dijudicandas ipsorum cogitationes.' This is the injunction which is enforced in the following verse."—*Dr. C. Hodge*.

Notwithstanding the eminence of these names, and they might be added to, and notwithstanding the seeming favour which these renderings get from the context, we believe them liable to the same objection as the first class; that is, they take *diakriseis* in a sense which does not belong to the word. The verb *diakrinō* from which it is derived, as already observed, signifies primarily to separate, then to

discriminate, to distinguish, to discern clearly. From this it naturally comes to signify to judge, to decide, but in a good sense, as judging or deciding for one's self, never so far as we are aware in a bad sense. So with the noun. It is sometimes employed in the classics to denote a deciding, interpreting, as of dreams or omens; a judgment, but also in a good sense. A judging of persons or characters in a condemnatory way is an essentially different idea, and we do not believe a single instance could be adduced of this word being used to express it—certainly not from the New Testament elsewhere. Now, if it mean judging in the present instance, it must be taken in a bad sense, or what is deemed such, for the apostle forbids it. We may observe here that there seems a strange confusion of ideas in regard to things that very markedly differ, on the part of the critics we have quoted, in which they are far from being alone. It is quite common to hear persons repudiating the notion of sitting in judgment on the opinions of others. We never could understand this. To forbid a man to judge the opinions of others, to our apprehension amounts precisely to the same thing as forbidding him to have any opinion of his own on the same subject. Judging *persons* is quite a different matter. The one is positively a duty, if we would hold by all truth: the other is a sin. The one is commanded: "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."—1 Thess. v. 21. The other is forbidden: "Judge not, that ye be not judged."—Matt. vii. 1. It is somewhat marvelous that so clear a thinker and so able a theologian and critic as Dr. C. Hodge should fail to perceive this palpable enough distinction. At all events we must protest against the Apostle Paul being supposed to labour under the confusion. When, in the course of his exhortation, he intro-

duces the idea of judging persons in a condemnatory way, as he does in the 3rd, 4th, and 10th verses, twice in the 13th, of this chapter, he uses a different word, not the compound *diakrinō* but the simple *krinō*, which has much the same latitude in Greek as our corresponding English word judge, and like it is often used to convey the idea of condemnation. *Diakrisis* no more signifies judging in a bad sense than it signifies doubt. The ablest critics may be sometimes led astray by mere similarity of sound.

A third class of interpretations is that of those who bring in the idea of disputation or discussion as expressed by either the one or the other of the two words *diakriseis dialogismōn*. Thus in the text of our English Bible. Erasmus translates, "Not to the determination of disputes," which might be taken to mean either that the apostle forbade all discussion of the matters referred to, or else the very opposite, that he would have them to discuss away for ever and never cease!—not a very lucid exposition most assuredly. Alford renders, "'discernments of thought,' lit. i.e. disputes in order to settle the points on which he has scruples." What he thus presents as a literal translation is by no means consistent with the paraphrase that follows, although he unaccountably makes the one the alias of the other. His paraphrase shows that his mind was running in the groove of our Authorized Version. The same explanation in the general is made by Scott, Haldane, Chalmers, and others.

This class of expositors we hold to be in error also. We cannot object to them on the same ground as to the two former, namely, that they take either word in a sense which it never has. *Diakrisis*, in the classics, though not in the New Testament, is sometimes used to signify a

dispute or quarrel. *Dialogismos* also is frequently employed, and in the New Testament, to signify reasoning in thought or in words. Nevertheless we do object most decidedly to the interpretation in this instance on the broad ground of common sense. The renderings and paraphrases all tend in one direction, and lead to one conclusion. They would make the apostle forbid all discussion at least of the subject in hand—the very subject he is discussing himself. Is it for a moment to be imagined that he who was beyond question one of the most rational of men, addressing Christians as rational beings, forbids them to seek any settlement of the points on which they have scruples or doubts?—forbids them even to try to solve a weak brother's doubts? Very strange it would be surely, if it were true. How is the truth to be exhibited in all its bearings, or as founded on its proper evidence, without reasoning? How can the Gospel be preached, or converts made to Christianity without reasoning and argument? How can a man be induced to give up his errors and embrace the truth without reasoning? Would that Christian be manifesting genuine love who knew his brother to hold a single erroneous view or principle, and would not try to convince him of his error? The apostles, and especially Paul, never set before them any such impossibility. At Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews, “Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three Sabbath days reasoned, *dielegeto*, with them from the Scriptures.”—Ac. xvii. 2. So at Corinth “every Sabbath.”—Ac. xviii. 4: and at Ephesus, ver. 19. At Cæsarea, in the presence of Felix, he so “reasoned of righteousness, and temperance, and the judgment to come,” that he made the Roman procurator to tremble on the judgment seat.—Ac. xxiv. 25.

At Damascus he “confounded the Jews who dwelt there, proving (*sumbibazōn*) that this is the Christ.”—Ac. ix. 22. Then at Jerusalem he “disputed (*sunezētei*) against the Hellenists.”—Ver. 29. At Athens he “reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the market-place every day with them that met with him.”—Ac. xvii. 17. At Ephesus, again, we find him “reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.”—Ac. xix. 9. And we find him last in Rome, calling the chief of the Jews together, and persuading (*peithōu*) them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening.”—Ac. xxviii. 23. This very Epistle to the Romans contains some of the most magnificent specimens of close, consecutive, and powerfully conclusive reasoning ever given to the world. And to come to the subject in hand—what was it? The question, as we have seen, on which there was a difference of opinion amongst the Christians at Rome, and to which the exhortation has reference, resolves itself simply into this, Is the Mosaic ritual binding on Christians? or, is it not abolished by the advent of Christ? Are we to be told that he forbids them so much as to touch that question, or discuss it in any way? Can that be a right interpretation? How could they ever come to be, every one fully persuaded in his own mind on the subject, as he expressly wants them to be (ver. 5), without discussing it? He forbids them, forsooth, and by way of setting an example, he incontinently plunges into the discussion to an extent himself; yes, and settles it too here and elsewhere in his writings, so far as reasoning and apostolic authority could have weight with any one.

We may, perhaps, be told it is only angry and unseemly strife and debate that is meant, not amicable discussion.

The apostle, however, makes no such distinction. It cannot be shown that the phrase he employs necessarily involves it. What is more, the commentators themselves do not observe it. Many of their renderings shoot clearly beyond it. It is very remarkable that, if the apostle, in this initial exhortation, refers to discussion of any kind, in the subsequent expansion of it he never once again makes the most distant allusion to anything of the sort. He forbids despising, judging, setting at nought, putting a stumbling-block in the way of, grieving, destroying, offending, making weak, a brother, and seeking to please only themselves : but there is not a word that can be construed into anything like a distinct allusion to controversy. Personal acrimony, bad feeling of any kind, is not an essential element in controversy. It simply arises from the infirmity of human nature, and may be the concomitant of what, considered in itself, is very good. If the apostle, in this first verse, forbids controversy at all, he forbids discussion of all and of every sort on the subject. This seems to us a veritable *reductio ad absurdum*.

We never could attach any definite meaning to the phrase "not to doubtful disputations," or make an intelligible application of it in the connection in which it stands. What disputation is there, or can there be, that has not more or less of the element of doubt mixed up with it, at least to some minds? What doctrine is there, however true it is, or important it may be deemed, that has been not only doubted or disputed, but repudiated, denied, rejected by some, and by persons calling themselves Christians too? We are, therefore, obliged to translate and interpret for ourselves, and the true interpretation, after all, seems simple enough. Let us come to it.

The noun *diakrisis* signifies primarily and properly the act of separating or distinguishing, and then a distinction or difference as perceived objectively. It occurs only in two other places of the New Testament, and it so happens that both are in Paul's Epistles, once in the singular and once in the plural. Heb. v. 14—"But solid food is for full-grown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil"—*pros diakrison kalou te kai kakou*—literally, for, or in order to, the distinguishing of good and evil. In 1 Cor. xii. 10, again, speaking of the distribution of spiritual gifts, Paul says, "and to another [is given] discernings of spirits"—*diakriseis pneumatōn*. Robinson makes it denote in these instances "the act or power" of distinguishing or discerning, but he does not explain how it applies to the power, which, by the way, is true only of the latter citation from Corinthians. It is by a figure of speech that it comes to denote the power, namely, metonymy, by which a cause is put for its effect, an effect for its cause, or generally one thing for another with which it is intimately connected, or to which it stands related in some way. Here (in 1 Cor. xii. 10) the differences of the spirits is put metonymically for the power of discerning these differences. This is very manifest from the simple circumstance of the word being plural. A power or faculty in the mind is not plural. Here then we have the ordinary signification of the word, which is neither doubting nor judging in a bad sense, and there is no need to go beyond in interpreting Rom. xiv. 1.

As regards the other word *dialogismōn* it is quite unnecessary to go into detail. It may be rendered thoughts, reasonings, or opinions. These are all ordinary meanings, and any one of them will make good sense, but we prefer

opinions. The rendering we propose is—*Him that is weak in the faith receive ye: not into distinctions (or differences) of opinions*, that is, not into a mode of treatment different from that exhibited to the strong, and occasioned by a knowledge of the difference in opinion. More freely rendered, it might stand thus—*Him that is weak in the faith receive ye (i.e. in a brotherly way), without making any difference on account of his opinions*. Of course the application is limited by what follows in the passage. It is not opinions on any or all subjects, but on the one subject afterwards brought distinctly to view. We have called our second form of translation more free, but when the idioms of Greek and English are considered, we think ourselves entitled to call it literal in that view—idiomatically literal. The recommendations of it are various and strong.

1. It gives to every word its ordinary signification and proper force. The force of the preposition *eis, into*, is not to be overlooked. 2. It is the most natural construction, and, once presented, it is really the one which we think must commend itself to the acceptance of every intelligent scholar. The only objection to it that we can imagine is, however, on this very score. It might be said that it is unnatural and forced to take differences of opinion for differences in the mode of reception or treatment springing out of the differences of opinion. If, however, as we have seen in 1 Cor. xii. 10, the apostle can employ a similar phrase, *differences* (the very same word) *of spirits*, to denote by a figure of speech the power of discerning those differences, an objective idea put for a subjective, it is fully as natural to take differences of opinions metonymically also for differences of treatment arising from these, both being objective ideas but most intimately connected. But there

is no need even to suppose such a figure employed, if we take *dialogismōn* to be the genitive of cause, occasion, or origin—distinctions of, that is from, arising out of, or occasioned by, *opinions*—and it is thus we have construed it in our second or idiomatic translation. 3. It obviates all necessity for supposing any ellipsis of a word, as Stuart does of a second *proslambanesthe* or an *estō*. 4. It suits the context better than any other. Starting with the general exhortation to receive the weak in the faith without making any distinction on account of opinions, the apostle immediately proceeds in the 2nd verse, and again in the 5th, to indicate what the opinions are to which he refers. Then he, in most natural order imaginable, goes on to define precisely the mode of reception, or demeanour, which he would have the one class to exhibit towards the other. The one was not to assume towards the other a patronising, supercilious, or contemptuously pitying air or manner, whether of speech or conduct. And, in particular, the strong brother was not to act wilfully a part which would be grievous or offensive to the feelings of the weak. He was never, by mockery of his scruples, or ridicule of his weakness, or in any other way, to tempt or induce him to do what he had scruples in doing, so long as he was not fully persuaded of the abolition of the Mosaic ritual, but still had a lingering prejudice in favour of its continued obligation; for that would be to seduce him into doing violence to his conscience, weak as he was, and might even have the effect of driving him away altogether from the profession of the Gospel. In a word, the conduct of the one towards the other was to be of the most cordial, loving, tender, considerate, brotherly kind, notwithstanding the differences to which allusion is made.

A question has been raised, whether in the reference, verses 5 and 6 of this chapter, to *days*, the weekly Sabbath is included. We believe not, that the apostle was not contemplating it at all. 'The 'days' are in the same category with meats, as clean or unclean. There were many days appointed to the Jews by the ceremonial law besides the weekly Sabbath, to be observed *as Sabbaths*; and it is to these only the reference is. Alford argues strenuously for the reverse. "*I therefore infer that Sabbatical obligation to keep any day, whether seventh or first, was not recognized in apostolic times.*" At the same time he would have it "carefully remembered, that this inference does not concern the question of the observance of *the Lord's Day as an institution of the Christian Church analagous to the ancient Sabbath, binding on us from considerations of humanity and religious expediency and by the rules of that branch of the Church in which Providence has placed us, but not in any way inheriting the divinely-appointed obligation of the other, or the strict prohibitions by which its sanctity was defended. The reply commonly furnished to these considerations, viz., that the apostle was speaking here only of Jewish festivals, and therefore cannot refer to Christian ones, is a quibble of the poorest kind: its assertors themselves distinctly maintaining the obligation of one such Jewish [!] festival on Christians.*" The italics are all his own, and there was small need for them. It is this effort of the learned critic himself that is quibbling of the poorest kind, and, what is vastly worse, it is about the most demoralizing piece of writing we have ever had the pain to peruse, an attempt to remove the Christian Sabbath from the rock of divine prescription and plant it on the ever-shifting quicksand or fluctuating billows of ocean. Multi-

tudes will cast all his cautions to the four winds, and not without reason. The apostle does not once use the word *Sabbath* in the case. The weekly Sabbath was not instituted or first promulgated by Moses. It is as old as the world. It was instituted, and its observance exemplified, if we may so speak, by the Creator Himself. It was made, not for Jews only, but for man, and not for man as already fallen and depraved, but for man while yet in his state of innocence; a striking proof, when duly weighed, of the perpetual obligation of the Sabbath law. Were Adam and Eve Jews? Was creation the work of a Jew? Only things Jewish are included in the apostle's reference. The weekly Sabbath was not peculiar to Judaism. Therefore it is not included. The command to observe it has its place in the very centre of the Decalogue. This stands out broadly and distinctively from all ceremonial ordinances, as a summary code of *moral* law in the Old Testament, while it has its constructive sanctions in the New. It alone was written by the finger of God once and again on the two tables of stone; and these alone were deposited in the ark of the testimony, the special symbol and remembrancer of Jehovah's special presence with the chosen people. The apostles, we believe, observed both Sabbaths, the seventh day and "the Lord's Day." There was a reason for this, in addition to the desire to avoid exciting prejudice. The unbelieving Jews frequented their synagogues on the seventh day. The rules of the synagogues admitted of the apostles and evangelists expounding the Old Testament Scriptures there. Thus there was furnished a most desirable and convenient opportunity for preaching the Gospel to their unbelieving countrymen, of which we know from the inspired record they eagerly availed themselves. At the same time, we

learn from the Book of Acts that they were accustomed to hold meetings for worship and conference on the Lord's Day. Now that the first day had taken the place of the seventh for very sufficient reason, the latter was no longer *of binding obligation* on Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles, any more than the other sacred days, also called "sabbaths," enjoined by the law of Moses.

In a subsequent article of the present series we shall adduce, from another of Paul's epistles, what we regard as plain enough proof of the continued obligation of the Sabbatic law, of the change from the seventh to the first day of the week, and of the reason for that change.

VIII.

THE MEDIATOR NOT OF ONE.

GAL. iii. 20.

“Now a mediator is not a mediator of one ; but God is one.”
And the mediator is not [the mediator] of one (of these); and God is one.—Right rendering.

This has been regarded as one of the most difficult passages to interpret in the whole Bible. Dr. John Brown, of Edinburgh, in his Exposition of the epistle, says—“Perhaps no passage in Scripture has received so many interpretations as this.” He tells us that Winer, at the time he wrote, reckoned they were about 250. But although ours may be the 251st, we do not despair of its being accepted, substantially at least, as *the* correct one, by those who will read and weigh our reasons. As a matter of literary curiosity, however, we may first present some of the many attempts that have been made to elucidate it.

Scott, who takes the mediator referred to, to be Moses, says—“It was, however, well known that ‘a mediator’ was not appointed to act merely in behalf of one party in any covenant, but of two at least : yet only one party in the Abrahamic covenant was present when the law was given, even God Himself. For the nation of Israel was not the other contracting party in that covenant ; unbelievers among them had no share in the principal blessings of it ; and all believers in every age and nation were concerned in it by virtue of their union with ‘the seed’ to whom the promise was made.” *Com. in loco.* Not to notice other objections to this, we may simply observe that, if the Sinaitic covenant was entered into, not with the nation of Israel, but with believers in every age and nation, as this

view assumes, then the inevitable conclusion is that Gentile believers till the end of time are bound to observe every jot and tittle of the law of Moses—a conclusion wholly at variance with the apostle's teaching in this epistle and in all his other writings. It is even contradictory of the immediate context, where the apostle represents the law as given for a temporary purpose—"added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come.'

Bengel has a marvellous syllogistic explanation. We need not cumber our page by quoting in full. One or two sentences from a foot-note of his translator will give the reader some idea of it, premising that by the term *one* in the first clause of the verse, Bengel understands, "one and the same unchanging being." The note says, "The syllogism is one of the first figure in *Ferio*. The major proposition is: One does not make use of that mediator. The minor is: But God is one; and the conclusion is, therefore God does not use that mediator."* The translator gravely informs us that the conclusion "is perfectly sound according to his (Bengel's) statement." Aye, verily, so it is, if you only admit the major proposition. But it is just as easy, as nearly as possible the same thing, to admit the conclusion at once. "The mediator does not belong to God, but to the law." Was the law, then, a personal entity, acting independently of God? Bengel actually makes the law *a party* in the Sinaitic covenant, instead of taking it as the covenant itself. "That party, to which the mediator belonged, is not one and the same with God, but different from God, namely, *the law*." Moses does not belong to God! Surely the writer might have been startled into distrust of his own judgment when he looked back on

what he had written, and found such absurd conclusions flowing from his pen. How the Galatians must have stared in sheer amazement had some learned critic stood up among them and seriously propounded such a syllogistic interpretation "in *Ferio*" of the apostle's words! They apprehended them better.

Dr. Eadie, like the two we have already referred to, understands the mediator in the previous verse as indicating Moses. "As the giving of the law is described here, there can be no doubt that Moses is the mediator, whatever might be the position of the high priest in subsequent times"—alluding to Gwynne's view, which we shall notice presently. The design of the apostle, according to Dr. Eadie, is to depreciate the law in comparison with the promise to Abraham. In giving the law there was the intervention of angels and of Moses. But God dealt with Abraham directly and without the intervention of a mediator. So he interprets. "God is one, and, therefore, mediatorless. God Himself, without any intervention, speaks the promise to Abraham; the promise is conveyed through no third party, as was the law." We might ask here, Is this true, according to Scripture? Did God ever transact with man—*could* He—without a mediator? But without insisting on this, the explanation so confidently propounded breaks down most egregiously when we try to apply it to the first clause of the 20th verse. "Now a mediator is not of one"—"equivalent to saying," writes Dr. E., "No mediator can belong to one party—*of one* emphatic—but two parties at least are always implied." Well, what is the antithesis to this, according to the explanation? But one of the two *parties* was wanting in the giving of the promise to Abraham. That is the

antithesis which logical consistency requires. But no, that is not it; it is, but a *mediator* was wanting in the Abrahamic covenant. This is utterly incoherent.

Gwynne takes the mediator in the passage to be "the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood, or, more accurately speaking, the high priest for the time being," the phrase "in the hand of a mediator," in the 19th verse, having reference to the *administration* of the law, although the previous phrase, "ordained by angels," must of course be taken as describing the *giving* of it. Such a double reference is obviously objectionable, and will scarcely commend itself to any reflecting mind. But let us come to the application of the scheme to the 20th verse. "Admitting it to be a fact that the law was administered by the high priest with the office and authority of mediator, how, it may be asked, does that fact sustain the conclusion assumed to be based upon it, namely, that 'it was only to continue until the seed should come to whom the promise was made?' St. Paul shall supply the answer with more than his usual conciseness. The Levitical high priest, though invested with the dignity, and discharging the functions, of a mediator, was not *a mediator indeed*, for the reason immediately subjoined, that 'a mediator is not a mediator of one party, but of two. Whereas, in the case of the high priest, there was but one party distinct from the mediator, for 'God is one,' or but one, as the words imply—the high priest, the officiating mediator, being himself a member of what should properly have constituted the second party, namely, the people, and consequently 'was not such a high priest as became us—holy, harmless, undefiled, and *separate* from sinners.'—Heb. vii. 26." We have here another curious exemplification of the manner in which

a subtle intellect may over-reach and impose upon itself, by what we might describe as an unconscious dexterity in the use of words. There is nothing in the whole passage to suggest the mediatorship of the high priest under the law. The mediator of whom the apostle speaks, whoever he may be, is spoken of as a reality and not as a myth. The exposition introduces the high priest as the veritable mediator referred to ; but, so soon as he is introduced, as if touched by the wand of a critical conjuror, presto ! he is gone, vanished from the scene, merging his individuality, dignity, mediatorial functions, and all, in the body of the nation. That cannot be a correct interpretation which assumes the *existence* of the mediator, and necessarily in the very same breath, and very same connection, assumes his *non-existence*, even though it were in a different sense. All may not be able to see the force of this objection, which we take to be fatal to the scheme, were there no other ; but any one may appreciate what we have further to observe. There is here the same absolute want of logical coherence, though in a different direction, which we have seen in Dr. Eadie's interpretation. 'A mediator is not a mediator of one party, but of two.' Very well, what then ? Was there one *party* wanting under the law ? No, that is not it, as any one can see at a glance by looking back on the quotation ; it was the *mediator* that was wanting. Where is the relevancy of this ? There is none. The writer seems to have had some latent feeling that all was not right, for he strangely speaks of "What should properly have constituted the second party, namely, the people." Why, the people *were* clearly and properly the second party, without any mincing of the matter, and throwing the high priest in with them could not have the effect of making them no *party*. The

only effect it has is to make him "not a mediator indeed."

Those who talk of *parties to a covenant*, in interpreting the text under consideration, are really travelling beyond the record. It is true that, in an earlier part of the chapter, the apostle speaks of the transaction with Abraham as a covenant. The idea there clearly is its abiding *validity*. Being ratified by God, the law, which was 430 years after, could not invalidate it. Then arises the question, as based upon this view, in the 19th verse, "What then is the law?" What was the use of it, if the promise is to be so regarded? "It was added," says the apostle, "because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom (respecting whom) the promise was made." Be it observed, it is spoken of no longer as a *covenant*, but simply as "the promise." The apostle is speaking, in this immediate connection, of the two things, the promise and the law (the latter not even *as law*), simply as revelations of the method of salvation, in illustration of his grand thesis, that salvation is not of works but of grace. The law, in the passage, does not mean the ceremonial law as distinguished from the moral, but the whole body of the statutes, ordinances, and revelations given to Israel at Sinai. The apostle says this was added, or *given in addition*. To what? The whole bearing of the passage clearly indicates, in addition to the promise; and no amount of super-subtlety and refinement of criticism can remove that impression. It is not that one law was superadded to another law—the ceremonial to the moral, promulgated in the Decalogue—as Gwynne insists. Where would be the relevancy of that to the apostle's argument? How would that be an answer to the question, What then the law? which clearly springs from the previous statement, that the promise was not

invalidated by the law? The Decalogue was certainly a very different thing from the promise to Abraham. And were not ceremonial observances required and attended to throughout all the long ages that preceded the giving of the law? We can see no "mystery" about one thing being given in addition to another, even though the two should be of a totally different nature, the one from the other.* All that the apostle's language really implies is, that one mode of revealing God's gracious salvation—adapted of course to the men, the times, and the circumstances—was added to a previous one. How could this writer venture to speak of the law as "having no sensible relation to the promise—all whose provisions seemed diametrically opposed to the promise?" The apostle asks in the very next verse, "Is the law then against the promises of God?" And his solemn rejoinder is, "God forbid." The promise spoke of a Saviour to come, under the name of "the Seed." The law, in all its ceremonial ordinances, typified and foreshadowed that same Seed.

Dr. Brown proposes to read the first clause of the 20th verse interrogatively. "The law was given by the hands

* In illustration of this, one Scriptural citation will suffice. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (spiritual blessings); and all these things (temporal blessings) shall be added unto you."—Matt. vi. 33. The Greek word employed here is the very same as that in Gal. iii. 19. There is surely a much wider difference between things spiritual and things temporal than there is between the promise and the law. Mr. Gwynne fixes his critical eye upon a single word with no little subtlety, but often, as in this instance, in such a way as shuts out of view its general connection and use in the argument where it is employed. This leads him into confusion of ideas and doctrinal representations that are to some extent not only unsystematic, but unscriptural.

of Moses as a mediator. But was *he* not the mediator of Him who is one and the same for ever? Now God, who appointed Moses as mediator, is one and the same—unchanged and unchangeable." This is presented with diffidence. The author is aware of the objections to it. The word *one* is used in an unusual sense, and it would require the past tense where we have the present.

But enough of these references. Commentators and critics seem to have become completely bewildered with this passage, and have multiplied words only to the darkening of counsel. It seems to us plain enough after all. The one grand misleading idea with the greater number is the assumption that, not Christ, but Moses or some other mediator, is intended, and thus the whole beauty, force, and point of the apostle's reasoning is utterly missed. Let us see what help Scripture itself can give towards the elucidation of this point. 1. Moses is never once named in this Epistle to the Galatians, from beginning to end. 2. The title of *mediator* is never once given to Moses in the whole New Testament. It is useless to refer us, as Dr. Eadie does, to the writings of the Jewish Rabbis. But he adds, "The allusions in Heb. viii. 6, ix. 15, xii. 24, also plainly recognise the mediatorship of Moses." This is by no means plain to us. The context in these passages furnish fully as good ground for Gwynne's notion, that they imply the mediatorship of the Jewish high priest. The truth is, that they do not *necessarily* imply the mediatorship of any one but Christ. Christ is "the Mediator of a better covenant" (Heb. viii. 6)—that is, than that which was *revealed* by Moses, or than that which was *administered* by the Jewish high priest. And so of the rest. 3. The title *mediator* occurs in four other passages

of the New Testament besides this in Galatians. Three of these are noted above. The fourth is 1st Tim. ii. 5. In all these it is expressly applied to Christ. In none of them, as we have seen, is it applied to any other by any necessity of implication or construction. 4. The last-named passage seems decisive. "There is one God, also one Mediator between God and men, *Himself* man, Christ Jesus." One Mediator—not two or three, Moses, the Jewish high priest, and Christ—one only, and that is Christ. It would seem, on the whole, that the writers of the New Testament—Paul, at least—were accustomed, in speaking and writing, to reserve the application of the title *Mediator* exclusively to the Saviour. The Galatians knew that from his preaching among them, and so they were in no danger of applying it to any other when he used it in this epistle. Dr. Brown has said, "What is so difficult to us might be, probably was, perfectly plain to the Galatians, calling up a train of thought which the apostle, by his discourses when with them, had made familiar to their minds." Very true, and with respect to more passages than this perhaps, but we think the materials for a solution of the difficulty, in this instance, were within easy reach and lying upon the surface.

Those who object to Christ being taken as the Mediator referred to in this passage do so with very insufficient reason. Some content themselves with dogmatic assertion. That is easier. Dr. Brown thinks the view "cannot be brought out of the words of the apostle. 'The word' may be considered rather as the giver of the law than the mediator through whom it was given; and if the reference had been to Christ, the language in the 19th verse would not have been *a* mediator, but *the* mediator, if not the

apostle's expression elsewhere 'the *one* Mediator between God and men.'" There are really two objections here, the second being the absence of the article in the 19th verse before the word rendered mediator. On this we remark—1. If there were any force in the objection it would militate equally against the application of the word to Moses, for he was unique in his function as Christ was in His. 2. The objection cannot be sustained by the general usage of the Greek article. The mere English reader may require to be informed that there is only one article in Greek, and its use by no means corresponds with that of the English definite article. Instances are perpetually occurring of no article in Greek where, in translating, the English idiom requires the definite article. The mere tyro in Greek must admit that. 3. The word *mediator*, as already stated, occurs only in four other places of the New Testament—Heb. viii. 6 ; ix. 15 ; xii. 24 ; 1 Tim. ii. 5. In every one of these the application of the term is distinctly and indubitably to Christ ; *in not one of them is the article prefixed in the original* ; and yet in the three first our translators have very properly prefixed the definite article. It is not in the translation of the fourth, because the introduction of the word *one* supersedes any necessity for it. 4. Dr. Brown actually refers to the last-noted of these four places (1 Tim. ii. 5), and actually misquotes it, inadvertently of course. If he had only turned it up and taken a casual glance at it, he could scarcely have written as he has done. Let us hear it once more, for even in our translation, and to one wholly ignorant of Greek, it ought, as already hinted, to be decisive of the whole question at issue here—"There is one God, one Mediator also between God and men, *Himself* man, Christ Jesus." It should be

noted further, that while in the original of Gal. iii. 19, the word *mediator* is without the article, yet it has it in verse 20. This, according to the usage of the Greek] article, indicates that the mediator of the 20th verse is *the same* as the mediator of the 19th. This is quite sufficient, even were there no other reason, to set aside the interpretation of Cameron, who takes the mediator of the 19th verse to be Moses, while the mediator of the 20th verse is Christ. *Notwithstanding the presence of the article in the 20th verse*, our translators of both Versions, A. and R., have ventured to render in this unprecedented manner, “*Now a mediator, &c.*” We have no manner of doubt that the translation should have had the definite article in both verses thus—“*ordained by angels in the hand of the Mediator. And the Mediator is not of one, &c.*” Even the indefinite article *in the 19th verse*, however, would make perfectly good sense, certainly not in the 20th.

The other objection has quite as little rational foundation, and is quite as easily disposed of. “*Christ is nowhere in Scripture called the Mediator of the law.*” We answer—1. If it be meant that this precise phrase, “*the mediator of the law,*” is nowhere used of Christ, that is true, but it is equally true of Moses. We have already shown that the title *mediator* is not once applied to him in the whole New Testament, and that is all that can be legitimately appealed to here. If, however, it be meant that the idea which the phrase may be properly taken to express is not to be found, we demur most decidedly to that, for—2. The objection proceeds on the assumption that the word *mediator* in this passage *must* somehow be understood in an inferior sense, as meaning merely *a medium of revelation*. This is certainly a sense which the word has nowhere else

in the New Testament, and to insist upon it is virtually to beg the whole question. The critic, moreover, in making the objection, is thus seen to violate the very canon of interpretation implied in the very terms in which the objection itself is propounded. Let it be borne in mind that *mediator*, according to the apostle's use of the word, signifies, not a mere medium of revelation, but *one who makes reconciliation between God and men*, and then it must be apparent that the objection is wholly pointless. Had Christ nothing to do with the giving of the law? Dr. Brown's language admits that He had—that He was in fact the *Law-giver*—and we may be sure Dr. Brown was too good a theologian not to admit more than this, namely, that it was *in His character as Mediator* that He was the Law-giver. Now this, we take it, is precisely the apostle's idea, very plainly expressed too. The law was “ordained by angels in the hand” (that is, *under the authority*, as we shall show by-and-by) “of the Mediator.” The objection we have thus been considering we regard as amounting to a contradiction (unintentional of course) of the apostle, under the name of interpreting his words. Though Christ were nowhere else in Scripture presented as the Mediator of the law, yet we believe He is so presented here, that is, in the sense of His being the mediatorial Law-giver—the only sense really admissible. We understand the apostle's design to be to assert that He is Mediator both in respect to the promise and the law—we understand him to make that assertion most plainly and emphatically. Nay more, we understand that assertion to be an essential element in the apostle's argument in the whole passage, without which it cannot be really apprehended or appreciated. Yet strange as it appears to us, that is the very idea which the great

mass of commentators set themselves, as it were, to shut out.

Dr. Eadie's objections are briefly put, and may be almost as briefly answered. Having given in a sentence or two what we regard as the true interpretation of the 20th verse thus—"Now He (Christ) is not the Mediator of the one dispensation only, but of the other also. But God is one—the one God gave the law and the promises (query *promise*), and in both cases He has employed the same Mediator"—he immediately adds—"But the mediator of the context is very plainly Moses, and that paraphrase assumes greatly more than the text asserts." Curt and dogmatic enough! We think we have made it very plain that the mediator of the context is *not* Moses; and, as to the other part of the statement, we have seen that Dr. Eadie's own exposition amounts to this, that it takes *no meaning* out of the apostle's words. *Less* it is not possible to take out of them. But we are surely well warranted in assuming *more*—in assuming that Paul, writing under divine inspiration, did not write incoherently as most of his expositors do, when they try to interpret this passage.

Mr. Gwynne propounds his objection in a paragraph, composed in such an extraordinary strain that we shall present it entire, especially as we have a further purpose to serve in doing so, which will appear in the sequel. After referring to the notion that Moses is the mediator of the passage, he says—

"The kindred (?) notion that Christ is the mediator intended, which also boasts of not a few supporters, chiefly amongst the most ancient expositors, with a fair sprinkling also of the modern, would seem, were it not for the high authority to which it lays claim, almost too preposterous to be entertained. That Christ should be the

mediator of the law of Moses, 'seeing that there are priests who offer gifts according to the law'—Heb. viii. 4—the mediator of a law expressly abolished at His coming, and abolished for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof!—at the same time that He is distinctly stated to be 'the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises'—Heb. viii. 6!! is so extravagant a supposition that one might almost have thought that it needed but to be broached to be condemned. Notwithstanding, it also has its supporters, which only shows to what extravagance the most gifted human intellect may be seduced, if once it lets go the clue which inspired testimony alone supplies, which clue in the present instance is *diatageis* [the word rendered *ordained* in our Version, 19th verse,] simply and literally explained, which points with grammatic certainty to the clause where the true solution is to be sought, and where it is indeed found without difficulty and without doubt."*

The notes of exclamation in this are the author's own. One should be very clear about the ground he stands on himself before he indulges in such language with reference to others. We by no means subscribe to the criticism on the word *diatageis*. It cannot be sustained by solid reasons. But we do not mean to pursue that. We have already seen that, notwithstanding the fancied "grammatic certainty," and notwithstanding the further fancy based upon it, that the true solution of the apostle's meaning has been "found without difficulty and without doubt," the author's supposed explanation will not actually hang together, and is totally irrelevant to the apostle's argument. In these circumstances the strong words and the doubled notes of exclamation might be retorted with real reason; but we forbear. We desire to correct a mistake which we believe prevails widely—a defective estimate of the law given by Moses—very broadly exhibited in the paragraph we have extracted. The law of Moses and the

* Gwynne's Com. on Gal., Dublin, 1863, p. 163, 4.

Gospel are often compared, and even contrasted in some respects, but there is no *such antagonism* between the two as this paragraph distinctly makes the ground of objection to the idea of Christ being the Mediator referred to by the apostle in the passage of Galatians under consideration. Dr. Eadie has made the Abrahamic covenant “mediatorless.” Mr. Gwynne makes not only the Sinaitic covenant, but the whole Mosaic economy without “a mediator indeed.” Did we not know that both of these critics by no means intend to assert all that their language clearly and naturally imports, we should be tempted to ask how, on their ground, either Abraham, the father of the faithful, or any one from Moses to the fulness of time, ever came to the possession of eternal life? Such representations are wholly without warrant from Scripture, and are even contradictory of what we regard as the very plain teaching of the apostle in this very passage of Galatians which they profess to expound. God never transacted with sinful men otherwise than through the “one Mediator.” According to our views of revealed truth, *He could not*. We may say it with all reverence, for it would be inconsistent with His infinite perfections. It would thus be to deny Himself. The Abrahamic covenant was not “mediatorless,” for it was the Mediator Himself who gave to Abraham the promise, appearing to him in the visible likeness of man—we have at least one recorded instance of this in Gen. xviii.—thus anticipating, as it were, and pre-intimating His actual incarnation in the fulness of time. Christ was the Mediator of the law of Moses, not in any inferior sense, but as already explained in the sense of His being the Law-giver in His Mediatorial capacity. There were priests that offered gifts according

to the law, but they and the gifts they offered were equally types of the one Mediator—only types calculated to lead the thoughts and direct the faith of true worshippers to Him that was to come, who was even then the Saviour of all who believed in Him. The commandment going before was disannulled at the coming of Christ (Heb. vii. 18), for its weakness and unprofitableness, that is, considered in itself. Yet that law was devised and enjoined by God. Kept in its proper place, it served a temporary gracious purpose, it constituted a Gospel preached unto the fathers, and in this sense could not be regarded as wholly unprofitable. Christ is the Mediator of a better covenant than that entered into with Abraham, or that entered into with Israel at Horeb—a covenant established on better promises, that is, promises more clearly and fully revealed, not different in their ultimate issue. But that is by no means a denial that He was the Mediator of those as well. Men were saved before the fulness of time. That could not be otherwise than through a Mediator, and there is only one Mediator between God and men. The truth is, although we speak for the sake of clearness of apprehension and to distinguish some things that differ, in accordance with Scripture, of several covenants that God entered into with men, as that with Noah, that with Abraham, the Sinaitic, and the Davidic, yet after all there is but one covenant which secures the salvation of the sinner who believes. That was not entered into by sinful men, but with Christ from eternity, and the several transactions we have referred to were but so many *revelations* and *applications* of that one everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure—revelations of it made in adaptation to the times, the men, and the circumstances. The covenant which

secures salvation is one; the Church of the redeemed is one; and so the Mediator between God and men is one—however dispensations and modes and degrees of revelation have varied.

Mr. Gwynne might have quoted still stronger language used by Paul in reference to the ceremonial observances of the Mosaic law, in this very epistle to the Galatians, and yet it would have been nothing to his purpose. Thus he speaks of them as “rudiments of the world,” under which they had been “held in bondage”—ch. iv. 3—“weak and beggarly rudiments”—ch. iv. 9. The apostle’s idea in these instances clearly is, that when the observance of the Judaic rites and ceremonies was rested in as furnishing in itself sufficient ground of acceptance with God, such a disparaging description would be strictly applicable. But he gives us elsewhere a very different estimate of the economy as a whole, viewed in a different light. It was actually and positively “glorious,” although its glory paled when brought into comparison with “the glory that surpasseth.” 2 Cor. iii. 7—11. It was the glory only of the type, reflected back upon it from the infinite antitype—the glory of the shadow, which must give place to the presence of the transcendent glory of the substance.

One other text of Scripture may be noticed in connection with this, because we apprehend it is very generally somewhat misunderstood. It is the frequently quoted verse, Jo. i. 17, “For the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” This, we suppose, is commonly understood as if it meant that grace and truth did not exist in or under the law, but “came” with the coming of Christ in the flesh—or, at least, in a comparative sense, that grace and truth are more fully revealed in the Gospel.

The latter, no doubt, is a Scriptural idea, but it is not the precise idea conveyed by the apostle's words as the verse stands in the original. The words *grace* and *truth* have each the article prefixed, and the introduction of the word *came* is not literal. A more exact rendering would be—*For the law was given by Moses; the grace and the truth were by Jesus Christ.* The verb in the latter clause is singular, used distributively—*the grace was and the truth was.* There were grace and truth in and under the Mosaic dispensation, but whatever of these was in it was (the record does not say *is* but *was*) by Jesus Christ. It is true the word employed (*egeneto*) is not the substantive verb, or that which expresses simple existence only. It is that which implies some mode of origination. That militates not in the least against our view. The grace and the truth that were in the law originated with Jesus Christ. A glance at the context corroborates our view. John the Baptist testified of Christ—“This was He of whom I said, He that cometh after me is become before me: for He was before me”—ver. 15. *He was before me* is a clear reference to His eternal pre-existence. “For of His fulness we all received, and grace for (*anti*) grace”—ver. 16, that is, as some interpret, *grace in addition to grace*, we would rather understand *grace over against grace*; meaning grace in the recipient *corresponding to* grace in the bestower. It seems to us wrong to limit the *we all* of this verse to those who had believed in the Baptist's day. We think it includes at least all who had believed since Moses, if not indeed all believers since the beginning of time. These had received of Christ's fulness, and grace for grace. Then it is added, “For the law was given by Moses; the grace and the truth were by (*or through*) Jesus Christ.”

There are still some minor critical details requiring to be noticed in order to a correct understanding of this passage.

The word rendered "ordained" in the 19th verse (*diatageis*) properly signifies *ordered* or *arranged*. It does not, strictly in itself, mean *promulgated*, although the apostle's reference clearly is to the giving of the law. Still less can it be taken to signify *administered*. If it could, and this meaning were put upon it, then we would be shut up to the conclusion that the law was administered, not by the Jewish high priest and his subordinates, but by angels. Plainly, both meanings cannot be forced upon it at once—arranged by angels, and administered by the Jewish high priest. What the precise part which angels had in the giving of the law was—what the mode and limits of their action—must remain an inscrutable mystery. But that they had an important part assigned to them is manifest. It is alluded to in more than one place, both in the Old Testament and the New. See Deut. xxxiii. 2; Ps. lxxviii. 17; Acts vii. 53; Heb. ii. 2.

The phrase "in the hand" in the 19th verse has been generally taken to denote *instrumentality*. This is entirely a misapprehension. It is wholly beside the point to refer us to expressions in the Old Testament. Messages were said to be sent by the hand of the prophets. In Exod. xxxv. 29 the Israelites are described as bringing offerings "for all manner of work, which the Lord had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses." The meaning of course is, not that Moses was commanded to make the all manner of work with his own hand, but that the command was conveyed by the hand, that is, the instrumentality, of Moses, as the messenger of God to the people. See, also,

Exod. ix. 35 ; Hos. xii. 10 ; Hag. i. 1, in the original. It is not Hebrew, but Greek usage, however, that must decide the point. Besides, even the merely English reader may perceive a wide difference between the two phrases, *by the hand*, and *in the hand*. Three passages have been referred to in the New Testament. Two of these are wholly irrelevant, because the preposition is different from that in Gal. iii. 19. They serve *our* purpose, however, in the way of contrast. The third is decisive in showing that the phrase does not denote instrumentality. In Acts v. 12 we read—“And by the hands (*dia dē tōn cheirōn*) of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people.” Again, in Acts xv. 23, we read—“And they wrote *thus* by them.” In the original it is, *dia cheirōs autōn*, *by their hand*. The idea in these two passages is, clearly enough, that of agency or instrumentality, but let it be observed, the preposition employed is *dia* not *ēn*. The third reference is to Acts vii. 35—“This Moses, whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? of him hath God sent *to be* both a ruler and a deliverer, with the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.” The phrase in the original is not, as in the two other passages referred to, *dia cheirōs*, *by the hand*, but *sun cheiri*, *with the hand*, and should have been so translated. The idea intended to be conveyed is clearly not that of instrumentality, but as nearly as possible the reverse, that, namely, of authorization, control, guidance. Moses was commissioned and guided by the angel. For who was this angel? No mere created being, however exalted, but the Angel Jehovah, the Messiah Himself. This is manifest from the record of the occurrence in Exodus iii., where He reveals Himself under the incommunicable name, I AM.

The phrase in Gal. iii. 19 must be understood in the same way. Whatever may have been the mode in which angels were employed in the giving of the law to Israel at Sinai, they were in all their actions under the authority and direction of the One Mediator between God and men. He was the Law-giver at Sinai, as He was the Sender of Moses to be a ruler and a deliverer.

Coming to the 20th verse, we find that some word must be supplied, in the first clause, in order to complete the sense. What must that word be? "The mediator is not of one." One what? Some would understand the word *party*. Others would seem to understand the word *race* or *nation*. It is pure imagination to supply either the one or the other. When one who writes with any expectation of being understood employs an ellipsis, there is always that expressly used in the context which supplies it without an effort. The apostle had not been speaking of parties to a covenant. Neither had he been making any express reference to the distinction between Jew and Gentile. But his whole argument, down to this verse, and in immediate connection with it, is expressly about two things, the promise to Abraham and the law subsequently given to Israel. Here we have indubitably what most naturally supplies the ellipsis. The mediator is not (the mediator) of one of these only—of one to the exclusion of the other. If there be a reference to one* more than to the other, it is to the law, as the last mentioned, and that to which those whom

* We find that we have here unconsciously used an ellipsis almost precisely identical with that of the apostle. Does any one, in reading the above sentence, need to search through the nooks and corners of his fancy for a word to supply with our word *one*? The comments of many on the text would be nearly on a par with that for *rationality* and *common sense*.

the apostle was opposing in his argument looked exclusively for salvation—at least their doctrine legitimately bore such construction; for, if the observance of the law of Moses was still necessary to salvation, their faith in Christ was vain, He profited them nothing. But we are inclined to take the reference as being equally to both promise and law. It is a positive idea expressed under a negative form. The mediator is not mediator of one, that is, he is mediator of both.

There is a particle (*δέ*) twice employed in this 20th verse, which our translators, both A. and R., have taken the very questionable liberty of rendering diversely—the one by *now*, and the other by *but*. Whatever force the one has, the other must be taken to have exactly the same; and in this instance they are simple connectives.* The two clauses of the 20th verse do not introduce any new idea in the argument. They are merely amplicative, explicative, and corroborative of what goes before. *And the mediator is not of one.* No, He is Mediator both of the promise to Abraham and of the law given by the ministry of angels. The Mediator of both is one and the same. *And God is one.* It was one and the same God who gave the promise to Abraham and who gave the law to Israel at Sinai.

These critical details may seem dry, but they are needful to enable us fully to apprehend the apostle's meaning, and to appreciate the admirable continuity, cogency, and beauty of his reasoning in the passage. Having glanced at them we are prepared for presenting a summary view of his argument, at least in part.

* There are two particles, *μέν* and *δέ*, often used in Greek when a contrast or comparison is intended—*μέν* on the one hand, *δέ* on the other—not so in Gal. iii. 20.

The Judaizers insisted that it was necessary to salvation for even Gentiles to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. In opposition to them the apostle propounds the doctrine that salvation is not of works, but by grace, through faith in Christ. This, be it remembered, is his fundamental thesis, which his whole argument is meant to establish. In illustration and confirmation of this fundamental position, he refers, as he does in his writings elsewhere, to the case of Abraham. God promised to Abraham that in his Seed, by which the apostle gives us to understand (v. 16) Christ was meant, all the families of the earth—not the descendants of Abraham after the flesh only—should be blessed. Abraham believed God, and his faith was reckoned to him unto righteousness—for such we think the rendering should be. Abraham was not justified by submitting to circumcision, but by the faith which he had previously, and he received circumcision as a sign and seal of that faith.—Rom. iv. 10, 11. Not that his faith, any more than his circumcision, was the *ground* of his justification. But his faith was the instrument, and the only appropriate instrument, of his union with Christ, whose righteousness is the sole *ground* of the sinner's acceptance with God. If circumcision could not save Abraham, much less could his salvation be supposed to depend on his observance of the law of Moses, which was not given for 480 years after his time. The revelation of God's method of salvation made in the promise to Abraham could not be supposed to be set aside or nullified by the subsequent revelation of His will made in the law. "Wherefore then serveth the law?" is the question which the Judaizer might be supposed to put, and which would naturally enough arise in the mind of any of the apostle's readers. *What then (was) the law?*

What was its nature? Or, (*For*) *what then was the law?* Of what use was it? For what purpose was it given? This question he puts and answers in the 19th and 20th verses of the passage under consideration. It was added—super-added, if you will—to the promise, as a further revelation of the method of salvation—because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made. The phrase “because of transgressions,” or, for the sake of transgressions, as it might be very properly rendered, like others in the passage, has been strangely misunderstood. Some make it mean, in order to restrain from transgressions; others, in order to convince of sin, and so to show the need of a Saviour. This restricts the law to the moral part of it, and overlooks the limiting phrase which follows, “till the Seed should come.” The moral precepts of the law no doubt did serve both of these purposes, but these precepts being of permanent obligation, they serve such purposes still, and are not temporary or provisional in their nature. There is another view, indeed, according to which the reference is to the carnal ordinances of the Mosaic code as designed to keep Israel a peculiar people, imposed upon them to preserve them from the gross idolatries of the heathen, to which they exhibited such a lamentable proneness. But had the law, as a whole, no purpose beyond all these? These ideas need not be wholly overlooked in interpreting the apostle’s comprehensive phrase. But his main idea we take to be, that the law in its ceremonial requirements—the sole matter in dispute with the Judaizers—by its types and symbols, shadowed forth the method by which in the fulness of time the guilt of sin was to be really expiated, and the necessity of holiness as a fruit of faith. There was in it thus a clearer

revelation of the divine will on these points than the promise to Abraham contained. And this was "till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made," when the clearest revelation of all should be made, life and immortality be brought to light by the Gospel, and the prevenient shadows could no longer serve any purpose save to obscure the light of the glorious Sun of Righteousness.* The law was thus added for the sake of transgressions, being arranged by angels under the authority and guidance of the Divine Mediator, the same as the Seed mentioned in the promise to Abraham, the Seed, not only *respecting* whom, but *to* whom as the Head of His elect, the promise was made. The force of the allusion to the angels appears to be this—*although* they had a part assigned them in the solemn transaction—a fact on which the Jews were accustomed to lay great stress in the way of magnifying their law—*yet* it

* Dr. Brown, in his comment on verse 19, has ventured the statement that "the facts connected with the law being given by the hand of Moses as a mediator, plainly show that *the law was not, in its literal meaning and direct object, a revelation of the way of obtaining the divine favour.*" We have shown, we think conclusively, that "by the hand" is a mistranslation, and that Moses is not the mediator intended, the title never being given to him in Scripture, but reserved for Christ alone. But do the facts connected with the law being given by the hand of Moses as a medium of revelation, or rather the single and simple fact of its being so given—for that is all that can be meant with truth—justify the somewhat astounding conclusion that the law was not designed to reveal the method of salvation, however dimly and obscurely? If so, we are shut up to the conclusion that the Bible as a whole has no such object, for it has been all communicated and preserved by human instruments. The statement is so illogical, unscriptural, and unjustifiable, that one can only marvel at its coming from Dr. Brown. But our examination of this passage has made us acquainted with not a few strange statements.

was only an inferior and subordinate part ; they were no more than ministering spirits in the hand of the One Mediator. And the Mediator is thus seen to be the one Mediator of both the promise and the law, as God who gave both is one.

What follows in the chapter fits in exactly with this interpretation. Thus, in the 21st verse, the apostle puts a question substantially equivalent to his former one, "What then the law?"—"Is the law then against the promises of God?" Is there any such antagonism between the law of Moses and the Gospel as that which Mr. Gwynne, for instance, seems to imagine? Nothing of the kind—there is the most perfect harmony, when both are properly understood. Christ did not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil. There was One who was 'a Mediator indeed' to those who lived under the former dispensation, the same even as now. This question the apostle does not proceed to argue directly and formally, because he had disposed of it already. Such a method of repeating, under another form, a question which has been previously answered, for substance, we are familiar with in all reasoning. It serves to round off and complete an argument, and furnishes an easy mode of transition to another or previous line of thought. Accordingly the apostle contents himself here with a strong negation—*mē gēnoito**—*let it not be*—let it not for a moment be supposed. And thus he glides back most naturally to what we have called his fundamental thesis, salvation by grace. "For, if there had been a law given which could make alive"—if it were possible for the sinner's justification to proceed on the

* Uniformly rendered in our Version, with no great propriety, "God forbid."

ground of obedience to any law whatever—"verily righteousness should have been of the law" of Moses, since this was enjoined temporarily by divine authority, most expressly and in its minutest details. Whatever, therefore, the purpose of the law might be—that had been already shown—it never could have been designed to serve this purpose.

Our exposition may not, after all, present any element that is positively new, but we think we have given reasons for our views that will be found irrefragable. Truth, not novelty, is what we seek, and if what we have written tend to rescue this noble passage from the meaningless misinterpretations that have been put upon it we have our reward. Any exposition that takes the mediator referred to to be Christ will be in the main correct and coherent. Calvin, for instance (a host in himself), does so. But he seems to supply the ellipsis in verse 20, by *race* or *nation*, and understands the reference to be to the distinction between Jew and Gentile. This is far-fetched. There appears a sort of critical retribution in the fact that those who withhold from the One Mediator the honour which is due, in interpreting this passage, have been left to themselves to write what is positively incoherent. Dr. Eadie tells us, "Origen started the opinion that the mediator was Christ." We cannot accept this as a statement of fact until we have something like proof, and that, we expect, can never be forthcoming. It is only an inference, and a most unfair one, though of course quite unintentionally so. The fact, we apprehend, is simply this—Origen's writings are the earliest extant in which any interpretation of the passage, at least on this point, is to be found. The legitimate inference from this is, not that he started the opinion, but

that it was the universally accepted one down to his day. If later writers among the early Christian fathers, so-called, were so void of judgment and discrimination as to 'start' a different opinion, and write nonsense on the subject, that is certainly no reason why modern critics and commentators, with scarcely an exception, should follow in their wake, and be quite as nonsensical as they, although the light of the 19th century, with that of the 18 that have gone before, is shining around them.

If one would truly and fully understand his Bible he must exercise an independent judgment and think for himself, seeking the direction of the Holy Spirit, who is the Author of Scripture, the only infallible Guide. While he may legitimately avail himself of human aid to the utmost, let him not yield himself implicitly to the guidance of any one, however eminent or accomplished. We have seen, in this instance, how fallible some of the best are.

Another reflection is suggested by our investigation. Admirable and faithful as our English Authorized Translation of the Bible is in the main, it is yet far from being faultless. We have seen, in the course of this discussion, repeated instances of the real sense of the original being clouded or actually reversed by the terms of the rendering as regards minor details. We never could sympathize with those who, in times past, were strenuous in deprecating every proposal to have it amended. Now that the attempt has been made, we hear little or nothing of the kind. Nor do we sympathize with those who think that all references—in the pulpit, say—to faults of translation, must have more or less the effect of lessening reverence for the Bible as the Word of God on the part of hearers. We believe this to be altogether a mistake. He must be a very unintelligent

Christian indeed who confounds any translation made by fallible men with those original Scriptures written by holy men of God of old, who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The more fully and firmly any one holds the plenary and verbal inspiration of the original Scriptures, the greater must the importance appear of having *all* this Scripture given by inspiration of God, presented in a translation as minutely accurate as possible, in order that it may be to the fullest extent "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, completely furnished unto every good work."

IX.

PSALMS, HYMNS, AND ODES INSPIRED.

Eph. v. 19. Col. iii. 16.

THE passages in which these three terms occur have given rise to some discussion in respect to the punctuation of the passages, and also to the meaning of the terms. In regard to the first point, let it be understood that in the ancient manuscripts the writing was continuous from one side of the leaf or roll to the other, without any break between a word and the next, or anything corresponding to our commas, &c., so that we are at perfect liberty to punctuate in a way to bring out the real sense when translating. We believe our Versions are at fault in the punctuation of these two passages. We shall present them in parallel columns, translating literally and pointing as we think required by the meaning:

Eph. v. 18—20.

And be not drunk with wine, in which is profligacy; but be filled with the Spirit [when] speaking to one another—in psalms and hymns and odes inspired, singing and rendering praise with your heart to the Lord—giving thanks always in all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to the God and Father.

Col. iii. 16, 17.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly—in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another—in psalms and hymns and odes inspired, singing gratefully [or with grace] in your heart unto God. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

We follow in this the pointing of Tischendorf and Conybeare, only using dashes the more clearly to distinguish the different exhortations in the different classes. Alford objects, “but surely both style and sense are thus marred.” That is all he has to say. Surely, say we, both style and sense are sacrificed by clinging, as he and the Revisers do, to the usual punctuation, confounding things so different

as teaching and admonishing with singing praise to God, as though both exercises could be engaged in at the same time.

But let us come to the three terms employed by the apostle—[*en*] *psalmois kai humnois kai odais pneumatikais*. They are the same in both passages, and clearly allude to some *collection* of sacred songs that was well known. The advocates of the use of hymns, as distinguished from psalms, refer to these passages as in their favour. Some admit that psalms here mean Old Testament psalms, while they claim the hymns and odes to be different, rendering the word *pneumatikais* by *spiritual*. Others boldly insist that *psalms* must be taken to mean hymns in the modern sense! Well, where is the collection that was so well known in apostolic times? They know that there is none such to be produced, and they might as well admit at once that there was none such in existence. The nouns *psalmos* and *hymnos* are masculine, *ōdē* feminine. The adjective follows all three (not usual in the case of a single noun), and is feminine, to agree by the grammatical rule of attraction with the noun next it. It is thus manifest that it was designed to qualify all three. We turn to the Book of Psalms in the Septuagint, and there we find the plain explanation. The Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Old Testament made in Alexandria, Egypt, about three centuries before Christ, by different hands, so that some books are much better rendered than others. “A great part of the version of the psalms is quite unintelligible.”* But it was the Bible to those who spoke only Greek, as our Authorized Version has been till recently the Bible to those who speak only English. In it almost every psalm has a title pre-

* Penny Cyclop., Art. Septuagint.

fixed. Five have *en humnois*, one *ek humnois*, that is, among or from among the hymns—one out of several. Twenty have *Allelouia*. When this word is thus used as a noun, it is the equivalent of *humnos*, for *humnos*, according to its derivation, means a song of praise, and *Allelouia* means praise the Lord. There are 97 out of the 150 that have one or two of the titles *Psalmos*, *Humnos* (or its equivalent), and *Odē*. We are accustomed to speak of the whole book as “The Psalms of David,” but with no great propriety, for they were not all composed by David. The ancients had a different method of indicating briefly the contents of a book. Thus when we open a Hebrew Bible we find on the title page *Torah*, *Nebim*, *Ukethubim*, i.e. The Law, The Prophets, and The (other) Scriptures. The collection referred to in Eph. v. 19 and Col. iii. 16 is simply and undoubtedly what we would call the Book of Psalms or the Psalms of David.

It must be manifest to every reader of intelligence that these exhortations were designed to be of general application to all cases and occasions in which Christians met together for religious ends and purposes. At first view it might seem as if it were rather family and private life that was in contemplation. Even so, the argument to be derived from them for the exclusive use of the inspired psalms in public worship is an argument *a fortiori*.

But we are told the psalms are *Jewish* in their tone and mode of expression, with many references to the typical, ceremonial ordinances that have been abrogated in Christ. The objection seems to overlook the fact that praise is a purely spiritual exercise, having the glorifying of God who is ever unchangeably the same as its one great object, and His perfections as illustrated by His actings for its one

great theme. The ceremonial ordinances of the Mosaic dispensation, given by the Almighty in infinite wisdom, constituted a Gospel preached of old unto the fathers, not in words only but in overt acts and deeds, object lessons having a high spiritual import, while at the same time they embodied praise and thanksgiving to God, expressed not in figures of speech only, but in forms that addressed themselves to every outward sense and inward faculty in man. They were a prose poem, the significance of which may be and often is studied to spiritual profit by Christians down to the present day. When these considerations are taken into account the wonder is, not that the references to the ceremonies of the old economy in the psalms are so many, but that they are not more numerous. Then the references we find are rather depreciatory than otherwise. See, for example, Ps. xl. 6 ; l. 7—15 ; li. 16, 17 ; lxi. 30, 31. The sacrificial ideas and language of the Old Testament we find adopted by the apostles in their statements and exhortations, with adaptation to the Gospel, to express spiritual thoughts. Thus Paul writes to the Romans, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."—Rom. xii. 1. The gifts sent to him by the Philippians he describes as an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God."—Phil. iv. 18. So Peter addresses Christians as "built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."—1 Pet. ii. 5. And of these sacrifices we learn somewhat from Paul's exhortation, "Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His name. But to do good

and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."—Heb. xiii. 15, 16. By the Mosaic law nothing that was ceremonially unclean and no creature that had a blemish was to be offered in sacrifice. When Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, offered "strange fire" on the altar they were consumed by fire from heaven. Have those who substitute in the service of praise hymns of human invention for those given by inspiration for the purpose no fear that judgments in some form will come upon them, though it may not be in a miraculous manner?—no fear that they may hear the demand, 'Who hath *required* this at your hand?' Certainly it is what God hath *not commanded*.

It is insisted again, and by some from whom better might have been expected, that there are some portions of the inspired psalms which it would be positively wrong for a Christian to sing. It has been said and published to the world by an eminent orthodox Presbyterian minister that "many passages in the psalms are not suitable for New Testament worship," the reference being to what have been called, but with no great propriety, 'the imprecatory psalms.' At the same time, the objector was somehow constrained to admit that "they were suited to a Jew." Translated into plain English, this seems to intimate that it would be very wrong for a Christian to entertain and express personally vindictive feelings, but that it was perfectly right and proper for a Jew. "He could ask and pray for destruction and ruin to his adversaries." The spirit of the one dispensation has been contrasted with that of the other by "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" on the one side, and "love your enemies" on the other, thus pitting the Sermon on the Mount against the Mosaic legis-

lation even in things moral. It is amazing to find educated Christian ministers giving utterance to such crude views. Love is the fulfilling of the law, but was it not always so? David in the cave, where he cut off the skirt of Saul's robe, and on another occasion when he took the cruse and spear from the head of his sleeping foe, but would not permit a hair of his head to be touched, though strongly urged to slay him, was a better Christian than, we fear, many of those who object to the so-called imprecatory psalms would have been, had they lived in his day and been placed in his circumstances with their present 'spirit.' Is the God of a Christian a different being from the God of the Jew? The Old Testament declares that He is a holy and a jealous One, who will not give His glory to another nor His praise to graven images. The New Testament tells us that He is a consuming fire, One whose wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Where is the difference? The Old Testament proclaims, and the New re-echoes it, "Vengeance belongeth unto Me; I will recompense, saith the Lord." Then it is added, "But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head."—Rom. xii. 19, 20. The law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth was a law for rulers in dispensing justice. The Sermon on the Mount was designed to set aside false glosses that had been put on the precepts of morality, not to cancel jot or tittle of these precepts; and was for the regulation of the conduct of private individuals. Would any one have us to believe that, under the Christian dispensation, there should be no such thing as criminal jurisprudence, or penalty of any kind, for offences of any sort whatsoever? That is what the reasoning we

have been considering would clearly lead to. The circumstances of the peculiar people of old rendered it necessary, perhaps, that the list of punishable offences should be more extended, and the degree of punishment greater than now. But we think our modern criminal codes decidedly too lenient in some particulars—a re-action it may be from the opposite in times past—and that a little infusion of Mosaic rigour would be salutary, and even merciful, in the interest of society at large. Elijah called down fire from heaven on one captain with his fifty, and then upon another. This was no doubt under a divine impulse, and designed to strike terror to the hearts of the idolaters. When the third captain begged that his life and that of his fifty might be spared, the request was at once granted. It is said of the two Apocalyptic witnesses that, “if any man desireth to hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies,” and that they “have power to smite the earth with every plague as often as they shall desire.” What would the objector to the use of some psalms make of that? Had he been standing by Peter when he denounced instant death upon Ananias and Sapphira, or looking over Paul’s shoulder when he was writing to Timothy “Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord will render to him according to his works,” would he have “wisely reprov’d their Jewish (!) notion, and said, ‘Ye know not what spirit ye are of?’” Would he have dared to hint such a thing?

The so-called imprecatory psalms, like all the rest, may and ought to be sung as the Word of God, not as the word of man. They are God’s denunciations against the workers of iniquity. Viewed in this light, it is only a puling sentimentalism, springing from “narrow views,” that refuses to

sing them. It is thus that He would have us to praise Him as holy and just in all His ways. Granting this, the word *imprecatory* is not by any means a proper descriptive epithet to apply to them. They might be denominated *minatory* or threatening. The humble and contrite Christian who trembles at God's Word will sing them with dread lest the threatening should fall upon himself. There is little danger of any well-instructed Christian perverting them into curses upon his personal foes ; but it is God's prerogative to curse as well as to bless. Besides, all such denunciations have a plainly implied proviso. They proceed on the supposition that those against whom they are directed persevere in unbelief and impenitence. In that case it is surely the duty of the Christian as much as the Jew to acquiesce in the just judgments of heaven. Even in those psalms which manifestly refer to Judas Iscariot, he is referred to, not merely as an individual, but as the type of a class. We confess, however—it may seem to some a bold and unwarrantable statement, but though we should stand alone over it we shall say it—that we should like to see the imperatives in the passages objected to rendered as futures in translating. That would bring out what we believe to be their real meaning, and give no occasion for any one to pervert them into expressions of personal malignity.

A poet has truly said, “A God all mercy is a God unjust.” But a God all mercy is the God of the hymn-books. If His justice is referred to in them it is relegated to the future, in connection with the judgment of the last day. Meanwhile the strain is such as the following :—

“Jesus Thou art *all compassion* ;

“*Pure unbounded love* Thou art.”*

* Hymn-book of the English Presb. Syn.—Hymn 466.

Certainly not the teaching of Scripture. Thus the God of the hymn-books is a different being from the God of the Bible ; and even though we had no other reason, we should decline to use them on that account.

History has been appealed to on behalf of uninspired hymns, but the proof is a miserable failure. Pliny, a heathen who could know little or nothing of Christian practice, has been quoted to no real purpose. Tertullian, a Latin father of the end of the second and beginning of the third century, speaks of a practice *in some places*, and *in private convivial parties*, of calling one into the midst to sing songs drawn from Scripture or from their own resources, a very different thing from the stated worship of God. In another place "he expressly mentions the fact that in the African Church the 133rd psalm was uniformly used at the administration of the Lord's Supper. Nor does he compliment those who only used it at that solemnity."* But the most glaring case for the hymn-mongers is that of Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch, towards the close of the third century, a heretic. The council that condemned him did so for this amongst other reasons, that "he put a stop to the use of the psalms in honour of our Lord Jesus Christ, as if they had been modern and the compositions of modern men—and prepared women to psalmodize in honour of himself in the midst of the church on the great day of Pasch; which any one might shudder to hear." By mistranslating two particles, *hōs de as being* (*quasi* in the translation of Valesius), instead of *as if they had been*, and omitting the part of the sentence we have put in italics, some one sought to prove that this Paul set aside *hymns* and "probably suffered nothing but psalms to be used!" Even such a

historian as Neander fell into the trap. It was exposed long ago, but has been quoted since on Neander's authority, and very likely will be so for generations to come.

The late Dr. Gibson, of Glasgow, presents in a few sentences all that can be truly derived from history on the subject. Speaking of a Report by a Committee of the Free Church in 1869, he says, "The paper gives a variety of something like proofs that hymns of some kind *had been written* by various parties as early as A.D. 139, 200, 220, &c., and on to the Council of Toledo in 663. It proves that some Councils forbade the use of 'private psalms.' This prohibition continued till the 16th century. All this while there is no proof that the Church, in any sense that could be called a Church authority, either enjoined, or sanctioned, or even practised the use of human hymns in the public worship of God; still less is any attempt made to connect such use with either apostolic practice or Scripture authority."

We are reminded that even in Old Testament times worshippers did not restrict themselves to the Book of Psalms. We are reminded of the songs of Miriam, of Deborah, of Hannah, of Hezekiah, of Habakkuk; and in New Testament times of Mary and Zacharias. But these were composed for special occasions, with special adaptation to individuals, in extraordinary circumstances, and under inspiration. We are asked, Why can we not sing these? The question is already answered. Take the song of Mary for instance. Cameron's rendering of this into English verse is the 161st in the English Presbyterian Hymn-Book. Is any *man* of intelligence prepared to sing this in the way of appropriation, and describe himself as the "humble *handmaid*" of the Lord? Will he have the presumption to

say or sing of himself that henceforth all generations shall call him blessed? If he sings it at all *in worship*, and does not intend this, what else means the service? Romish mariolatry; we could put no other construction on it. Apart from what is local, individual, temporary, and extraordinary in these songs, we find the substance in the psalms. None of the Old Testament songs we have mentioned are transferred as a whole to the Book of Psalms. But there are some songs in it so transferred, *with some variations*. Surely this has its own significance. *Paraphrases* we look upon as simply a perversion of the Divine Word, putting portions of it to a use for which they were not intended.

The truth is, when men get into the habit of substituting hymns for psalms they seem to lose all proper conceptions of the nature of the service in which they professedly engage. They will sing anything smooth in versification and having some flavour of religion—not always possessed even of that—however objectionable it may be in other respects. One stands up before a congregation and says with a loud voice, “Let us praise the Lord,” and then proceeds to read out for the people to sing some such composition as the well-known hymn commencing thus—

“Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched,”

in which there is not one word of praise, nor one word addressed to God, from beginning to end, but all addressed to an imaginary auditory of wretched sinners. And this is called praising God! Would we be wrong in construing it rather as praise to themselves, for surely they are not thinking of themselves as the wretched sinners addressed? Nor is the matter made better, but worse, when a portion of Scripture like the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians is

turned into verse and sung. Is God a man that His creature man presumes to instruct Him in the nature, exercise, and manifestation of brotherly love? Taking up a hymn-book, the most extensively used perhaps of any in the world, we find the very first section has the heading "Exhorting sinners to return to God." Of the first hundred in the collection, thirty-eight are expressly addressed to man, and of the thirty-eight seventeen are expressly addressed to sinners. The 48th is in praise of a dead body! The 52nd is addressed to a spirit departed! The 53rd is entitled "On the death of a widow," and might be more aptly described as the Praises of a Widow! Need we ask, Is the singing of these praising God?

In fine, we are quite of the mind of good Romaine of the Church of England, a divine who lived and laboured in London in the last century. He wrote:—"I want a name for that man who should pretend that he could make better hymns than the Holy Ghost. His collection is large enough; it wants no addition. It is as perfect as its Author, and not capable of any improvement. Why, in such a case, would any man in the world take it into his head to sit down and write hymns for the use of the Church? It is just the same as if he were to write a new Bible, not only better than the old, but so much better, that the old may be thrown aside. What a blasphemous attempt! And yet our hymn-mongers, inadvertently I hope, have come very near to this blasphemy; for they shut out the psalms, to introduce their own verses into the Church, sing them with great delight, and, as they fancy, with great profit; although the practice be in direct opposition to the command of God, and, therefore, cannot possibly be accompanied with the divine blessing."

X.

THE CONTINUED OBLIGATION OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

“ Let no one therefore judge you in eating and in drinking, or in respect of a feast day, or a new moon, or of sabbaths, which are a shadow of the things to come ; but the body is of Christ.”—Col. ii. 16, 17.

The Messiah promised of old to the fathers had come, and fulfilled all the predictions and types that had been exhibited before respecting Him. In consequence, the whole system of ceremonial observances that had been enjoined before by divine authority, as prefigurations of the Saviour, was abolished. It terminated in Him. Hence the apostle speaks of Him in the 14th verse of this chapter as having “ blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and He hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.” But certain Jewish converts in various places, zealous for the law of Moses, insisted that it was of continued obligation, and that it was necessary even for Gentile converts to Christianity to keep it still. These Paul strenuously resisted, as virtually setting aside the Gospel, proclaiming another method of salvation than that which Christ Himself had preached, and wreathing round the necks of His disciples a yoke “ which,” said Peter on one occasion, “ neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.” Paul would put the Colossians on their guard against all such Judaizing efforts. Jealous for the glory of his Divine Master, he would have them look to Christ, and trust in His one all-sufficient sacrifice of Himself, and in that alone, for salvation.

Let no one judge you. The word *judge* (*krineto*) is often

used in the sense of censorious judging, or condemning, and it is obviously so used here. *In eating and in drinking.* The reference plainly is to the Mosaic distinction in articles of food as clean or unclean. No man has any right or warrant to find fault with you for wholly disregarding such distinctions now. A Christian has a perfect right to use any kind of food that is wholesome. Several commentators have remarked that no *kinds* of drink were forbidden by the law of Moses. That is true, but the fact seems to be overlooked that even pure water might, in certain circumstances, become ceremonially unclean, so as to be prohibited for drinking purposes, so long as the law of ceremonies was in force. See Lev. xi. 34, 36. *Or in respect of a feast day.* The feasts enjoined by the law of Moses, as distinguished from the new moons and Sabbaths separately mentioned by the apostle, were the following:—1. The Passover, or Feast of Unleavened Bread, commencing on the 15th of the first month, and lasting for seven days. 2. Pentecost, otherwise denominated the Feast of Weeks, or the Feast of Harvest, or the Feast of First-fruits. This was held on the fiftieth day, reckoned from the 16th of the first month (hence the name *Pentecost*, this being the Greek for *fiftieth*; hence also the name *Feast of Weeks*, seven weeks intervening between the 16th of the first month and it), when there was to be, with other offerings, a presentation to the Lord of two wave loaves baked from the *first fruits* of the barley *harvest*. 3. The Day of Atonement, on the 10th day of the seventh month, the only day in the whole year in which the high priest was permitted to enter into the most holy place. In strictness, this should rather be called a *fast*, but it is usually comprehended under the general designation *feast*. 4. The Feast of Tabernacles, or of In-

gathering, commencing on the 15th of the seventh month, and continuing for eight days, during which the Israelites were to dwell in booths made of branches of trees, to commemorate the sojourn of their fathers in the wilderness, when they could inhabit moveable tents. *Or of a new moon.* The Hebrews' reckoning of the month was lunar. The day of the new moon's appearing was taken to be the first of the month, and special ritual observances were by their law connected with it. *Or of sabbaths.* Besides the weekly Sabbath, there were other days commanded to be observed as sabbaths, in which no "servile work" was to be done, and on which there were to be "holy conventions." Such were the first and seventh days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, the new moon of the seventh month (also called the Feast of Trumpets), the day of Atonement or Fast of the seventh month, and the first and eighth days of the Feast of Tabernacles. These were also called sabbaths, the word *sabbath* signifying simply *rest*. But we do not think the apostle intended these by this last word in his enumeration, because these are manifestly comprehended in the previous term *heortē, feast*. It seems to us very clear that it was the seventh day Sabbaths, *as observed by the Jews according to their law, that he meant.*

Which are a shadow of things to come. A few ancient manuscripts and versions have the relative here in the singular instead of the plural, *ho* instead of *ha*, and Alford has adopted this reading in his text. He says, "if the singular be read, the relative may refer either to the aggregate of the observances mentioned, or to the *last* mentioned, *i.e.* the Sabbath. Or it may be singular by attraction, and refer to all, just as if it were plural. See Matt. xii. 4." To this we say, the relative may *not* refer to the last men-

tioned. The last mentioned is plural in the original—*Sabbaths*, not *the Sabbath*—and is so rendered previously by Alford himself. No rational ground can be assigned for the apostle making the Sabbaths exclusively a shadow of things to come. He evidently meant that the whole enumeration constituted the shadow, else why mention the other items as he does? Notwithstanding the “may be” in the sentence quoted, Alford actually goes on to render *which is* instead of *which are*. In adopting the reading which makes the relative singular, he has the great preponderance of manuscript authority against him, and the same may be said of his reading of Matt. xii. 4 referred to, while in his reading he palpably violates one of the plainest rules of English grammar—“Sabbaths which is!” In all this there is a manifest critical straining after a foregone conclusion. Yet the attempt, by such an accumulation of solecisms, is as vain as it is preposterous. It does not tend in the slightest degree towards the establishing of the writer’s “theory” respecting the Christian Sabbath, as we shall see. But it may raise a presumption, that the theory cannot be true which is sought to be established by such methods. *Which are a shadow*. Not *which were*, because, as Alford rightly observes, the apostle speaks of the things mentioned, “in their nature, abstractedly.”* *Of things to come*. Literally, *of things coming*, that is, which were future during the continuance of the former dispensation. *But the body [is] of Christ—or belongs to Christ—“i.e.,”* says Alford, “the substantial blessings, which those

* The classical reader does not require to be informed that, according to a rule of Greek syntax, a plural nominative, when it is of the neuter gender, has its verb invariably in the singular form, which must be rendered into English as a plural.

legal observances typified, are attached to, brought in by, found in union with, Christ." The system, as a whole, *terminated* in Him.

Some have inferred from this passage that Christians are freed from the obligation to keep the Fourth Commandment—a very questionable boon surely, even if it were so. But, if the remaining nine are left in the plenitude of obligation, we never could comprehend on what principle an exception is made of the fourth. Others, like the late Dr. Norman M'Leod, perceiving the inconsistency of this, would make a clean sweep of the whole Decalogue. Yet they cannot do this without limitation or explanation. The Ten Commandments, we are told, were *formally* binding on a Jew; they are not formally binding on a Christian—a transcendental distinction which conveys no meaning to our mind, a distinction in words only, representing no real difference. What would be the meaning of telling a man that a Jew was under a formal obligation not to commit theft, but that he, being a Christian, is under no such obligation? This would surely be equivalent to telling him that he may steal as much and be as dishonest as he please, so far at least as the obligation of the Eighth Commandment is concerned. In the same way it may be asked, Is the Christian under no formal obligation to abstain from murder, adultery, idolatry, or blasphemy? What, moreover, is the proper antithesis to *formal* obligation? If we are under any kind of obligation to regard the Decalogue, of what sort is it? If it be not formal, pray give a name to it, for we must confess we cannot imagine one with any real sense. When persons talk in the way we have indicated, they do not seem to contemplate seriously as they should do the fearful issues as regards the most

common morality, to which a general adoption of their view must inevitably tend. They may not think it complimentary when we say that we take their heart to be better than their head. In reality it is only the Fourth Commandment that is regarded as not formally binding, and the distinction of formal and not formal (or whatever else may be the implied antithesis) is but a subterfuge (unwittingly resorted to, no doubt, as such) to cover this exceptional treatment.

It may be objected—it has been—‘If you insist on the formal obligation of the Fourth Commandment, then you are formally bound, as the Seventh Day Baptists say, to observe still the seventh day of the week, and not the first, as the Christian Sabbath.’ In reply we say it is not true that the Fourth Commandment specifies or fixes any one day of the week to be observed as the Sabbath. Let us examine its terms. “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy”—literally, *the day of the Sabbath*, or *the day of rest*—not *the seventh day of the week*. “Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work”—not *the first six days of the week*. “But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God”—not *the seventh day of the week*, but plainly the day coming after the six days of labour, whatever days of the week these might be, and which would therefore be, numerically in relation to them, the seventh. And in the conclusion, “the Lord blessed the Sabbath day (or the day of rest) and hallowed it”—not *the seventh day of the week*. It is true that, in point of fact, it was the seventh day of the week on which God rested from the work of creation, which is made the reason for the command; still, it is equally true that this particular day of the week is not specified in the commandment, and God’s resting after the

six days of creating still abides as the reason why one day in seven is to be observed as holy to the Lord. It is also true that the Jews would understand that it was the seventh day of the week they were to observe as their Sabbath. But this they could not learn with absolute certainty from the terms of this commandment alone—they knew it otherwise, and we have further light on the subject which they did not possess. The terms of the commandment were thus, by the all-wise Author of it, purposely, as we believe, left open for a change of the particular day of the week by competent authority, and that would be none other than divine.

Dr. Norman M'Leod pronounced this method of viewing the commandment to be "trifling." It is not trifling, to state simple matter of fact—to state what the commandment actually says, and what it does not say—nor is it a thing of trifling significance to bring this clearly out. But to talk in a strain of levity about Christians not being formally bound by the Decalogue, and say, "*I was never brought out of the land of Egypt,*" was surely trifling of a most mischievous sort, and of most immoral tendency. The preamble to a law is no part of the enactment. It merely recites the occasion or causes leading to it. The preface to the Ten Commandments is not one of them, it has not even the form of a command. It exhibits a strong reason why the Israelites should regard themselves as under special obligation to keep this law. Formally and literally, the preface was for the people to whom the law was promulgated in their existing circumstances. And yet it has its lesson even for us. As the Westminster divines have succinctly and beautifully put it, it "teacheth us that, because God is the Lord, and our God and Redeemer, there-

fore we are bound to keep all His commandments." If we have been redeemed from a bondage worse than Egyptian, our obligation to keep this law is all the stronger on that account, so far is that obligation, from being in any sense, measure, or degree relaxed.

If Christians are not *formally* bound to the Ten Commandments, what then? Are they left without any law by which their conduct should be regulated—wholly without restraint of any kind? No, say some, they are under the law of love; while others put it in the stronger form, that they are to regulate their conduct not by law but by love—as if law and love were antagonistic. But love is, strictly speaking, not a law in itself at all. It is the spring, source, motive, principle of, that which prompts to all holy obedience—itself a commanded duty—and so presupposes some law extrinsic to itself; for evidently the thing commanded cannot be the law commanding that same thing. Hence the law is described as summed up in this, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and thy neighbour as thyself. But, be this as it may, it is admitted that the Christian is bound by what is called the law of love, and, this being admitted, the obligation must be further admitted to be of a formal kind. If any thing is formally bound upon Christians by the Saviour and His apostles, surely this is, that they should love God and their neighbour. But this embraces the whole law, as we have seen. On these two hang all the Law and the Prophets. If ye love Me, said the Saviour, keep My commandments. What commandments? The ten, most certainly, for these have never been abrogated. There are many indications in the New Testament that they are of continued obligation. Is not this *formal* prescription? The law of love is formally

enjoined. But this embraces the Decalogue. The Decalogue, therefore, is formally enjoined. What becomes, then, of the fine-spun and unintelligible distinction between formal obligation and that which is not formal? It vanishes into thin air, even on the ground of those who insist upon it.

But, to return to the passage in Colossians, we find Alford, in his notes upon it, reasoning thus:—"We may observe that if the ordinance of the Sabbath had been, *in any form*, of lasting obligation on the Christian Church, it would have been quite impossible for the apostle to have spoken thus. The fact of an obligatory rest of one day, whether the seventh or the first, would have been directly in the teeth of his assertion here: the holding of such would have been still to retain the shadow while we possess the substance. And no answer can be given to this by the transparent special-pleading, that he is speaking only of that which was *Jewish* in such observances; the whole argument being general, and the axiom of verse 17 universally applicable." Dogmatic and vehement enough, certainly. But a few considerations may suffice to show on which side the "transparent special-pleading" really is.

1. The name *Sabbath*, in apostolic times, was appropriated to the seventh day of the week, as observed by the Jews, according to their law. It had its fixed and determinate sense. The great majority of the Jews were not believers in Christ, but zealous for the continued obligation of their law. In these circumstances, if any one had applied the term to the first day of the week he would have been misunderstood. This is the simple reason why we never find it so applied in the New Testament, but find instead simply *first day of the week*, or *Lord's day*. The apostle, in this place, uses the word *u* its universally

received and understood application at the time he wrote, and so the passage has really nothing to do with the question of the continued obligation of the Fourth Commandment, the day being altered by the authority of the Saviour. We may be certain it never entered into the mind of Paul or those to whom he wrote to imagine for a moment that Christ's coming had the effect of abrogating that commandment. But it had the effect of changing the day—the *Jewish Sabbath* of the seventh day was abrogated. So much is clearly taught us in this place. Christ, who was the Mediatorial Law-giver at Sinai, and who claimed to be Lord of the Sabbath, has, in accordance with that claim, given us sufficient indications of His will (as we might prove from Scripture, were that our present purpose) that such a change of the day should be made. But the application of the name Sabbath to the first day of the week is not now liable to be misunderstood, the same reason not now existing. And here it may be remarked in passing, we have an unconquerable dislike to the word *Sunday*. It is of heathen origin. The same is true of *Monday, Tuesday, &c.*, and for that very reason we must avoid them, if we could find any convenient substitute. But here a principle is involved. When we hear any one invariably use the word *Sabbath* we know that he holds the continued obligation of the Fourth Commandment; but when *Sunday* is constantly employed we are dubious.

2. The words, *which are a shadow, &c.*, must be understood to refer to all mentioned before, not the Sabbaths alone, but the distinction of meats and drinks as clean or unclean, feasts, and new moons, as well. Any other construction seems to us wholly inadmissible.

8. A portion of time, considered simply as such, can be a

shadow, type, or symbol of nothing, unless it be of some longer portion of time. Thus, in the symbolical prophecies of Scripture, a day is regarded by many, rightly we believe, as standing for a year. But a particular day, or a particular series of recurring days, in the very nature of the case, can be symbolical of nothing. To say that it could is manifestly absurd. This consideration we deem most important and decisive in the present question.

4. It is clear from the foregoing that it was the rites and ceremonies distinctive of the times and days referred to, and which so largely *constituted* the observance of these times, not the times or days considered abstractly or in themselves, that the apostle meant when he wrote *which are a shadow of things to come*. Even the weekly Sabbath had its extra sacrifices and other ceremonial observances. These constituted the shadow, which the day in itself could not be.

5. If the holding of the divinely obligatory rest of one day be "to retain the shadow," what are we to make of holding a Christian *Sunday*, based upon Church authority and considerations of humanity and expediency? as Alford does, see his notes on Rom. xiv. 5, 6. According to his method of viewing the subject this must be to retain *the shadow of a shadow!*

6. Lastly—If the devoting of one whole day in seven to the worship of God, which is precisely the principle of the Fourth Commandment, and precisely what is struck at by the advocates of this *Sunday* theory—if this was a shadow, of what was it a shadow? What did it typify or symbolize? All the special-pleading that can be adduced, whether the same be transparent or obscure, can never furnish an answer to that question.

There are two other passages relied on by those who deny the continued obligation of the Fourth Commandment. "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord: and he that eateth, eateth unto the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks."—Rom. xiv. 5, 6. "Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labour upon you in vain."—Gal. iv. 10, 11.

On the first of these passages Alford comments thus:—"It is an interesting question, what indication is here found of the observance or non-observance of a day of obligation in the apostolic times. The apostle *decides nothing*; leaving *every man's own mind* to guide him in the point. He classes the observance or non-observance of particular days with the eating or abstaining from particular meats. In both cases, he is concerned with things which he evidently treats as of *absolute indifference in themselves*. Now the question is, supposing the divine obligation of one day in seven to have been recognised by him *in any form*, could he have thus spoken? The obvious inference from his strain of arguing is, that he *knew of no such obligation*, but believed *all times and days to be*, to the Christian strong in faith, **ALIKE**. I do not see how the passage can be otherwise understood. If any one day in the week were invested with the sacred character of the Sabbath, it would have been *wholly impossible* for the apostle to commend or uphold the man who judged all days worthy of equal honour—who as in ver. 6 paid *no regard* to the (any) day. [This "any," by the way, is an unwarranted gloss.] He must have

visited him with his strongest disapprobation, as violating a command of God. *I therefore infer, that sabbatical obligation to keep any day, whether seventh or first, was not recognised in apostolic times.* The reply commonly furnished to these considerations, viz., that the apostle was speaking here only of *Jewish* festivals, and therefore cannot refer to Christian ones, is a quibble of the poorest kind: its assertors themselves distinctly maintaining the obligation of one such Jewish festival on Christians. What I maintain is, that had the apostle believed as they do, he could not by any possibility have written thus. Besides, in the face of 'EVERY day,' the assertion is altogether unfounded." The same writer says on Gal. iv. 10, "Notice how utterly such a verse is at variance with any and every theory of a *Christian Sabbath*, cutting at the root, as it does, of ALL obligatory observance of times as such."

The bristling array of italics and small capitals in these quotations, in which this writer abounds, and which he no doubt thought calculated to make his reasoning more forcible, only serve in this instance to make more distinct how absolutely puerile and inconclusive it all is. A few remarks may show this.

1. The apostle was referring—and the observation applies to the passage in Colossians, as well as to those in Romans and Galatians—to questions and controversies that had arisen in the Churches to which his epistles were sent. Those to whom they were addressed would, therefore, know more certainly than we can do now, what the bearing of his language was—with what limitations it was to be understood—what he referred to, and *what he did not refer to*. There is not a particle of evidence to show that it was ever a question among the Christians in apos-

toxic times whether the Decalogue in general, or the Fourth Commandment in particular, was abrogated ; or, whether the principle of the Sabbatic law, namely, that one day in seven should be devoted to the worship of God, was not still of divine obligation. Universal terms applied within certain understood limits cannot be legitimately stretched in their application beyond these limits.

2. To say that those who hold by the principle of the Sabbatic law distinctly maintain the obligation of one *Jewish* festival on Christians, is a veritable "quibble of the poorest kind." The Christian Sabbath is not a Jewish festival. It is absurd to speak of it as such. If it be, what shall we say of the Christian (?) *Sunday* ? Is it a heathenish festival ? Or is it a combination of the two, partly Jewish and partly heathenish ? The Sabbath was made for man, not for the Jew only. And for man, too, in his state of innocency. In the inspired record of the creation we are told that God "rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it : because that in it He had rested from all His work which God had created and made."—Gen. ii. 2, 3. It has been urged that it is not said, the Lord hallowed the seventh day at *that time*, but *for that reason*. But this is a poor quibble indeed. Those who employ it overlook the fact that the same reason existed from the beginning, and still exists, so far as devoting to the worship of God one day in seven is concerned. And when it is said that God blessed and sanctified the day, what does this mean ? It cannot be understood in relation to God, but in relation to man. It can only mean that He set it apart from the other days of the week, that man might employ it exclusively in His worship and service.

To say, then, that He set it thus apart, not at that time, but 25 centuries afterwards, is plainly to contradict the record. The Passover was not required to be observed only 25 centuries after the exodus, which furnished the reason for it. And the same is true of every other commemorative ordinance having a divine sanction.

3. Alford insists that the apostle's words must be taken absolutely, without any limitation whatever in the application of them. But in that case an inexorable logic will carry him much further than he seems prepared to go. Construed thus, the apostle is made to denounce "any and every theory" of a Christian *Sunday*, "as an institution of the Christian Church, analogous to the ancient Sabbath, binding on us from considerations of *humanity* and *religious expediency*, and by the rules of that branch of the Church in which Providence has placed us," equally with any and every theory of a Christian Sabbath. Nay more, the man who pays any "regard" to stated "times" for worship, whether in private or in the family, must be set down as weak in the faith, "cutting at the root, as this (false construction) does, of ALL obligatory observance of times as such." It does not require much penetration to perceive that this is equivalent to making the apostle set down all worship as a weakness. Certainly it makes any regard for the Christian *Sunday* to be a 'turning again to the weak and beggarly elements.' The argument based upon such a construction proves too much, and, therefore, by a universally recognised canon of reasoning, it proves nothing. Such zeal for an unscriptural theory is blind and suicidal indeed.

It may be added to the foregoing that those who quote those portions of Scripture in opposition to the idea of a divine obligation on Christians to observe the Sabbath are

found for the most part, in modern times, in one section of the Church, and as members or dignitaries therein they are very far from being consistent. Their reasoning on behalf of their theory and their practice are diametrically opposed. If the Apostle Paul were permitted to revisit earth, we might imagine him addressing them somewhat after the following manner:—‘Ye men of a half-reformed Church, ye observe days and times. Ye have a whole calendar of so-called saints’ days. Ye observe a Holy Thursday and a Good Friday. Ye have a time called Easter, and a season called Lent, about which some of you make no small stir. Ye have a day regarded as especially holy, named Christmas, observed at a manifestly wrong season of the year, and notoriously grafted on an old Pagan festival. And all this while many of you refuse to acknowledge the continued obligation of the Fourth Commandment. I am afraid of you, lest the instruction contained in my epistle, as well as in other parts of Scripture, has been bestowed upon you in vain.’

On the whole, we come to the conclusion that the three passages in the epistles to which we have drawn attention have nothing to do with the principle of the Sabbatic law, that one day in seven should be set apart for religious exercises, and were never designed to interfere with the divine obligation of that principle. But as the subject is one of the greatest practical importance, we may pursue it for a little in the way of presenting some further thoughts upon it. Before doing so, however, there is an apparent discrepancy, on the part of the apostle, which it may be requisite to notice.

In writing to the Romans he makes the observance of the Jewish festivals—for it is of them alone, as we have seen,

he is speaking in all the passages we have been considering—to be a matter of indifference; while, in writing to the Galatians, he speaks of this same observance in terms of strong and even indignant censure. The explanation of the difference is not difficult. The question among the Romans was one which affected the converts from Judaism alone; and, in the transition state of the Church at the time, the apostle had no fault to find with those Jews who embraced Christianity continuing to observe the ceremonial law, so far as it was practicable, as a matter of expediency. He himself did so. But it was a different case he had to deal with in Galatia. There the attempt was made to induce Gentile converts to keep the law of ceremonies. This Paul always and most consistently resisted, as virtually making void the Gospel. The whole Epistle to the Galatians was manifestly written with the specific design of counteracting the teaching of Judaizers.

Much has been made, in relation to this subject, of the distinction between what are called moral precepts and what are called *positive*. The whole question has been made by some to hinge on this distinction. The Fourth Commandment, we are told, was a positive precept, and to make it a part of the moral law has been set down as “utterly unintelligible.” What, then, is the distinction? A very common way of putting it is this—A positive duty is one which is right because it is commanded, a moral duty is one that is commanded because it is right. But this will not stand a moment’s consideration. There is nothing right merely because it is commanded. Whatever God commands, He commands because He sees it to be right to do so. He has infinitely wise reasons for every precept He issues, however inscrutable they may be to us. A more

plausible method of presenting the distinction is, to say that a positive precept is one which enjoins what is in itself a matter of indifference, antecedent to any command on the subject. There are other definitions, but it may suffice to consider this one. Who then, we ask, is to judge of what is or is not indifferent in itself? Is it competent for fallen and depraved man to sustain himself as judge of this in every instance? For aught that he knows, the matter may be one that is far from being of such a character; and it would surely be more becoming erring creatures such as we are, instead of dogmatically pronouncing such and such a precept to be positive, to qualify the statement by saying that, so far as we can see, it is of such a kind. Is it possible for man to apply this distinction to every precept? And if he could, what good purpose is to be served by it? If there be any command of universal obligation it is surely the command to believe in Christ. "This is His (God's) commandment, That we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ."—1 John iii. 23. Is this a moral precept or a positive? What multitudes of men have never so much as heard the name of Jesus, or known aught of the Gospel message? The light or law of nature could never lead them to obey the precept, or even to form any conception of it. Yet who will say that it is a matter of indifference whether they believe or not, prior to the hearing of the message? And what matter does it make whether this command be pronounced moral or positive? It is the revealed will of God. That is enough. We do not affirm that the distinction may not be useful for some purpose, but those who make it should remember that they are not infallible. Even a precept called positive must be admitted to be *of moral obligation*, so long as it is the will

of God that it be observed. It might be well, too, to bear in mind that some of the most fearful judgments recorded in Scripture fell upon those who transgressed precepts that would be classed under the head positive. It was such a precept that Uzzah violated, and it cost him his life. So of the men of Bethshemesh who looked into the ark. So of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and their company. Instances might be multiplied. If there was one command which would be set down as positive with less hesitation than any other, was it not that which was given to Adam and Eve in Paradise, forbidding them to eat the fruit of a certain tree? yet what tremendous consequences followed their violation of it!

Let us come to the case in hand. It is a moral duty to worship God. That will be conceded by all who believe the Bible to be His Word. But constituted as man is, he must have some stated times for that worship in a social public manner. What is the proper proportion of time to be thus devoted? There must be some proportion better suited than any other to man's nature, for his full benefit, and to the nature of the case generally. But this is a question which, man left to himself, is clearly unable to solve. God has revealed it, that the seventh is the proper proportion. To us it seems wholly immaterial how you answer the question, Is the precept requiring this moral or positive, or (as some say) partly moral and partly positive? The real question to be decided is, we submit, Is the precept of continued obligation, or is it not? One thing seems clear—whether you call it moral or positive, it is not ceremonial. If any one insist that it is, we demand, What did it typify or symbolize *under the Gospel dispensation?*

Granting that the Mosaic legislation, considered as a

whole, was abolished by the advent of Christ, yet it must be admitted there were exceptions. All that is considered moral in it was so, and that will include nine precepts out of ten in the Decalogue. And is one to be set aside, as being merely of temporary obligation, on the ground of a speculative metaphysical distinction, of such a cloudy character that it seems impossible to apply it in some instances? On the contrary, we maintain that the whole Decalogue was manifestly designed to be of universal and permanent obligation. It stands out from all the rest with a distinctiveness and prominence which make it perfectly unique. It alone was pronounced with audible voice by the Almighty to the chosen people, amid all the awful manifestations of Sinai. It alone was written upon two tables of stone by the finger of God Himself. It alone, as thus inscribed, had place within the ark, the peculiarly sacred symbol of Jehovah's gracious presence. (See Deut. ver. 22; 1 Ki. viii. 9; 2 Chron. v. 10.) Not only has it this singular position of honour in the Old Testament, but we find references to it in the New, by Christ and His apostles, of such a kind as imply continued obligation. There is not a hint anywhere of the Fourth Precept being only of temporary obligation, and the particular statutes given by Moses to Israel outside the Decalogue ought not for a moment to be brought into comparison with it or with any one precept in it as regards the question of continued obligation. The idea entertained by some that, in the observance of the Jewish Sabbath, the primary circumstance was the physical rest, while the worship of God had only a secondary place, is a strange reversal of what we believe is clearly on the surface of the precept. The primary part of the command plainly is "to keep holy"

the Sabbath day; it is the Sabbath "of the Lord thy God." What can this mean but that the day was to be devoted to the worship and service of God? And the physical rest evidently had but a secondary and subsidiary place. It was enjoined in order that they might be free to keep the day *holy to the Lord* in a becoming manner. Is idleness a holy thing?

Archbishop Whately has classed the views held respecting the observance of the Lord's Day under four heads—some resting it upon the practice of the apostles; some on its primeval institution; some on the Fourth Commandment as a moral precept; and some on the same as a positive precept.* We do not acknowledge the accuracy of this classification, whatever grounds any may have given for it. For ourselves at least we refuse to take our place under any of the four *exclusively*. We rest the observance on *the revealed will of God*. That will was revealed to man at his creation. After the fall some knowledge of it was retained, and handed down in a traditional form, while special revelations were made from time to time to the fathers on whom the Spirit of prophecy rested. Through the instrumentality of Moses the laws by which men's conduct was to be regulated, till that time probably traditional and unwritten, were codified, with many minute additional particulars designed for the chosen people; while what was designed to be of universal and permanent obligation was summarized in the Decalogue, signally distinguished from all the rest, in a way wholly unparalleled, as we have seen. It was part of the primeval revelation that man should devote one

* *Essays* (2nd series) on some of the Difficulties in the Writings of the Apostle Paul. 5th ed. Lond., 1845. Ess. V. Note B. See also *Thoughts on the Sabbath*. By the same. 3rd ed. Lond., 1845.

day in seven to the worship and service of God. This was recognised, as a principle, and re-promulgated in the Decalogue. Apostolic practice presents to us a sense of continued obligation, together with a change of the day from the seventh to the first of the week, in commemoration of Christ's resurrection, a mere circumstance not affecting the principle of the law. Apostolic precedent and example we certainly hold to be one means of ascertaining what the will of the Lord is.

Whately's own view was that the observance of the Lord's Day rests on Church authority, and he went so far as to say that to seek any sanction for it in the Fourth Commandment is "to remove it from a foundation of rock to place it on one of sand: it is to 'seek for the living among the dead.'" Church authority he thought sufficient, because of the power of the keys. But if the Lord's Day is to be observed because what is bound by the Church on earth is bound in heaven, what is this but to make the observance a matter of divine obligation after all? We rest it on the revealed will of God *immediately*; he rests it on the will of God (but not as revealed in the Word) *ulteriorly*. The Church has to be brought in for some share in the honour! And this is done in such a way as tends to destroy *all sense of obligation* with multitudes, as facts demonstrate. When Christ said to His apostles that what they bound on earth would be bound in heaven, He may be understood as speaking to them *exclusively*, as men who should be inspired to reveal the will of God. If the application be carried further, to the Church in post-apostolic times, it can be properly understood only with a limitation—in so far as what she binds is antecedently in accordance with the revealed will of God—then the obligation clearly springs.

not from Church authority, but from divine. The principle that the Church has authority to decree rites and ceremonies *not contrary* to the inspired Word is a most dangerous one, and opens the door to all the excesses of the most fantastic and senseless Ritualism. The more fantastic and senseless it is, indeed, the less is the probability of meeting with any express prohibition of it in Scripture. On this principle the worship (so called) might be all resolved into a continuous pantomime of meaningless mummeries.

The archbishop was anxious to promote the proper observance of the Lord's Day, and he was "convinced that the most effectual, as well as the only justifiable, means for accomplishing this object will be found in the placing of this duty on its TRUE foundation." Very right, if the foundation be really the true one. But if what is taken for the rock turn out to be only sand (the tree is known by its fruit) what then? In his honest adherence to what he conceived to be the truth on the subject, this writer overlooked what must seem clear enough to less gifted minds. Convince a man that there is no *divine* obligation to observe the Lord's Day, that the observance rests on Church authority only, and, unless he be a Romanist professed or in disguise, you inevitably destroy all sense of *obligation* whatever. He may comply with the customs of the society in which he lives and moves, or defer to the opinions of his neighbours, but not from any sense of obligation, and when he is in circumstances where such pressure is not bearing upon him he acts accordingly. The effect of such teaching is visible enough even among Romanists themselves. The effect of such teaching is clearly seen in the Continental *Sunday*, devoted so largely to politics and pleasure, or to

slavish manual labour, to military reviews, governmental elections, horse races, bull fights, theatres, dissipation—devoted so largely, we might truly say, to the service of Satan rather than to the service of God. The effect of such teaching is but too manifest in our own highly favoured lands, in the hundreds of thousands who, as Post Office officials, or by the running of railway trains, sometimes even goods trains, on the Sabbath, are in a manner compulsorily prevented from having the opportunity of ever entering a house of worship. All experience goes to show that vital godliness in any community is in proportion to the high standard of Sabbath observance. And it equally goes to show that such a standard can never be kept up by exhibiting for it any thing short of a divine requirement.

Some there are who tell us that to the Christian every day in the week is alike sacred. But this can only mean, so far as the vast majority of professing Christians are concerned, that in practice every day may be alike *secular*, if they choose to make it so. To the properly instructed Christian it can never be so.

A *Sunday* resting on Church authority is not "THE LORD'S DAY."

XI.

PAUL'S MAN OF SIN.

“3. LET no man beguile you in any wise: for *it will not be*, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, 4. he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped ; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God. 5. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6. And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. 7. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. 8. And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming: 9. *even he*, whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10. and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing; because that they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”—2 Thess. ii. 3—10. *Rev. Ver.*

The Fathers, so called, of the early Christian Church were of opinion that this man of sin was to be an individual person, in whose character and conduct should be exhibited the concentration of all manner of wickedness; and that which prevented his manifestation in their own day they took to be the old Roman empire. The ‘Reformers before the Reformation,’ from the eleventh century, and the Reformers of the sixteenth century generally, saw in the apostle’s description a delineation of the Papacy, while they

agreed with the early fathers that it was the old Roman empire which hindered the development of that system sooner. This has been the view of most evangelical Protestant commentators till a comparatively recent period. But many of the latest have fallen back upon the first part of the early fathers' opinion, while they have been obliged to adopt a different view of "what withholdeth."

The writer of the article, "PERDITION, SON OF," in the Imperial Bible Dictionary says, "He appears to be the final incarnation of irreligion, and his character is drawn in the Book of Revelation as the great deceiver and tormenter of nations, who, after becoming the instrument of the destruction of the mystic Babylon, aims at universal despotism, forbids all worship of the true God, and defies the power of Christ; but he is to be destroyed and cast into the lake of fire! The terms in which this 'son of perdition' is described seem to imply that he will be a real person; but arguing from the very figurative character of prophecy, many writers have been led to an opposite conclusion." This statement exhibits a rather marvellous confusion of ideas on the part of any one who has read the Apocalypse. Where in that book is the passage to be found containing aught that could be construed into an intimation that Paul's 'man of sin' will be the instrument of the destruction of the mystic Babylon, and *after that* aim at universal despotism? There is no such passage. On the contrary, we find much that points very clearly to an identification, in part at least, of this man of sin and the mystic Babylon. It is to the mystic Babylon herself that it is said, Rev. xviii. 23, "By thy sorcery were all nations deceived." It had been said before of the beast from the sea, ch. xiii. 7, that "there was given to him authority

over every tribe and people, and tongue, and nation ;” and of the two-horned beast from the earth, in the same chapter, verse 14, that he “ deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by reason of the signs which it was given him to do in the sight of the [seven-horned] beast.” Again, it is said, ch. xix. 20, “ And the beast [from the bottomless pit] was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.” Comparing various passages, we come to the conclusion that Paul’s man of sin, the two-horned beast, the false prophet, and the woman in scarlet, of Revelation xvii., are all identical, while “ Mystery, Babylon the Great” is a title intended for the woman in scarlet and the beast she rides upon *taken together*. “ These both” go into perdition at the same time. As to the man of sin being an individual person who shall appear at some time yet future, there is that in the cast of thought and expression in the passage which seems to us wholly irreconcilable with such an idea. We can scarcely conceive of any man in the future going to greater lengths in wickedness than some that have already left their black mark on history. We cannot think it likely that any man will make more gigantic efforts towards establishing a universal secular despotism than did the first Napoleon ; or that, if any one did, he would succeed to a greater extent ; and who would think of finding the fulfilment of the prediction in him ? Besides, the tendency in the present day is not in this direction—quite the reverse. But it is notorious that a universal despotism, and that of the worst description, in regard to all things both sacred and secular, has been the

cherished "aim" of the Popedom for ages bygone, and never more so than at the present time.

The late Dean Alford, in his Greek Testament, presents in his Prolegomena to the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians a history of opinions on this passage about the man of sin. As a history of opinions it is valuable. His own view may be presented in a few sentences. "We still look for the man of sin in the fulness of the prophetic sense, to appear, and that immediately before the coming of the Lord. [The reader not acquainted with Alford's writings requires to know that he is strongly Millennarian.] We look for him as the final and central embodiment of that *anomia* [lawlessness], that resistance to God and God's law, which has been for these many centuries fermenting under the crust of human society, and of which we have already witnessed so many partial and tentative eruptions. Whether he is to be expected personally, as one individual embodiment of evil, we would not dogmatically pronounce: still we would not forget, that both ancient interpretation and the world's history [*sic!*] point this way. . . . The particulars of ver. 4 we regard variously [*sic*], according as the *anomos* [lawless one] is a person or a set of persons, with however every inclination to take them literally of a person, giving out these things respecting himself, and sitting as described in the temple of God, whether that temple is to be taken in the strictly literal signification of the Jerusalem-temple (to which we do not incline), or as signifying a Christian place of assembly, the gathering-point of those who have sought the fulfilment of the divine promise of God's presence—and so called the temple of God." This is manifestly one of the weakest points, where all is weak as water. The "what withholdeth" of the 6th verse, and the

“he who now letteth” of the 7th verse, he understands “of the *fabric of human polity*, and *those who rule that polity*, by which the great up-bursting of godlessness is kept down and hindered.” It is somewhat astonishing that such a misty and vague interpretation should commend itself to any person of judgment accustomed to reflect deeply. But methods in relation to Scripture prophecy which tend towards explaining away all definite meaning seem to be those that find most favour with many modern critics.

When stating the opinions of others, which he does very fairly, Alford sets himself to combat these, in so far as they do not coincide with his own. Against the application of the passage to the Papacy, he urges two objections, which he imagines are fatal to it. The first is thus presented:—“In the characteristic of ver. 4, the Pope does not and never did fulfil the prophecy.” Dogmatic enough, certainly! “Allowing all the striking coincidences with the latter part of the verse which have been so abundantly adduced, it never can be shown that he fulfils the former part—nay, so far is he from it, that the abject adoration of, and submission to, *legomenoi theoi* (those called gods) and *sebasmata* (objects of worship) has ever been one of his most notable peculiarities.” There might, no doubt, be difficulty found in applying this part of the description to the Papal system, if the apostle *must be* understood as saying that the man of sin would *oppose*, or *withstand*, *all that is called god, or that is worshipped*. But this difficulty is effectually removed by Alford’s own hand. Turning to his notes on the 4th verse, in the epistle, we read:—“He that withstands (the construction is not to be carried on by *zeugma*, as if *above all, &c.*,) belonged to *that withstands* as well as to *and exalts* (the omission of the second article is no proof of

this, as Pelt supposes, but only that both predicates belong to one and the same subject), but *that withstands* is absolute, '*he that withstands CHRIST,*' the *antichrist*, 1 John ii. 18)." Stripped of its technicality, this means that the apostle did not intend to say, *who opposeth all that is called god, &c.*, but *who opposeth Christ, and exalteth himself above all, &c.* Now, that the Pope opposes or withstands Christ is plain matter of fact. While claiming to be Christ's vicar and to occupy His place on earth, this is only a cover for manifold forms of resistance to His revealed will. The very claim is an act of real hostility. To resist the word of Christ is to resist Himself, and every one knows the attitude of Rome towards the Bible. To oppose and persecute the true disciples of Christ is, in the language of Scripture, to oppose and persecute Christ Himself. Of this the Roman pontiffs have been notoriously guilty. Popes have never hesitated, in their published documents, to apply to themselves passages of Scripture that were plainly never intended to be applied to mere man, but only to the Saviour personally. This we can regard as nothing less than fearless blasphemy.

In a foot-note (in the Prolegomena) the same writer adds:—"It must be plain to every unbiassed mind that the mere logical inference, that the Pope sets himself above all objects of worship, because he *creates* objects of worships, and *the maker must be greater than the thing made*, is quite beside the purpose. It entirely fails in showing *hostility to, and lifting himself above, every one that is called god or an object of worship*. The Pope is the devoted serrant of the false gods whom he creates, not their antagonist and treader down. I should not have noticed so irrelavant an argument had it not been made much of as against my

view." The italics are all his own. But the hostility, antagonism, and treading down are only Alford's gloss upon the apostle's phrase, not necessarily involved in it. True, if any creature exalts himself in any way, even by "mere logical inference," above the Supreme Being, he must, from the very nature of the case, do so in a "hostile sense." But it is not so in regard to other objects of worship, and the apostle's phrase was manifestly designed to refer to both. Let this be borne in mind, and it will be very plain indeed, that it is Alford's own objection and the argument by which he seeks to sustain it that are irrelevant and quite beside the purpose. The objection and the reasoning are based upon the false assumption of the "hostile sense," and fall to the ground with it. So clear is this, that the somewhat contemptuous tone he has chosen here to assume might be retorted upon him with vastly more of truth. The objection would scarcely be worthy of notice, did it not come from such a man, and had he not made so much of it.* The most abject adoration of, and professed

* The references on which he relies (see his notes on the passage in the epistle) to establish the "hostile sense" do not bear it out—quite the reverse. They are two. One is 2 Cor. xii. 7, where the word rendered *exalt* occurs twice, and this is the only place in the New Testament, besides the passage under consideration, where it does occur. And when the apostle uses the phrase "lest I should be exalted above measure," can any one for a moment suppose that he entertained the idea of exaltation in a hostile sense?—hostile to himself! The other reference is to Ps. lxiii. 16 (lxxi. 16 in the Septuagint). The blundering Greek translator of the Psalms has rendered this verse in the following ludicrous fashion:—"There shall be a prop in the earth on the top of the mountains: its fruit (the fruit of a prop!) shall be exalted above Lebanon." In this, too ridiculous as the rendering is, the hostile sense is absolutely invisible. To adduce these references for a sense which cannot even be forced upon them seems scarcely reconcilable with candour.

submission to, objects of worship is by no means inconsistent with self-exaltation above them, not necessarily in a hostile sense. That the maker, in the very act of making, exhibits himself as superior to the thing made, is more than a logical inference—it is a simple, indubitable *fact*. There is a passage in the 44th chapter of Isaiah in which the prophet describes a man hewing down a tree—cedar, cypress, oak, or ash. With part thereof he makes a fire and warms himself; bakes bread and roasts flesh on the coals of it; eats and is satisfied; and of the residue he makes a god and falls down to worship it. Surely that man exhibits himself as superior to his wooden god, the work of his own hands. Missionaries have told us what an impression this passage has made upon some savages, when it was translated into their language and read to them, in the way of convincing them of the stupid folly of idolatry. Let flour-paste be substituted for tree in the prophet's description, and with little other change it would exactly apply to what is witnessed every time the Mass is celebrated—with this remarkable difference, that it might be found impossible to convince the most degraded heathen, that to swallow his wooden god when he has made it (if such a thing were possible) would do him any conceivable good. In the beatification and canonization of saints the Pope exalts himself above these, since he makes them to be, what they had not been before, objects of worship. And surely a living man claims a superiority over such objects as old bones and rags, when he makes these objects of worship. But there is no need to rely on such illustrations. In exalting his own authority, making that to be sin which God has not forbidden, or even positively required, as, for instance, the marriage of the clergy and the

general circulation and reading of the Scriptures ; and requiring what God has not required or even positively forbidden, as prayers for the dead and the worship of saints and angels—in making Canon Law, that is, Pope's law, override all other law, divine as well as human—in claiming the power to do, what we may say with all reverence God Himself cannot do, remit the punishment due to sin without any adequate satisfaction to justice—in various ways does the Pope most certainly exalt himself above all that is called god or object of worship, sitting in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Alford's second objection, which he thinks "is even more decisive," has in reality even less show of reason, if that be possible. "If the Papacy be Antichrist, then has the manifestation been made, and endured now for nearly 1,500 years, and yet that day of the Lord has not come, which, by the terms of our prophecy, such manifestation is immediately to precede." And he adds a foot-note—"For surely this is the only possible understanding of our ver. 8 on the ordinary acceptance of words." In other terms he understands the 8th verse to signify that the man of sin or "Wicked" will be destroyed *immediately* upon his manifestation. And this is the only possible understanding! Could any statement be more puerile and absurd? The apostle's words imply nothing of the sort, nothing so void of all sense. The wicked, or lawless one, was to be revealed or manifested. But the revelation or manifestation might be, for aught that the 8th verse says or implies, *gradual and progressive*, a process of development extending through ages and generations. Even supposing what is in every way improbable, that the manifestation was to be *instantaneous*, surely it is absurd to suppose that the

manifestation and the destruction were to take place in the *same instant* of time, as by a flash of lightning. And if any period of time be allowed to the lawless one for exhibiting himself in his real character, as seems only rational, and as is necessarily involved in other parts of the prophetic description, it may as well be a thousand years as one day, for aught implied to the contrary in this verse. The truth is, all that the verse imports is the ultimate doom of the lawless one, as that other title given to him, "son of perdition," intimates, and nothing whatever can be inferred from it as to the length of the period during which he shall deceive the nations. For information on this subject we must consult other portions of Scripture prophecy.

If these be the strongest reasons that can be produced for rejecting the interpretation which takes this passage to predict the character and destiny of the Romish system—and coming from the source they do we may well assume them to be such—then that interpretation may surely be regarded as occupying an impregnable position. This indeed is only evidence of a negative sort, but a cursory glance at the terms of the prediction will serve to show that these find an exact fulfilment in the Papal system, and that in every particular.

There was to be *a falling away first*, ver. 3, *hē apostasia*, *the apostasy*. The article is prefixed in the original, not exactly because the Papal system was to be emphatically *the* great apostasy from the Christian faith as taught by Christ and His apostles (although that is true), but rather, as it would seem, because the apostle was referring to what he had spoken to the Thessalonians of, *viva voce*, when he was present with them. Thus he writes in the 5th and 6th verses—"Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with

you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth, &c.” We need not wait to show that Romanism is properly described as an *apostasy*. We scarcely conceive of a greater apostasy consistent with the retention of the Christian name, an idea necessitated by another part of the description, “sitting in the temple of God.” A return to heathenism can hardly be brought into comparison, for a large part of both the doctrine and ceremonial of Rome had a heathen origin. Even Alford felt constrained to include it among the forms of apostasy which have already appeared. “Unquestionably,” he says, “the greatest of these has been the Papacy, that counterfeit of Christianity, with its whole system of falsehood and idolatry.” And yet he will have it, that this and other forms “are but tentamina and foreshadowings of that great and final apostasy” of which the apostle wrote in this passage. He is clearly astray, however, in making Mohammedanism another of these forms. A system of imposture, error, and delusion Mohammedanism is, but it could never be set down as an apostasy from the Christian faith. Rather was it, on the contrary, to an extent and measure, a reform—a return to monotheism from degrading polytheism, on the part of the vast majority of those among whom it has made progress.

For the mystery of lawlessness (that is, ungodliness—refusal to recognise God’s law—as Alford truly puts it) *doth already work*—ver. 7. *Mystery*, in the New Testament, signifies, not something enigmatical or inexplicable, but something concealed wholly or partially for a time, yet capable of being revealed or manifested, according to the measure of human apprehension. In this sense the Gospel, the calling of the Gentiles, and the conversion of Israel

(still future) are spoken of as mysteries. See Rom. xvi. 25; 1 Cor. ii. 7; Col. i. 26, 27; Rom. xi. 25; &c. There was an evil leaven *working* among masses of professing Christians at the very time the apostle wrote. Many corruptions in doctrine and practice had already appeared. Even among the twelve, and before their divine Master was taken from their view, the working of personal ambition was brought to light in their contention among themselves as to which of them should be greatest, and the Lord solemnly warned them against cherishing the evil spirit. Diotrophes was far from being the only one, during the lifetime of the apostles, who loved to have the pre-eminence.

But there was that which *restrained, hindered, or retarded* the development of the apostasy, the revelation of the mystery—namely, the existing Roman empire. “And now ye know that which restraineth.” While the apostle “was yet with” the Thessalonians he had told them of this, doubtless in a private way, and more plainly and fully than, for obvious prudential reasons, he would write it in an epistle. To have published, so to speak, a prediction of the downfall of the Roman empire, while it was yet in the full possession of its strength, would have been certain to give great offence, and would likely have been a cause of persecution. The apostle did not think it expedient to expose Christians to obloquy and persecution by furnishing such an occasion as this. But for this we should probably have had this part of the prediction expressed in terms more clear and unmistakable. But when the iron empire of old Rome was broken into fragments by the irruption of the Northern hordes, the barrier was removed, and the temptation to corrupt and ambitious churchmen was strong

and irresistible, to enlist these hordes by a compromise with their heathenism.

Then, in the progress of apostasy, in the working of the mystery of lawlessness, and as the outcome of these, was *the man of sin revealed*. “In the language of prophecy,” says Scott, “a king generally signifies a succession of monarchs, of the same family or dynasty, carrying on the same design. (*Notes, Dan. vii. 15—27.*) Thus the ‘man of sin’ does not mean a single person, but a succession of men, impious in themselves; and conducting the same wicked design of corrupting Christianity, in doctrine, worship, and practice; establishing an intolerable tyranny on religious pretences; and using all kinds of seduction, iniquity, and cruel persecution, to induce mankind to adopt the antichrist system.” The twin title *son of perdition* (a Hebraism) does not refer to the influence exerted—that is sufficiently expressed in *man of sin*—but simply to his doom. It was applied by the Saviour to Judas (John xvii. 12), and this is the only other use made of it in Scripture. The Popes claim to be the successors of Peter, whom they call prince of the apostles. The apostolic succession, in their case, however, must be traced not to Peter, but to “the traitor, who sold his Lord for money, and betrayed Him with a kiss.”

Of his opposing Christ, and exalting himself above all that is called god or object of worship, we have already said enough. But it is added—*so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God*. The “temple of God” signifies here the Christian Church, in accordance with the metaphorical use of the phrase in other portions of Paul’s epistles. See 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. ii. 21. The interpretation which looks for the fulfil-

ment of this by some individual man at a future day sitting in "a Christian place of assembly" (a meaning which the phrase *temple of God* never has in Scripture) seems to us, we must say, something like solemn trifling—a veritable descent from the sublime to the ridiculous. Here again Mohammedanism is excluded by the terms of the prediction. Mohammed and his followers, with comparatively few exceptions, never have had place in the Christian Church, but have been always outside her pale, and fanatically hostile, as every one knows. Sitting in the temple of God, the Pope there usurps the throne, *showing himself that he is God*, by pretending to infallibility, claiming universal submission, lording it over conscience, and in other ways already indicated. The titles given to him by Romish theologues, never repudiated but sometimes explicitly assumed, are such as "His Holiness;" "Lord of the Universe;" "King of kings, and Lord of lords;" "Vice-God;" "A God upon earth;" "Our Lord God the Pope."

Whose coming is after the working of Satan—ver. 9. When one thinks of the Inquisition and kindred enormities, the epithets, *satanic*, *fiendish*, are those which present themselves most naturally to the mind. *With all power, and signs, and lying wonders.* The lying legends and false miracles of Romanism are well known, and plied by the manipulators as vigorously as ever, even in this nineteenth century, which boasts so much of its superior enlightenment. *And with all deceit of unrighteousness, that is, unrighteous deceit.* Who is there that does not know something of the "pious frauds" of Romanism?

On the whole, and from the closest examination, we come to the undoubting conclusion that the Romish system, with the Pope at its head, answers to this description ex-

actly and in every particular, and that this was what the Spirit of God designed prophetically to pourtray by the instrumentality of Paul in this passage. So fully persuaded are we of this, that we cannot conceive of any person, potentate, or system, appearing in the future to which every one of the items in this prophetic description would apply so exactly in all its details.

But the system is doomed. Its votaries boastingly anticipate its perpetuity, and are accustomed to speak of Rome as "*the eternal city.*" The sure word of prophecy speaks far otherwise. *Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit (or breath) of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness (or appearance) of His coming. Manifestation of His presence* would, we think, be a more exact rendering of the original of the latter clause. We regard this as intimating that the destruction will be effected, partly by the prevalence of a pure Gospel (the breath of His mouth), detaching many from the anti-Christian cause; and partly by the manifestation of Christ's presence in providence, as the Avenger of God's elect, to whom the Father had committed all judgment, pouring out the final plagues on the mystical Babylon. The expectation of any coming of Christ to earth in His glorified humanity, for this or any other purpose, before the Judgment of the Great Day, is one for which we can find no real ground in the Scripture of truth.

THE DANGER OF MAKING SHIPWRECK
CONCERNING THE FAITH.

Holding faith, and a good conscience ; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith.—1 Tim. i. 19, Rev. Vers.

Paul addresses Timothy in this chapter (verse 2) as his “true child in faith.” He had been the instrument of his conversion, and he yearned over him with the ardent affection of a father, and with the most intense desire, now that Timothy was in the office of the ministry, that he in turn should be the instrument of doing much good in his day, of winning many souls to Christ. He, therefore, writes to him many earnest exhortations, some of which are appropriate not only to Timothy, or to any minister, but to any one who professes to be a Christian. Among these latter is one we have prefixed to this article. Let us first try to understand the terms in which it is couched.

Faith is used in two senses in the New Testament. Sometimes, objectively, it signifies the truth divinely revealed, as when Jude says that Christians “should earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” At other times it signifies, subjectively, belief of that truth, the state of mind and heart with which it should be regarded. The word in the last clause has the article prefixed in the original—“concerning *the* faith”—while it is not so in the first, and hence some would give it the subjective meaning in the first clause, and the objective in the last. But it is unnatural to give it thus a different meaning in the two clauses ; and besides, the subjective idea, the state of mind to be entertained in relation

to the truth, is sufficiently expressed by the term *holding*—“*holding faith*”—so that there is no necessity or even room for making *faith* express it. Saving faith is a different and somewhat complicated conception. The chief elements distinctive of it are personal trust, reliance, appropriation. It is a loving acceptance of Christ as He is offered to us in the Gospel and as *our* Saviour, with exclusive reliance on Him and His work for acceptance with God. But this is inadmissible here; for this being a grace of the Holy Spirit instrumentally uniting to Christ and thus securing salvation, he in whom it is implanted will never be left to make shipwreck. Faith, in the exhortation we are considering, is thus plainly seen to be used in the objective sense. It is observed, however, that the apostle does not make the assertion in the latter clause directly or absolutely, but only relatively. He does not say, have made shipwreck of the faith, but *concerning* or with respect to the faith; for the faith spoken of being God’s truth cannot be destroyed by any act or course of conduct on man’s part. He may make wreck of his profession of the faith—he may make an eternal wreck of himself—but the faith itself is indestructible. It is that “word of God which liveth and abideth. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth. But the word of the Lord abideth for ever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you.”—1 Pet. i. 23—25.

A good conscience, again, is one that does not accuse, but, on the contrary, positively and habitually approves the course of conduct of its possessor. It does not necessarily mean an enlightened conscience. Paul, before the Sanhedrim, could say, “I have lived in all good conscience before God

until this day.”—Ac. xxiii. 1. What! While he was haling men and women to prison, and breathing out threatenings and slaughter against them, because they professed to believe in Jesus? Yes, even so; for, in his defence before King Agrippa, he could allege (Ac. xxvi. 9), “I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.” But in the exhortation the enlightenment is provided for by the first clause. While one continues to hold the faith, this will ensure a due enlightenment of the conscience that is otherwise good, and thus it will be good in every way.

The exhortation is to conjoin these two, the faith *and* a good conscience. We are not to hold one to the neglect of the other, but to hold both with a tenacious grasp. Christians must hold fast the faith, not the wisdom which is of this world, not the deductions of mere human reason, not the suggestions of the ‘inner consciousness,’ but the faith that has been once for all delivered to the saints; and the rule or test to which all is to be brought is not the traditions, doctrines, or commandments of men, but the living Word of the living God. But it is not enough to hold the faith with a good conscience. There are Antinomians who would make the faith everything, while they make little or no account of a good conscience; and there are to be found among professors of religion those who are loud enough and zealous enough in their defence of an orthodox creed, while they are careless and indifferent as to the discharge of other important duties, living it may be a positively sinful life, slanderers, backbiters, scandal-mongers, quarrelsome, untruthful, whose word cannot be relied on, indulging evil passions, envious, spiteful, revengeful, worldly, perhaps dishonest. These are practical Antino-

mians. The Apostle James warns us that faith without works is dead. It is a kind of faith of which even the devils are capable, for they also believe and tremble. Nay, they doubtless have it in greater degree than is possible to man; for, as they know more, have longer experience, and means of acquiring knowledge beyond what is available by us, they *must* believe more, and with greater accuracy of belief. They cannot help it; the evidence is too strong, with their means of judging, to be resisted. Yet they remain *devils*.

It is not enough, on the other hand, to hold a good conscience without faith. Here Paul himself furnishes a most apposite illustration, referred to also by himself in this very chapter. He tells us how he was a blasphemer and a persecutor, "but," he says, "I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief"—ver. 13. He had a good conscience even then. Yet he could not look back upon that past part of his life without horror, while he most fervently gave thanks to God who had opened his eyes to see the terrific precipice on the brink of which he was careering. Of course he does not mean to tell us that there was anything meritorious in his ignorance and unbelief, that these were in any proper sense the procuring cause of his obtaining mercy. That, plainly, cannot be his meaning. But he does at least intimate that, if it had been otherwise, if he had pursued such a course, knowing it to be wrong, his conscience upbraiding him for it the while, his sin would have been tremendously more heinous and aggravated. He does seem to intimate that, in such a case, he would not have obtained mercy. It may be that such a case would constitute that very sin against the Holy Ghost, the unpardonable sin, of which our Lord spake to His disciples.

Faith is mentioned before a good conscience ; for, while both are necessary to genuine religion, it is God's method in dealing with men to act upon the moral nature, the feelings, and the conscience, through the intellect and judgment. He deals with men as rational beings. "Come now, and let us reason together," is His address to the sinner. The proper avenue to the heart is through the head. A religion of mere feeling, while the intellect is uninstructed and the judgment uninformed, may be expected to be as evanescent as the early cloud or the morning dew. And yet the exhortation has some special respect to a good conscience. "Which," namely, the good conscience, "some having thrust from them, made shipwreck concerning the faith." Here is the danger incurred by putting away a good conscience. And this was the danger to which Christians in the apostolic age were especially exposed. Under the pressure of fiery persecution from both Jews and Gentiles, persecution often even to the death, the temptation was strong to dissemble, to suppress a testimony for truth, to hide their light under a bushel, contrary to the dictates of an enlightened conscience, in order to secure their own safety. As a good conscience is not necessarily an enlightened one, so an enlightened conscience is not necessarily a good one, and then the very enlightenment will make its stings and upbraidings the more keenly felt. Let the pressure become more severe and then the danger is that of apostatizing from the faith altogether, and returning to the very heathenism that had been solemnly abandoned and repudiated. Such would seem to have been the case with the examples which the apostle adduces in the next verse, and by which he would enforce the exhortation—"Of whom is Hymenæus and

Alexander, whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme.”

Now that the hand of persecution has been stayed, the danger, though tending to a like result, comes from a different quarter, from yielding more or less to direct assaults upon the faith itself, or even more insidious processes of undermining, a good conscience, it may be, being retained the while. We live in times when every part and portion of the faith is subjected to sifting and criticism of the most unsparing, unrelenting, and irreverent kind. Nothing is too sacred to be exempted from such handling. On the continent of Europe this has led some to make shipwreck in the gulfs of atheism and pantheism. The wave of German neology, which has been receding from the Fatherland for some time, though not so fast or so far as could be wished, has recently rushed with somewhat of startling suddenness upon the shores of Britain. There are teachers of religion, and those whose office it is to train such teachers, in Churches hitherto regarded as most orthodox, among whom loose views on the subject of the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Scriptures already extensively prevail. This is in a sense vital and fundamental; for, when such lax sentiments are entertained, the way is opened to all manner of departures from the truth. One coarsely and loudly denounces what has been hitherto regarded part of revealed truth as inconsistent with his preconceptions of the moral character of God, as if such ideas had never been ventilated before, as though God were unable without his help to make known what His own real character is, and to defend it too. Another, with little less coarseness, describes what has also been looked upon as part of the faith as being “wooden to the core.” And a

third, more dangerous than the last alluded to, by an elaborate discussion, would politely bow the same part of the faith to the door. It was all very well for Reformation and post-Reformation times ; it served a good purpose then ; but we have learned a great deal since, and know better ; as if there had not been in those days men who were giants in intellect, and mighty in the Scriptures too, as if it were possible to make discoveries in respect to that faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. As with the Athenians in Paul's day, the inquiry is ever after some new thing. And it is noteworthy that these men have either nothing to put in the place of what they would destroy, or that which they would substitute is another gospel than that which Paul preached. Christians have indeed much need to be on their guard against such attacks, for thereby many have already been deceived. The very fact that some, men eminent in their way it may be, have expressed disbelief of the faith, even of its most elementary parts, confidently, though with however little of reason, is enough to raise at least a large amount of discomfoting doubt in many minds.

Christ on one occasion said to the Jews, " If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God."—Jo. vii. 17. The converse of this would seem to be equally true. If a man cease to do the will of God, his knowledge may turn into disbelief—left to himself, his very light becomes darkness. Nor is it difficult to understand somewhat of the process. Yielding to temptation, he commits an act or enters upon a course which conscience condemns. Naturally he looks around for some means of obtaining ease, for what may palliate or excuse, if not justify. In these circumstances false doc-

trine comes to his help, and he listens eagerly to sophistical pleadings on its behalf, at first incredulously, then arises the wish to believe it true, the wish becomes father to the thought, and he ends by embracing that which he formerly repudiated with loathing.

Declension or apostasy in religion usually begins with what has been last acquired, a godly practice. First, closet duties are neglected, then it extends to the family or social circle. If there be attention to public worship it is in the way of cold formality, to gain a name, to promote worldly interests, or as a salve to a sore conscience. But even this under further pressure may come to an end, and the man sink down into what is but too plainly practical heathenism, living without God, without hope, in the world.

Life on earth has been often compared to a voyage. The faith furnishes the sails; a good conscience the ballast. It is requisite that the sails be kept properly trimmed, and the ballast prevented from shifting. In the prosecution of the voyage there are perils to be calculated upon which no mere human wisdom or strength can overcome. There are storms and tempests of reproach, affliction, temptation, mayhap persecution; rocks and shoals of unbelief and heresy; treacherous quicksands of sceptical speculation; a whole fleet of powerful and most malignant enemies through which the course must be steered, a continuous running fight kept up, and over whom only faith in Christ can gain the victory. There are whirlpools of carnal pleasures, and winds of doctrine that blow from all points. It is necessary to keep a good look-out—Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. See to it that there be no mistake made in the reckoning—Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye

be reprobate? The Captain is divine, possessed of infinite skill and power, but there is a crew on board of prejudices, desires, appetites, and passions, that are apt to become mutinous and rebellious. The Word of God furnishes compass and chart of infallible accuracy, but the indications may be unread or unheeded, and a different course steered from that which is laid down. Voyager on life's ocean towards the better country, even the heavenly! there is danger on every hand, danger without and danger within. Two rules should ever be borne in mind—First, Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for He is faithful that promised—and secondly, Let us, like the great apostle of the Gentiles, herein exercise ourselves, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. So may we hope, through the grace and strength of our divine Captain, and the favouring gales of the Holy Spirit's influences, sent in answer to believing prayer, to enter at last the haven of eternal bliss, and to have an entrance ministered abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

XIII.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

TO WHOM, BY WHOM, AND WHEN WRITTEN.

It seems to have been the usual practice in writing a letter in ancient times, whether to an individual or to a community, to prefix an inscription with the name of the writer, and not to keep this to the end, according to modern practice. It is so in seventeen out of the twenty-one epistles in the canon of the New Testament, not only in the thirteen confessedly from the hand of Paul, but in the two by Peter, and in those of James and Jude. In the first by John there is no such inscription, not even an express indication of the persons for whom intended, as it was manifestly designed for Christians universally. His second is inscribed, "The elder unto the elect lady and her children," or, as we think it should be rendered, "The elder to the chosen Cyria, &c.," an individual being clearly meant, just as his third has the inscription, "The elder unto Gaius the beloved." It was characteristic of John that he would not mention his name, even when he had occasion to refer to himself; but the style, diction, and tone of the three epistles are so peculiarly Johannine that the most uncritical reader can scarcely fail to recognise the author. There must have been some special and strong reason for the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews departing from the usual practice of prefixing his name; and we think such reason can be shown when the identity of the writer has been first determined.

The absence of the name has led to a great divergence of opinion regarding the authorship—a divergence extending backwards as far as to the very age succeeding that of the

apostles themselves. Barnabas, Silvanus, Clement of Rome, Titus, Luke, Mark, Aquilla, Apollos, as well as Paul, have each had his advocates. Some think that it was written by one of these, under the superintendence of Paul ; but that is virtually to make Paul himself the author. Indeed it would appear that he laboured under a defect of vision, so that he had to employ an amanuensis, only appending a few words at the close in his own handwriting to authenticate his letter. Thus he writes, 2 Thess. iii. 17, "The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle : so I write."* It is scarcely necessary to state that the subscription to Hebrews in our Authorized Version—"Written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy"—is of no authority. The subscriptions to the epistles were made by King James's translators, some of them clearly wrong. There is no evidence that Hebrews was written from Italy, but the reverse. The expression, ch. xiii. 24, "They of Italy salute you," implies that there were Italian Christians with the author at the time the epistle was written, whoever he was, or whatever the place. Timothy was probably the amanuensis ; but of this again.

It is not our purpose to enter upon details of speculations on the subject, or any exhaustive consideration of the arguments by which the different conclusions have been

* In Gal. vi. 11 he says, "See with how large letters I have written unto you with mine own hand." Or, as Conybeare renders, "Observe the size of the characters in which I write to you with mine own hand," understanding this as applicable only to what follows. Alford would apply it to the whole epistle ; and not only so, but thinks he wrote some other of his epistles wholly with his own hand, simply because he does not in them expressly state the contrary. In this we cannot coincide, and consider Conybeare right.

arrived at. A few sentences here must suffice. It is clear from the last chapter, verses 17—25, that the epistle was sent to the Christian Church in a particular place, although it contains most important instruction for all readers. It was not sent to believing Jews in Jerusalem, much less to such in Palestine at large, as some have supposed. The writer says, ch. xii. 4, “Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.” Would this have been true of the Christians in Palestine?*

There is one reference elsewhere which, in our judgment, is decisive of the question, To whom sent? and by implication that of the authorship, as well as approximately that of the date. In 1 Cor. v. 9—13, R.V., we read, “I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators; not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world; but now I write unto you not to keep company, if any one that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner: with such a one no, not to eat. For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within, whereas them that are without God judgeth? Put away the wicked man from among yourselves.” The original has the article prefixed to the word *epistle*—“I wrote unto you in the epistle.” Commenting on the 9th verse here,

* Alford indeed, in his note on the verse, seizing upon a hint from Bengel, speaks of “the pugilistic figure being intended,” and would “apply ‘unto blood’ to the figure, not to the interpretation.” Most people, we should think, will be unable to see any figure in the case, and may conclude that the critic, in this as in many other instances, has permitted his fondness for nice distinctions to run away with his common sense.

Dr. C. Hodge writes, "This may be understood to refer to what he had written above in this epistle. Comp. Rom. xvi. 22, 1 Thess. v. 27, Col. iv. 16, where *the* epistle means the epistle he was then writing. Calvin, Beza, and almost all the modern commentators understand it to refer to an epistle no longer extant. This is obviously the more natural interpretation—first, because the words, *in the* epistle, would otherwise be altogether unnecessary; and, secondly, because the epistle does not contain the general direction not to company with fornicators, which, it would seem from what follows, the Corinthians had misunderstood. . . . 'I wrote to you in the epistle,' naturally means here, as in 2 Cor. vii. 8, the epistle which you have already received, and not the one which he was then writing."

Where then are we to look for this epistle? It seems to us utterly incredible that the early Christians would suffer anything from the hand of Paul to be lost, especially when we find the brief epistle to Philemon, on a private and personal matter, although it has its own important lessons, assigned a place in the canon. Is it not as incredible, it may be asked, that the early Christians should have lost positive knowledge of the authorship of an epistle, as in the case of that to the Hebrews? No, when we take into account the fearful amount of degeneracy that crept into all the Churches after the death of the apostles, the foreshadowings of which, even while they were yet alive, cast such gloom upon them as their writings testify. Besides, the fact is indisputable that the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews was a subject of question and difference of opinion from the earliest post-apostolic time to which the history of the Church carries us; while it is only conjecture

that any epistle of Paul's was ever lost—a conjecture, too, resting on no sufficient grounds, as we hope to show. We have the fact also, that Hebrews has a place in the canon, account or not account as we may for the rather surprising circumstance that those to whom it was sent, and some of whom of course must have known the author, have handed down no certainty of a historical kind on the subject. But of this circumstance afterwards.

In Heb. xii. 14—16, R.V., we read, “ Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord : looking carefully lest *there be* any man that falleth short of the grace of God ; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled ; lest *there be* any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one mess of meat sold his own birthright.” The reference to this in 1 Cor. v. 9—13 seems sufficiently plain, and yet it has been overlooked by commentators with scarcely an exception. Alford, who takes up 62 octavo pages of his Prolegomena in discussing the authorship, never once in all these pages alludes to it. But in his Prolegomena to 1 Cor. he has a foot-note to § iv. par. 2, as follows —“ Perhaps the most extraordinary theory ever propounded by one who has evidently spent some pains on his subject, is that of Mr. Paget in his ‘ Unity and Order of the Epistles of St. Paul,’ in which on account of a fancied resemblance of this command to that in Heb. xii. 16 (which if examined proves to be *no* resemblance) he maintains *the epistle* here to be the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, which he imagines to have been a sort of general circular epistle to all the Churches, written previously to those addressed to particular congregations. I need hardly remind the student how entirely all the data of every kind furnished by

that epistle are against such a supposition." Quite an arbitrary decision. Paget was mistaken if he imagined—we have not seen his work, and there may be an unintentional colouring of his 'theory'—that the epistle was not sent to a particular Church. At the same time, it may be said that it was designed to be of use, not only to the members of that Church, but, in some special sense, to others beyond the pale, as we shall endeavour to show—to all who might read it indeed—but that is no more than might be said of any one of the epistles. Of decisive data, furnished by the epistle itself, *against* the Pauline authorship, there are none.

For convenience of comparison, let us put the two passages we have referred to in parallel columns.

Heb. xii. 15, &c. "Looking carefully . . . lest <i>there</i> <i>be</i> any fornicator, or profane per- son, as Esau," &c., <i>among you</i> , of course, is implied.	1 Cor. v. 9, &c. "I wrote unto you in the epis- tle to have no company with for- nicators; not altogether with the fornicators of this world," &c.
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Is there "*no* resemblance" here, as Alford asserts so positively, the italics his own? Is there not something more than mere resemblance? Or is *resemblance* the word that should be used in the case? Let the reader judge. The device of quotation marks is a modern invention; and a person referring to something he had written to the same party does not usually consider it necessary to quote the precise expressions he had previously used, *verbatim et literatim*, if he only convey the same idea. The reference here seems perfectly natural, and just what we might expect. The previous exhortation had been misunderstood; as if the apostle had designed to prohibit Christians from having any dealings with such characters as he specifies, even though these were not Christians. He writes se-

condly to correct this misapprehension, and to explain that if any one who was named a brother, who made a profession of Christianity, was guilty of such conduct, they were to avoid all intercourse with him, until he gave evidence of penitence.

The conclusion to which we are thus led is, that the Epistle to the Hebrews was sent to the Jews in Corinth, and by none other than the Apostle Paul. We can approximate the date too. It has been generally supposed, even by those who adhere to the Pauline authorship, that it was among the last from the apostle's dictation. Instead of this it was among the first, only the two to the Thessalonians having preceded it. He came to Corinth A.D. 52, where he laboured for a year and half (Ac. xviii. 11), and from that sent his two epistles to the Thessalonians. Driven from Corinth by the violence of the unbelieving Jews, in the spring of 54, he visited Jerusalem and Antioch; and, towards the close of the year, came to Ephesus, where, according to his own statement (Ac. xx. 31), he laboured for three years, interrupted, as it is supposed, only by a brief visit to Corinth. From Ephesus he sent the epistle known as the First to the Corinthians, in the spring of 57, and later in the same year that which is called the Second.* From these data we infer that our epistle was sent from Ephesus to Corinth in the year A.D. 55 or 56, probably, as we shall see, in the latter year.

There are not wanting some considerations, deduced from a comparison of passages, that go far to corroborate our conclusions. In Heb. xiii. 23 we read, "Know ye

* For details of these incidents, and proofs, the reader is referred to Conybeare and Howson's "Life and Epistles of St. Paul," and particularly to the Chronological Table at the end of the second volume.

that our brother Timothy had been set at liberty ; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you." Timothy was an attached companion of Paul, his "own son in the faith," as he calls him, his companion and fellow-labourer in much of his work, one of them that "ministered to him" in Ephesus, Ac. xix. 22. It does not seem that such a close and sustained relationship existed between Timothy and any of the others to whom our epistle has been ascribed. It would seem that Timothy had been cast into prison somewhere not in Ephesus before our epistle was written, but liberated at the time. We have no mention of such an imprisonment in the brief record in Acts. But we know that the early workers in the Gospel field were often called to suffer in this way, and we could not expect all the instances to be recorded. Paul speaks of himself as having suffered in this way "more abundantly" than any of the rest, 2 Cor. xi. 23. And we find a remarkable coincidence with our view in a passage just referred to, Acts xix. 21, 22, "Now after these things were ended, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia,* to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. And having sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia" [that is, of course, in Ephesus] "for a while." It may have been in Macedonia that Timothy underwent the imprisonment alluded to. It will be remembered that it was in Philippi, a city in Macedonia, Paul himself and Silas, on a previous occasion, were cast into prison, after they had been beaten with many stripes. Thessalonica, too, was a city of Mace-

* The educated reader does not need to be informed that Corinth was the chief city in Achaia.

donia, and there the unbelieving Jews had acted with much violence. We gather from all the circumstances the probability that it was towards the close of the year 56 the Epistle to the Hebrews was written.

Corinth was a place noted, even proverbial among the heathen, for its lewdness. We need not enter on detailed proof. Enough to say that Venus was the patron goddess of the city, and her *worship* was—what might be expected. Of course, by multitudes the vice was not regarded as at all sinful, and these circumstances had their natural effect. When any evil becomes prevalent in a community, it will be astonishing only to those who know little of human nature how soon some—it may be many—who have been reckoned as worthy men, will give it their sanction in theory or practice, or both. We learn from the epistles expressly addressed to the Corinthians that some converts to the profession of Christianity there, from looking lightly on the prevailing immorality, had, by the time these epistles were sent, actually fallen into it, filling the apostle's mind with the most poignant grief and indignation. He had seen reason to warn them of this in the passage we have founded on, and it is not the only one in the epistle. In the next chapter (Heb. xiii. 4, 5) he writes, "*Let marriage be had in honour among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.*"

Again in 2 Cor. x. 10, the apostle, referring to some who had been attempting to undermine his authority at Corinth, writes, "His letters, say they, are weighty and strong; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account." *Letters*, in the plural, indicating that he had written more than one to Corinth previously. True, he had written two before this to Thessalonica, but it is not

probable that the mal-contents at Corinth, at least 200 miles distant, were speaking of these.

Objections have been urged against the Pauline authorship, but before noticing these—there are only two or three that seem worth notice—it may be well to reply to the question, If Paul was the author, why did he not prefix his name, as in his other epistles? We think a very satisfactory answer can be given. We know from his Epistle to the Romans what a consuming zeal he had for the conversion to the faith of Christ of his ‘kinsmen according to the flesh.’ Though he was ‘the apostle of the Gentiles,’ yet his motto appears to have been, ‘to the Jew first.’ Wherever he went the synagogue was the first place of public assembly into which he went to proclaim the Gospel message. It were passing strange then, if among his numerous epistles, there should not be one, and that among the first, addressed to these kinsmen. But we know that those who are regarded as renegades from any sort of religious profession are the objects of the keenest antipathy on the part of those who still adhere to that profession. Paul had been a very noted man among the Jews, and a violent persecutor of Christians, prior to his conversion. All the circumstances in his case combined to intensify the hostility and prejudice of the unbelieving Jews to the highest pitch. He had only too much reason to be well aware of all this. He wrote to the Corinthians that he had ‘become all things to all men, that he might by all means save some,’ and that, ‘being crafty, he caught them with guile’—not in any immoral sense, of course. To meet the prejudices of the unbelieving Jews, he circumcised Timothy. It was perfectly in keeping with this innocent craft that he should suppress his name in an epistle evidently composed

with the desire that it should fall into the hands of some of his unbelieving kinsmen, and be the means, under God's blessing, of convincing them of the truth of the Christian religion, an end for which it was admirably adapted, as well as to confirm the faith of those who already believed. Such an unbeliever might take up the epistle and read it to the end, whereas if the name had been prefixed he would probably have flung it from him at once, without reading a word beyond. We may find here also an explanation of what seems unaccountable, that the authorship should have been a matter of difference in opinion from so early a period. The real authorship may have been known only to few, and they, understanding the author's policy, would fall in with it and conceal his identity. In this there would be nothing inconsistent with right principle.

It is objected that in chap. ii. 3 the oft-quoted question, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? which, having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard," is 'quite irreconcilable' with the Pauline authorship. No sufficient reason can be assigned for such a dictum. The term "us" does not necessarily include the writer. It is an instance of a figure of speech called *consociation*, in which the writer puts himself in the circumstances of those whom he addresses, or even those in a far distant future. Thus in 1 Thess. iv. 15 we read, "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alone that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep." And again, ver. 17, "Then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." So in 1 Cor. xv. 51,

“Behold I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.” Alford, indeed, insists that not only Paul but all the apostles laboured under the impression that the coming of the Lord (by which he understands in these instances a pre-millennial advent) might take place in their own day. We marvel if any other could be found to agree with him in this. That such an impression was widely entertained in the times of the apostles is clear enough. But certainly the apostles, and Paul in particular, did not participate in it. On the contrary, he denounces it in strong language, as a deception, in his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians. Besides, the passages we have quoted plainly refer to the end of the world. The expression, moreover, “confirmed unto us by them that heard,” instead of being quite irreconcilable with the Pauline authorship, is greatly confirmatory of it. The great probability is that Paul never heard Christ speak except at his own conversion on the way to Damascus.

In opposition to the idea of the epistle having been sent to Corinth, Alford says, “The circumstances of the Jewish portion of the Church at Corinth were not such as to justify such an hypothesis. It does not appear to have been of sufficient importance in point of numbers”—the *only* “circumstance” adduced. The reverse was unquestionably the fact. “Corinth was then the metropolis of the province of Achaia, and the principal seat of government and trade. Its ports were crowded with vessels, and its streets swarmed with a mixed population of Jews, Greeks, and Roman attendants upon the proconsul. The constant communication which went on between it and the most flourishing regions of the East and the West, includ-

ing Rome itself, would ensure the extensive propagation of the Gospel. Moreover, as was their custom in mercantile cities, Jews had here congregated in great numbers; and in every place which St. Paul visited it was to his brethren after the flesh that he first addressed himself. At this particular period too the decree of the Emperor Claudius, banishing Jews from Rome [A.D. 52], had increased the number of Hebrew residents in Corinth.* Alford adds, "Nor can the 'confirmed unto us by them that heard' of ch. ii. 3 have been asserted of them, seeing that they owed their conversion to the ministry of St. Paul." No sufficient reason assuredly. It was not asserted of them exclusively or even particularly. It is a general statement. It may be added, that the motive for blameless concealment of identity would be applicable here.

What we regard as the weightiest objection of all to the Pauline authorship is the marked difference in style and diction between the epistle and the others bearing Paul's name. This must be admitted. But is it such as cannot be accounted for? We think not. A writer's style may change in the course of time. But the difference of subject—and on this we lay some stress—does, we think, remove the felt difficulty to an extent, if not altogether. The epistle is in some respects a unique production. There is a distinctiveness and unity of theme, and of manifest design and purpose in it, which we do not find, in the same degree at least, in any other of the epistles in the New Testament, and which not only admitted but required some peculiarity in treatment. It is a commentary on the Mosaic ritual and observances in worship, exhibiting their typical significance as a Gospel preached of old unto the

* *Imp. Bib. Dic.* Art. CORINTH.

fathers, all terminating in Christ, presented with consummate skill. An argument from style and manner furnishes very precarious footing for coming to a conclusion. Doctors proverbially differ, and some of the most eminent Biblical critics have not found this difference of style an insurmountable obstacle in the way of accepting the theory of the Pauline authorship. Had "The Cottar's Saturday Night" been published anonymously, and the real authorship been kept as profound a secret as that of "The Letters of Junius," we should probably have many contending that it could not be the production of Robert Burns, judging from the other acknowledged pieces from his hand.

Other considerations may be adduced, corroborative of our conclusion. Paul, as is generally conceded, was obliged, from a defect of eyesight, to employ an amanuensis. Who so likely to be employed in this way in writing to the Hebrews as Timothy, whom he fondly called his "true son in faith" (1 Tim. i. 2), who we know was with him in Ephesus before he was sent into Macedonia? The epistle may have been written then, kept in hand for some time until an opportunity presented itself for sending it to Corinth by a trustworthy messenger. There were no post offices in the East in those days. Then, when such opportunity offered, the last two or three verses would be added. In writing the epistle, in order the better to carry out the idea of concealing his identity, the apostle may have put a *carte blanche* into Timothy's hand as to style and diction, contenting himself with dictating the line of argument, while exercising a superintendence. There is surely nothing in all this to tax one's sense of probability and credulity too much.

On a review of the whole case, we are of the decided

opinion that no man living at the time *could* have been the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews but the Apostle Paul. Apollos, who has the next best claim, had no one, we believe, to present it before Luther. No one among the ancients appears to have thought of him. It is a mere conjecture, resting mainly on the one description, that he was "an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures." Can this weigh for a moment against the evidence we have adduced? Let the reader judge.

XIV.

THE "REST THAT REMAINETH."

[CONTAINING A PROOF FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT FOR THE
'CHRISTIAN SABBATH.']

"*There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.*"—
Heb. iv. 9. *A.V.*

"*There remaineth therefore a sabbath rest for the people of
God.*"—*Ib. R.V.*

*Therefore there is left a keeping of Sabbath to (or for) the
people of God.*"—*Lit. Rendg.*

THIS is one of those texts of Scripture which have come to have a certain meaning attached to them without much consideration, in a sort of unquestioning way. The rest referred to is supposed to be the eternal rest of heaven. Discourses have been preached and published on the happiness of the glorified, with this as the text, as if no other interpretation had ever been or could be put upon it; and "the rest that remaineth to the people of God" in this sense is being constantly employed in prayers and public addresses. Yet there are strong reasons for regarding this as an erroneous interpretation, and for understanding the rest referred to as a *present*, not a *future*, rest. 1. The word *rest* occurs no less than ten times in the connected passage from chapter iii., 7th to the 11th verse of this chapter. In the other nine instances the original word is *anapausis*; in this verse it is *sabbatismos*, a word that occurs nowhere else in the whole New Testament. The verb *sabbatizo*, which is found in the Septuagint, signifies *to keep sabbath*, and the noun *sabbatismos*, formed from it, properly denotes *keeping of a sabbath*, as it is rendered in the margin of our Bibles. *It has and can have no other*

meaning. 2. The word rendered remaineth is not the Greek term which most commonly has that meaning, namely, *menei*, but *apoleipetai*, is left. It is the participle of an analogous verb which is used by the apostle in the first verse—"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us (*kataleipomenēs*), &c."* The keeping of a Sabbath is left us just as the promise is left us, and that is certainly not a future thing but a present. Had the translation stood; as it would be literally, 'Therefore there is left a keeping of Sabbath to the people of God,' it is probable the idea of a future eternal rest being meant would scarcely have commended itself to many readers, if to any at all.

3. A present rest in believing is what the apostle refers to plainly, as we think, in the 3rd verse—"For we who have believed do enter into that rest." It is not *shall enter*, but *do enter*. That the sinner, by believing in Jesus, does enter into a state of mental rest, unknown to him before; is surely what no evangelical Christian will dispute. It was our blessed Lord Himself who made the proclamation "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls."—Matt. xi. 28, 29. And the apostle writes in another epistle, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."—Rom. v. 1, 2. Does any one understand these expressions otherwise than as referring to a

* *Apoleipomai* signifies to be left *apo* from something going before: *kataleipomai*, to be left *kata to*, and of course *from* something going before. The difference is only in form.

present rest, though that be recognised at the same time as a pledge and earnest of future glory? 4. The general drift of the passage leads to the same conclusion. The whole is an exhortation to beware of unbelief, such as that exhibited by Israel in the wilderness; in other words, to hold fast faith in Christ. But it is only in the present life that union to Christ by faith can be formed. There is no hope held forth in Scripture of any one entering into the rest of heaven who has not believed, and so entered into a present rest. The eternal rest, no doubt, is sure to those who are already resting in Christ by faith, but it is not of that ulterior rest the apostle is speaking, nor would that form so natural a theme for an exhortation. He exhorts to make sure of a present rest in believing; the eternal rest will certainly follow, but it is not of that he is speaking, nor does there seem to be any direct or explicit reference to it in the whole passage.

These 9th and 10th verses we take to refer to the Christian Sabbath. They are a parenthetical inference, by the way, from what the apostle had said in the verses before. By those who take the *sabbatismos* of the 9th verse to signify the rest in heaven the 10th is explained to mean that the believer, when he enters heaven, has ceased from his works, as God did from His after the Creation. But is it conceivable that the apostle would make any such comparison; or would there be any propriety in it? The reference is plainly to Christ, who, on rising from the dead on the third day, ceased from His humiliation work of redemption, as God did from His creation work. Even Alford, notwithstanding his inveterate hostility to any proper Scriptural ideas respecting the perpetuity of the Sabbatic law, is constrained to "own" that to this view, so

far as the reference to Christ in the 10th verse is concerned, he is "strongly inclined," for reasons which he states. If the believer's rest in heaven be intended in these two verses, why is a new word, used nowhere else, introduced in the 9th verse? This, we are told, is to give emphasis to the idea. But if that be so, why is there a return to the unemphatic word in the 10th verse? and why should the emphasis be laid on man's rest, rather than on God's rest, or Christ's? Speaking of emphasis, there are some commentators who, rather inconsistently with that we have just been alluding to, when it is the believer's entering into God's rest that is in question, would have us to lay great stress on the word *His*—His rest—as if it were God's *own*, His *personal* rest that was meant. But it is absurd to suppose that any creature can enter into that. God's rest, in reference to man, must mean simply the rest that God has provided for him. He provided a rest for Israel in Canaan. He has provided a rest of an infinitely higher kind for His people, through believing in Jesus, not that the rest is identical with the believing, it is consequent upon it.

But how does the reference to the Christian Sabbath come in? A brief resumé of the apostle's reasoning in the passage may make this clear.

Israel in the wilderness so provoked God by their unbelief that He swore in His wrath they should not enter into the rest He had provided in Canaan—namely, the whole generation that came out of Egypt, from twenty years old and above, save Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun. David, in the 95th Psalm, refers to that threatening as a warning to the men of his own day—"Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, &c." This he did under the guidance of inspiration, so that it

was a warning from God Himself. The apostle, when quoting it, introduces the quotation thus—"Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith."—Heb. iii. 7. He makes a similar use of the threatening to that of David, applying it as a warning to Christians against unbelief. The threatening implied a promise. The unbeliever shall not enter, the believer shall, just as Caleb and Joshua did enter Canaan, while all the rest fell in the wilderness. This implied promise is continued to Christians—ch. iv. 1. When God, through David, warned the Israel of his time, the implied promise referred to some kind of rest provided for the believer. What kind of rest was that? It was not the rest of the seventh day Sabbath; for that was enjoyed by those who worshipped the living and true God, "from the foundation of the world"—ver. 3—5. It was, as plainly, not the rest in Canaan, for this had been enjoyed all along from the time of Joshua—ver. 8. What, then, was it? It was a spiritual rest, consequent on believing—"For we who have believed do enter into the rest"—ver. 3. This was enjoyed by believers in David's day, and in still larger measure by Christians in the apostle's day. The 9th verse is an inference from all this. "Therefore there is left," just as the promise is left, and in the plenitude of moral obligation, under the Gospel dispensation, "the keeping of a (weekly) Sabbath to the people of God," inasmuch as this is most intimately connected with the rest in believing, calculated, under God's blessing on the due observance of the day, greatly to enhance that rest, and constitute a fitting memorial of the completion of that work by which Christ procured the rest for His people. "For He (Christ) that is entered into His rest, He also hath ceased from His works (in procuring rest for us), like as God [did] from

His own"* (in creation)—ver. 10—a clear and direct proof for the change of the weekly Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, under the Gospel dispensation. Then, when the apostle resumes the hortatory tone in ver. 11—"Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest," &c., "that rest" does not refer to the *sabbatismos* of ver. 9, but to the *anapausis* of ver. 4—"For we which have believed do enter into rest," &c. The 9th and 10th verses come in as a parenthesis, an inference by the way as we have said, no unprecedented thing in the writings of Paul. It may be asked, But if he intended his reference to be to what we designate the Christian Sabbath distinctively, why did he not make it more plain and explicit? The answer is not far to seek. Had he done so, it would have shocked the prejudices of the unbelieving Hebrews, whom it was his special desire to conciliate; and the method he took served his purpose of concealing his hand. As respected others they had ample opportunities for making themselves acquainted with the doctrine and practice of the apostles on the subject.

It may seem a little presumptuous on our part to differ so widely from the almost universal voice of commentators in our exposition of this passage, the 9th verse in particular. And yet we do not stand altogether alone. Dr. Owen, a host in himself, in his great work on the epistle, attempts to put both meanings on the word *sabbatismos*, holding it "undeniably manifest that the apostle here proves and asserts the granting of an evangelical Sabbath, or day of rest, for the worship of God to be constantly observed," but at the same time expressing the opinion that it *includes* the idea of a present spiritual rest through

* So the words stand in the original.

believing. Fausset would make the word intend mainly the future rest in heaven, but with a side glance, so to speak, to the Christian Sabbath, as a type of the heavenly rest. But surely any such double reference is inadmissible. It might as well be taken to include all three ideas at once—the Christian Sabbath, a present spiritual rest, and a future glorious rest. The late Dr. Wardlaw, of Glasgow, again, in his valuable little volume, *Discourses on the Sabbath*, now become very scarce, while holding the *sabbatismos* of the 9th verse to mean the Christian Sabbath, yet complicates his view of the passage as a whole, and obscures his reasoning, by taking the rest of the 3rd verse, which we who have believed do enter into, to mean the future rest in heaven instead of a present rest. We venture to affirm that the explanation we have given is clearer, more consistent and conclusive than any of these.

The passage, taken as a whole, we understand to establish the following points in relation to the Sabbath:—1. Its primeval institution, when God rested on the seventh day from all His work which He created and made, and when He “blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it” (Gen. ii. 3), which words can only be properly understood in relation to man. God set apart the day to be observed by man in His worship. The Sabbath was thus “made for man,” for his observance and for his benefit, not for the Jew only, for *Jews* were not in existence at the creation, but for man in all ages till the end of time. 2. The continued obligation to observe a weekly Sabbath under the Christian dispensation. This, indeed, is implied in its primeval institution, but it is directly proved by Heb. iv. 9, 10. 3. The change of the day from the seventh to the first day of the week, to commemorate Christ’s resurrection on that

day, His resting from His works as God did from His own. This is commemorated by its being the first day of the week, while at the same time the commemoration of creation is not lost sight of, since it is still the seventh portion of time.

XV.

CHRIST'S PREACHING TO THE SPIRITS IN PRISON—SALVATION NOT BY WATER.

1 PET. iii. 18—21.

WHAT Peter says of his "beloved brother Paul's" epistles (2 Pet. iii. 16), that in them are "some things hard to be understood," is applicable to his own epistles—notably to this passage, in which he speaks of preaching to the spirits in prison. There are those who contend that in the interval between Christ's death and resurrection He descended into hell and there preached the Gospel to condemned souls. For such an idea no other Scripture can be adduced than this, and it is of importance to inquire whether it really teaches any such thing.

The apostle had been exhorting to patient well-doing under persecution and suffering, and fortifies his exhortation by this consideration, verse 18—"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." There is not a sharply defined contrast here, as many suppose—and this has contributed at the very outset to misapprehension and confusion—between flesh and spirit. There is such a contrast in Paul's writings when he is treating of mere men; the flesh in those instances meaning human nature as fallen and corrupt, the spirit meaning the renewed nature. But no such contrast is admissible in reference to Christ. The antithesis here is not between the flesh and the Spirit, but between being put to death and being quickened or made alive again. The flesh can be understood to mean only and simply the human nature of Christ, because it alone

was susceptible of dying and being made alive again. But it is not so very clear what is meant by the *pneuma* or Spirit here. Alford, who argues strenuously for the descent into hell, says, "What is asserted is not that the *flesh died* and the Spirit was *made alive*; but that 'quoad' the flesh the Lord died, 'quoad' the Spirit He was made alive"—a distinction certainly without a difference, like too many made by the same writer, and equally astray whichever side of it be taken. Then he adds, by way of explication, "He, the God-man Christ Jesus, body and soul, ceased to live in the flesh, began to live in the Spirit; ceased to live a fleshy mortal life, began to live a spiritual resurrection life," seeking to fortify the view by quotations from Luther and Hofmann, which it is needless to reproduce; for, by whomsoever the view may be presented, it is clearly absurd. Surely it is absurd to say that Christ, in the very moment of dying, entered upon a new spiritual life—absurd to say that, in the very act of dying, He began His resurrection life, or that His resurrection life began before the morning of the third day. True "there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv. 44), but this cannot be applied to a human soul in its state of separation from the body and before the spiritual body has begun to be. To be consistent, those who hold this view, absurd as it is otherwise, should take Christ's preaching to the spirits in prison to have occurred after His resurrection on the third day. In that case, why the special reference to the antediluvians? and, if such preaching took place at any time since His resurrection, why not always and to all condemned souls? Yet Alford, though hesitatingly to be sure, will have it that the preaching took place before the resurrection and not after. Further on in his comment we meet

these words, "that Spirit in which also, ere He was made alive with the full resurrection life, He, &c." So it seems there was a partial resurrection life even before the resurrection, and the dying was actually a partial quickening! Strange that an acute mind should not perceive the absurdity of this.

A few elementary considerations may make the subject thus far plain enough, and free it from the mist which transcendental and unintelligible speculation has gathered upon it. The Son of God, who is a divine person, and has not nor ever had a second distinct human personality, in order to accomplish our salvation, assumed a human nature into ineffable union with His divine nature. It was necessary to the accomplishment of the work He had undertaken that He should die as the substitute of those He came to redeem. The divine nature could not die. Death, in the human subject, is the separation of soul and body. Christ had a true body and a rational soul. He was "put to death in the flesh," that is in respect to His human nature—the words can mean nothing else. His death consisted in the temporary separation of His human soul and body; and His being "quickened," or made alive again, consisted in the re-union of His human soul and body, which took place on the morning of the third day, not before. What then does the *pneuma* of this verse mean? Does it mean the human soul of Christ? No, for as that could not be distinctively said to die any more than His divine nature, so it could not be said to be made alive again. Does it mean His divine nature? that He was made alive again by the power of His divine nature? Such seems to be the interpretation put upon the apostle's language by many. It would be an intelligible mean-

ing, not inconsistent with the teaching of Scripture elsewhere, were it not for what follows in the next verse :—
“ By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.” If one should say that Christ went and preached to men, whether in the body or out of the body, at any time, *in or by His divine nature*, no meaning could be attached to such language ; it is simply unintelligible. But if it be said that Christ went and preached to men by the Holy Spirit, the expression is intelligible as the idea expressed is Scriptural.

We are thus shut up to understand the Spirit by which (whom) Christ was quickened as the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. Nor is this the only place where the resurrection of Christ is ascribed to the direct or immediate agency of the Holy Spirit. In Romans viii. 11 we read—
“ But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” True, it is not said there in so many words that Christ was raised by the Spirit, but the whole cast of the language used manifestly implies this. The resurrection of believers will be by the Spirit who now dwells in them ; and this will be effected in the way of conformity to the resurrection of their Lord ; implying clearly that His resurrection was effected by the same glorious Agent. “ Shall also quicken your mortal bodies (as well as quickening His) by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” We find Christ’s resurrection in Scripture sometimes ascribed to the Father ; sometimes to Himself ; and in these instances, as we believe, to the Spirit, in what precise distinctive sense we need not wait to inquire, if indeed the subject be not too profound for our finite capacity.

Alford, to be sure, declares the rendering of the English Version "by the Spirit" to be an "error," and pronounces it "wrong both grammatically and theologically." But for this he assigns no reason whatever. Let no one be staggered by the dogmatic utterance. Alford, however eminent as critic and grammarian, was not always perfectly accurate even in his grammar. In this instance he seems to have founded on the notion of a contrast between "the flesh" and "the spirit." This we believe to be a mistaken idea, as already noted. The original word for spirit is a simple dative, without either article or preposition prefixed, but every one familiar with the usage of the Greek Testament knows that *Spirit* or *Holy Spirit*, being a proper name, may or may not have the article; and, in Greek syntax, such an one does not require to be reminded of the frequently recurring 'dative of the instrument,' or agent. As to Alford's theological attainments, or even his logical discrimination, if one may judge from his notes on the passage under consideration and many others, they must in our opinion be rated very low.

It follows of course, from what has been said, that we understand the relative in the 19th verse to refer to the Holy Spirit—"By whom (not *which*) He went and preached to the spirits in prison." Who the spirits referred to are particularly appears from the succeeding verses. The prison is that of the condemned, in which the spirits referred to were confined at the time the apostle wrote. But it does not follow that the preaching took place either then or at any previous or subsequent time to these spirits in their disembodied state. The language of the next verse, instead of employing this, as some contend, implies the very reverse. "Which at one time" *pote* (not *sometime*, as in

our Version, which is ambiguous and so misleading) “were disobedient when” (this defines the period of the disobedience and of the preaching as well—the *once* of our Version is superfluous) “the long-suffering of God was waiting in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few” (not *few*, as in our Version), “that is, eight souls were saved from water”—*di’ hudatos*, not *by* water. Christ went and preached to those who, at the time the apostle wrote, were disembodied spirits—preached to them while they were yet in the body, by His Spirit resting upon, qualifying, prompting, and guiding Noah, who is expressly styled by the apostle in his Second Epistle (ch. ii. 5) “a preacher of righteousness.” The work of redemption was committed by the Divine Father, in the counsels of eternity, into the hands of the Son, and in order to its accomplishment all power was given unto Him in heaven and on earth. In virtue of that delegated mediatorial authority He sends the Spirit—“I will send you another Comforter.” And it was not only after Christ’s ascension that the Spirit was thus sent, although from that date His influences have been poured out in larger measure. It was so from the beginning. In corroboration of the interpretation which makes Peter declare that Christ preached to the antediluvians by His Spirit resting on Noah, and of the views we have presented generally, the language of the Almighty, as recorded Gen. vi. 3, is not a little striking—“My Spirit shall not always strive with man.”

Should the exposition thus far commend itself to the acceptance of the reader he will perceive that the passage gives no countenance whatever to the notion of Christ’s descent into hell, or to the fancy that those who have left the world

in a state of enmity against God ever have another offer of mercy. If not taught in this passage, then nowhere else in the Bible. In truth both are equally and utterly repugnant to all the teachings of the inspired Word. If the preaching was not in the interval between Christ's death and resurrection, as we think has been made abundantly clear, then it *must* have been made at some other time. The 19th verse expressly fixes the period to have been "in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared."

Noah and his family were saved from water. So we have rendered and understood the phrase *di' hudatos*. The preposition *dia* followed by a genitive most commonly denotes the means or instrument, but when used as a local reference, as here, it has the force of *through*, *through and from*, or *through and out of*. This indeed is its primary meaning. "The primary meaning," says Winer, "is *through*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12 (Plat. *Phaed* 109 c): the idea of *going through*, however, in a local sense, always has attached to it that of *coming forth or out*."* Examples of this might be multiplied. *Dia mesou*, Lu. iv. 30, "through the midst." "And the nations shall walk *dia tou phōtos autēs*, *through her light*" (that, namely, of the New Jerusalem), Rev. xxi. 24—"as their element and atmosphere." (*Webster*.) "Shall be saved *houtōs de hōs dia puros*, but so as *through and from fire*," 1 Cor. iii. 15. The "by fire" of our Version here is misleading and confusing to the reader. It could not be said that the fire is the means or instrument of the salvation. It *destroys* the work, and would destroy the worker too, were he not saved *from* it by other means. "She (the woman) shall be saved *dia tēs teknoyonias through and out of* (certainly not *by*) child bearing," 1 Tim. ii. 15.

* *Gram. N. T. Gr.*, Moulton's ed., p. 472.

In 1 Pet. iii. 20, as in these other instances cited, Webster renders 'through and out of.'* But Alford, who translates thus in the other places, here diverges and translates "by water," adding, "The water is, in the apostle's view, the *medium of saving*, inasmuch as it bore up the ark: of the next verse." Of the next verse we shall have to speak presently. Meanwhile we must express astonishment that so many gifted expositors, and among them Calvin, should entertain such a view for a moment, or represent the apostle as doing so. If the water saved, what did the water save from? The water, of course. The water saved from the water! Why the water was not sent to save but to destroy. It drowned all the other inhabitants of the world, and would have drowned Noah and his family too had he not been saved by the ark. It was the ark that was the medium of saving *from* the water. It might as well be said that the wrath of God against sin, of which the Deluge was an emblem in general and an exemplification in particular, is the medium of saving us from that same wrath, inasmuch as its being poured out on the great Surety and Substitute has the effect of for ever delivering from it the sinner who has fled to the great antitypical Ark that God Himself has provided—as well might this be said as that the water of the Deluge was the medium of saving Noah.

The first clause of the 21st verse as it stands in our Authorized Version, "The like figure whereunto," is no translation of the original words. These are *ho kai humas antitupon nun sōdsei*. † The question here is, What is the

* *Synt. and Synon. of the Gr. Test.*, p. 165.

† The Textus Receptus has *hemas*, us; but *humas*, you, is the reading best supported by manuscripts. The difference is of no significance.

proper antecedent to the relative *ho*? Alford makes *hudatos*, the word immediately going before, the antecedent, and translates thus—"Which (viz., water) the antitype is now saving you also, even baptism, &c." In order to make this out he enters upon a series of explanations or *aliases*, as we might call them. First he tells us that *hudōr* to which *ho* refers is not, as Huther, al., the water of Noah's flood, but water generally—a distinction so very nice, or we so obtuse, that we cannot appreciate it. Next, we are told—or rather told before on the preceding page—that it is the "water of baptism." But then we read again that it is "not, *the water of baptism*—but water, in the form of baptism, becomes to us baptism," another transcendental distinction. And lastly, "that baptism not material, but spiritual." It is so far well that we are thus brought to the spiritual at length after so many transmutations. Wonderful that an acute mind can so impose upon itself by its subtle and incomprehensible distinctions. We can have no confidence in an explanation that tells us a simple little word means so and so; then, not that, but something else very different; then, not even that something else, but something totally different again. But the explanation is liable to decisive objection all round. We have already seen reason to conclude that the apostle cannot be supposed to assert anything so absurd as that Noah and his family were by the water of the Deluge saved from the Deluge. Much less can it be rightly understood to declare, that men are now saved eternally by water, refine upon the idea or explain it away as one may. Baptism, again, cannot be properly regarded as the antitype of the Deluge. If so, the inevitable conclusion is, that baptism is not for salvation but for destruction, and we need to be saved from

it. The very collocation of the words in the original, indeed, is against such a construction. It is plainly not the relative *ho* that is in apposition with *antitupon*, but the word *humas*, *you*. Believers saved by Christ from sin and misery are the proper antitype of Noah and his family saved from the Deluge by the ark.

We must go beyond the word immediately preceding, then, to find the antecedent to *ho*. Nor have we far to seek for it. There is a relative in the 19th verse, the antecedent being, as we have seen, the word Spirit in the 18th—"By whom also He went and preached, &c." The 20th verse is subordinate and explicative of this. Then the *ho* of the 21st introduces another relative clause co-ordinate with that in the 19th—"By whom He preached, &c. . . . Who also now saves you, the antitype." Men are saved by the Spirit of God, not by water. Salvation is more usually in Scripture language ascribed to the Father or the Son. But it is the work of the Triune. The Father so loved the world that He sent the Son to redeem: the Son makes atonement for sin and intercedes: the Holy Spirit applies the redemption which Christ has purchased. And it seems requisite that men should be often reminded of the truth, that this work of the Spirit in applying is as absolutely necessary as is the work of the Son in procuring. Salvation is properly ascribed to any one of the Divine Persons, it being understood that there is in it absolute concurrence of the Three—that it is the work of Godhead.

Thus far the exposition is comparatively easy and plain enough. The chief difficulty of the passage is in the reference to baptism and the meaning to be put on that reference. We can see no way out of it by making the

word *baptism* commence another subordinate and explanatory sentence, thus:—"Baptism [is] not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, &c." Those acquainted with the originals do not need to be informed that in the ancient manuscripts the writing was continuous; there was nothing answering to our punctuation, not even a break in a line to distinguish one word from another; the separation of words and the punctuation being the work of modern editors and printers—so that we are at perfect liberty to adopt a different punctuation where the sense appears to demand it. By baptism here we understand, not as Alford, spiritual baptism, but simply the outward rite. But we cannot, with most expositors, take the phrase 'the filth of the flesh' in a literal sense. Surely no Christian needed to be reminded that baptism is not a mere external ablution, an ordinary cleaning of the skin—that it is a religious ordinance significant of what is spiritual. By the filth of the flesh we understand, after the manner of Paul's use of the term *flesh*, the fallen and corrupt nature. The external rite of baptism is not the putting away of this. It is not regeneration, much less is it sanctification. Many professing Christians in the apostle's day required to be reminded of this, and many who have undertaken to be teachers of others in all ages down to our own day require to be taught this part of the first principles of the oracles of God. But if baptism is not this, what is it? "It is," says Peter, "the seeking of a good conscience after God." The word *eperōtēma* does not mean *answer*, but the converse, *question*, *request*, *inquiry*. The phrase 'a good conscience,' again, sometimes signifies merely a conscience that does not accuse but approves. Thus Paul, in commencing his speech before the Sanhedrim, could say, Ac. xxiii. 1, "Men

and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day," making no exception of that former period of his life when he was a persecutor, because he then "verily thought with himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."—Ac. xxvi. 9. But the phrase as used by Peter evidently means more than this. It means a conscience not only approving, but, while approving, enlightened by the Word and Spirit of God. It is, perhaps, scarcely necessary to add that a good conscience here is put by a well-known figure of speech for the possessor of it.

The case is this:—The person who applies for baptism and has it administered to him on a credible profession of his faith in Christ is already, in the judgment of charity, a justified person. When the infant child of a believing parent is the subject, the faith of the parent, as the natural representative, is accepted on behalf of the child, according to a moral principle recognised under the old dispensation. A *moral principle* is to be distinguished from the particular *law* requiring and defining its practical exhibition. The law may be varied in accordance with times and circumstances, by the authority and in the wisdom of the Great Law-giver. The moral principle is immutable. But for the sake of illustration we take the case of an adult applicant for baptism to himself. He is, we repeat, when his application is complied with, regarded as already justified. Being a believer in Christ, he is reconciled to God through Him, the guilt of his sin being wholly removed. He is thus the possessor of "a good conscience." By believing he has entered into a present rest. At peace with God, he has peace in his conscience. But the very process of enlightenment which has brought him thus far has re-

vealed to him, as he never knew before, the depth of corruption still cleaving to him. He knows, if he has been rightly instructed, that baptism as an external ceremony cannot free him wholly and at once from this in-dwelling sin. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to sanctify wholly, in soul, body, and spirit; and this is a gradual process, never perfected till the gate of death is passed. His submitting to baptism, then, is, on his part, an emphatic mode of expressing his earnest longing—at the same time intensifying that longing, as the expression of every feeling naturally does—that God, by His Spirit, would do for him what he knows by painful experience he cannot do for himself, and what no mere man or rite can do for him, namely, cleanse away all ‘the filth of the flesh,’ a purification symbolized by the application of water in this very baptism. In such a case the prayer will be heard and answered; and who can tell, even in the case of the unconscious babe, what blessings the faith of the parent may be instrumental in procuring for his child, either at the time or afterwards?

The apostle’s words are not to be understood as furnishing a formal definition of baptism. They are such a description of the ordinance as is calculated to obviate misconceptions of its nature and design. That there have been such misconceptions in the apostle’s day and ever since, widely entertained amongst those calling themselves Christians, is matter of historical fact. Very early Christian fathers, as their extant writings show, began to speak unhesitatingly of baptism as regeneration. The “mystery of iniquity” (2 Thess. ii. 7) was already working before the apostles left the world. There is a tendency in human nature, as innumerable facts in all ages testify, to ascribe to rites and ceremonies somewhat of a magical virtue.

The doctrine of baptismal regeneration is not of Christian but of Pagan origin. It had a prominent place in the ancient Babylonian mysteries, in which, curious to note when considering this passage in Peter, perverted traditions of Noah and the Deluge largely mingled.* Converts from heathenism could not all be expected to be completely freed from the notions, sentiments, feelings they had cherished from childhood in their unconverted state. It may be, too, that some misconstrued the words of our Lord to Nicodemus, John iii. 5, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God." It is at least questionable whether Christ intended in these words any reference to baptism. If we compare them with the Baptist's words, recorded in Matt. iii. 11, it may help us to a better understanding—"I indeed baptise you with water He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and fire." It has been supposed this was a prophecy, fulfilled at Pentecost; but it should be remembered that the Baptist addressed these words, not to the apostles, who were not yet chosen, but to the multitudes who waited on his ministry at the Jordan. Christ never required the use of literal fire in any ordinance appointed by Him. We must, therefore, take the word figuratively, like the *fan, floor, wheat, garner*, in the next verse. If we distinguish between the fire and the Spirit, then the fire may refer to the exercise of such graces as love and zeal, *kindled* in the soul by the Spirit. Even so, in the phrase, "water and the Spirit," water probably means the graces *infused* into the soul by the Spirit, as distinguished from the Spirit Himself personally considered. A very large proportion of the Anglican clergy strenuously

* See Hyslop's *Two Babylons*, 3rd ed., 1862, pp. 187—209.

contend for the dogma of baptismal regeneration, and the wider kindred doctrine of sacramental efficacy—doctrines which we find it impossible to distinguish substantially from the *opus operatum* of the Romish theologian. These doctrines were the germs from which, in great measure, the whole gigantic system of Romish superstition came to be developed in the course of ages. We see the process now going on before our eyes with amazing rapidity. Already the ‘perverts’ in England, many of them highly cultured, count by the hundred, and a large proportion of the Ritualistic party, which may be numbered by the thousand, are Romanists in all but the name. If the circumstances were as favourable as in the early ages, we might expect soon to see the Church of England going back bodily to the great apostasy. But who ever heard of a Presbyterian minister becoming a pervert? There is little danger of such a thing, so long as Presbyterians adhere firmly to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, in which we find the following clear and concise utterance, expressing, as we believe, the very mind of the apostle in the passage we are considering:—“The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them (*opus operatum*), or in him that doth administer them (apostolic succession so-called and priestly intention); but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of His Spirit in them that by faith receive them.” The records of the past thus throw light upon the train of thought to which, under the guidance of inspiration, expression is given in the passage. Instead of teaching that baptism is regeneration—if it teach that, it teaches more, that baptism is salvation—it teaches, when rightly interpreted, the very reverse. Baptism cannot be regeneration,

for, on any Scriptural view of the subject, the recipient is presumed to be already regenerated: it is a sign and seal of faith already possessed. Much less is it sanctification. Both are the work of the Holy Spirit.

It remains that we notice the last clause of verse 21—“by (or *through*) the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Some would connect this with the words immediately going before—the seeking of a good conscience after God, through the resurrection of Christ—but this seems an unnatural construction, which we find difficulty in putting a meaning on. Alford we think is right, agreeing with the English Version, in connecting it with the word *saves*, regarding the intervening words as parenthetical, only that we consider both wrong in not including the word *baptism* in the parenthesis. Alford observes truly that the mention of the resurrection of Christ here leads back our thought to the 18th verse—“quicken’d by the Spirit”—but the whole verse leads our thought to the agency of the Holy Spirit, as in the resurrection of Christ, so in our salvation. It is the Holy Spirit, not baptism, that saves us, through the resurrection of Christ. There is good reason for the prominence and importance assigned in the apostolic writings to this grand fact of the Gospel history. It implies, and involves, of course, His previous atoning death. “Who was delivered for offences, and raised again for our justification.”—Rom. iv. 25. The Father, by raising Him from the dead, attested His acceptance of the finished *atoning* work. It was necessary that He should thus rise and ascend to heaven, in order to carry on the work of intercession, procuring all the blessings of salvation for those for whom He died—in order that He should fulfil His promise to send another Comforter. Sustained as the fact is by

the clearest historical evidence, the contemplation of it is calculated to confirm believers in their faith. And since Christ rose again "the first-fruits of them that sleep," 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23, it animates their hope of glory, inasmuch as it is a sure pledge, while it is a procuring cause, of their own future resurrection. The Holy Spirit's work in salvation is founded upon that of Christ: it is the direct application of the redemption purchased by Christ to those for whom the purchase was made. The Holy Spirit, according to Christ's own word, testifies of Him; receives, takes, of His, and shows it with demonstration and power: guides into the knowledge of, and brings to remembrance, all that truth, the truth in Jesus, which instrumentally saves; convinces of sin; breathes into the soul dead in trespasses and sins the breath of new life; works that faith in the heart which unites savingly to Christ; intercedes on earth, in the hearts of believers, with groanings which cannot be uttered; carries forward the sanctification of the whole nature, thus making meet for glory; and will, at the great day, raise their mortal bodies and fashion them in the likeness of Christ's glorified body—all this "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."*

The exposition may be fitly summed up by presenting an amended literal translation of the passage, with a word or two of running comment.

"Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, put to death in the flesh [the human nature], but made alive [again] by the Spirit. By whom [viz., the Holy Spirit] also He went and preached to [some who are now disembodied] spirits in pri-

* See in proof Jo. xiv. 26, xv. 26, xvi. 13, 14, 15; 1 Cor. ii. 4; Rom. viii. 26; Eph. ii. 8; 2 Thess. ii. 13; Rom. viii. 11.

son ; *At one time [during their sojourn on earth] disobedient, when the long-suffering of God was waiting, in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few [persons], that is, eight souls were saved from water. Who [i.e., the Holy Spirit, the relative clause here being co-ordinate with that in verse 19—By whom also He went, &c. . . . Who also now saves, &c.,] also now saves you the antitype [of Noah and his family, they being saved from the Deluge by the ark ; you from the wrath of God due to sin by being in Christ, the antitypical ark, through the Spirit's working faith in you : for] (baptism [is] not the putting away of the filth of the flesh [it has not the effect of taking away the corruption of our whole nature], but [it is] the seeking of a good conscience after God [that He, by His Spirit, would do for us what baptism cannot do]) through [i.e., the Holy Spirit saves you through] the resurrection of Jesus Christ."*

We may add, that the exposition, more particularly with reference to the agency of the Holy Spirit, seems strongly corroborated by the words of the verse that follows, verse 22, " Who (Christ) is gone to heaven, and is on the right hand of God," &c. Christ has left the world, and, as the same apostle testifies, Ac. iii. 21, the heaven must receive Him till the times of the restitution of all things. But He fulfils His promise that He would send another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, to take His place, so to speak, in His absence, till He come the second time to perfect His work begun on earth.

