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Archives
230.7
B6421
n.d.

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Oregon,
Illinois.

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THE LARGER HOPE :

A CONSIDERATION OF THE QUESTION—
WILL ALL MEN ULTIMATELY BE SAVED ?



AMONG the many, many doctrines promulgated at the present time, claiming from its advocates the attention, and belief, and support of their fellow men,—such at least as profess to believe the Bible, and are anxious to know what is therein revealed regarding the ultimate fate of the vast majority of mankind,—is the one which is for a time to engage our thoughts to-night, and to be examined and tested, as time will admit, in the light of the plain and comprehensive teaching of the word of God. It is a doctrine which largely appeals to the sympathies and feelings of mankind, consequently it is not to be wondered at that it has many adherents, a fact however, that tells not one iota in favour of its truthfulness, for the feelings of religious people are easily worked upon, and the number among them—in the comparative sense I mean—is few indeed who exercise their intellectual powers in dissecting those doctrines constantly proclaimed from the discordant voices of the thousands of preachers of this and other lands. Nevertheless it is a duty enforced upon us (though so sadly neglected) by an Apostolic pen, for the disciple whom Jesus loved in an especial degree has said, writing to believers in his day,—and the duty surely is equally as necessary now as then—“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but *try* the spirits whether they are of God : because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (I John iv. 1) ; and we find that it was a distinguishing characteristic of the believers composing the church at Ephesus, specially approved by the Lord Jesus himself,—as you will find by referring to Rev. ii. 2—that they “had *tried* those who said they were apostles, and were not, and had found them liars.” In such plain language did Jesus speak of the false teachers in Apostolic times, and the commendation passed by him upon those who examined their claims, and the plain command of the Apostle John to try, or test the doctrines of those who appeal to our feelings or our reason, together with the many other declarations of a like nature, make it imperatively necessary that we should be cautious what we accept as true, and look well to the utterances of those who, in too many cases, preach for hire, and whose voices disagree so much with each other.

The doctrine of Universalism, or in other words, the doctrine that all men who have ever lived,—savage or civilized, learned or ignorant, Pagan or Christian, bond or free, the most enlightened or the most debased barbarian—will all ultimately be saved with an everlasting salvation, is no new thing in the earth. There are few false doctrines that are. Most of them, if not all of them can be found,—like the various conflicting theories in the scientific world—in the teachings of men who lived in the first few centuries of the Christian era, or among the dreamings of unenlightened heathen minds in those various systems of religion and philosophy which existed before Christ was born. Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Clement of Alexandria, and Justin may be mentioned as those who—among the so-called “fathers” of the Christian Church—believed and taught the final restoration of all men to God; and perhaps in all ages—I don’t know that it can be proved—there have been those who have entertained these large views of the divine mercy and all-embracing love. At any rate large numbers of Universalists exist to-day, and the doctrine of the salvation of all extends on every hand. “Multitudes of the ministers of the gospel” (says the Rev. Edward White) “cherish it in secret, with more or less of assent, whose ministry suffers in fervency accordingly, the sense of danger being lost. Yet they are for some reason afraid to proclaim it. Why afraid?” he asks. “Is it not” says he, “that they suspect that the common sense of serious Christians will explode their opinion as contrary to Scripture?” “The minds of such good men,” he continues, “honestly unable to sustain the stupendous burden of the dogma of endless torments, and knowing no other refuge, have fled to the doctrine of the salvation of all men, quoting the Poet Laureate’s agreeable reveries when Holy Scripture fails them.”

In our own day this doctrine has been more freely proclaimed, however, because of the freer air men breathe in the theological world. The barriers of creed are giving way. Men are less and less afraid to utter all their thoughts. Bigotry and priestcraft is rampant enough it is true, but it cannot chain human thought, it cannot now force men into the dungeon, it cannot place men upon the rack, or turn the thumb-screw, or light the faggot, or quench the light of a man’s life at the stake. There is more freedom, more toleration, less persecution; therefore men think, and thinking, they give utterance to their beliefs; consequently, owing to this freedom, the air is resonant with voices, and the sounds differ, and hence the necessity to examine and test the spirits whether they are of God, for where there is so much diversity all cannot be right, seeing that there is but “one faith,” and “one hope” according to the most reasonable declaration of the Apostle Paul. We have had this doctrine of the final salvation of all men brought before our notice of late years by such men as the Rev. Andrew Jukes, the eloquent Dean Farrar, and the late Rev. Baldwin Brown. The two latter have not indeed, as far as I am aware stated their full conviction that all will indeed be saved, but Dean Farrar’s book on “The Larger Hope” goes very near it. He denies eternal punishment. He denies the doctrine of conditional immortality. And yet he says in reference to the only other view left open to him “I cannot preach the certainty

of what is called universalism—that is, the view that all will finally be saved.” It is not difficult however, notwithstanding this statement, to see where he stands, for he asserts that Peter taught that the “soul” or the “divinity,” or some part of the dead Jesus, went and preached to the “souls” of certain other dead people who were destroyed by the judgments of the most high God in the time of Noah, and he says “if the fate of those dead sinners was not irrevocably fixed by death, then it must be clear and obvious to the very meanest understanding that neither of necessity is ours.” You will observe that there is a very important “IF” contained in this passage. Apart from this sentence however his teaching is pretty plain. Winding up one of his powerful sermons on “Eternal Punishment” he says, “There, then, my brethren, is the sole answer which I can give you to your question, What about the lost? My belief is fixed upon that living God who is the saviour of all men. My answer is, with Thomas Erskine of Lanathan, that we are lost here as much as there, and that Christ came to seek and to save the lost; and my hope is that the vast majority of the lost will at length be found. . . . If there should be souls among you (and are there not?) souls very sinful indeed, but yet not hardened in sin—souls that feel, indeed, that ever amid their failing they long, and pray, and love, and agonise, and strive to creep nearer to the light, then to you I say, Have faith in God. There is hope for you—hope for you even if death overtake you before the final victory is won; hope for the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; hope for the mourners, for they shall be comforted; though you, too, *if you should continue in sin*, may have to be purified in that gehenna of æonian fire beyond the grave. Yes, my brethren, ‘Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him!’ But say also, as Christ’s own Apostles said, that there shall be a restitution of all things, that God willeth not that any shall perish, that Christ both died and rose and revived that he might be the Lord both of the dead and of the living; that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive, and that the day shall come when all things shall be subdued unto him that God may be all in all.”

Now while an extract like that sufficiently shows the theological leanings of the Dean, it manifests at the same time an amount of fallacious reasoning, and a misapplication of scripture so marvellous, that one wonders how so learned a man can so completely distort and muddle it in the manner he has done. Portions of texts are torn from their contexts, which in several cases entirely destroy the very theory they are quoted to prove. Some of these passages we may examine before we conclude, we simply utter our protest now against the manner in which they are here employed, for very little discrimination is required to perceive that—with their contexts—they teach an entirely opposite view.

The late Rev. J. Baldwin Brown’s view was very similar to that just referred to. He appeared to teach, judging from his letters some few years back to the *Christian World*,—a paper which, with its widespread influence is cast upon the side of the Larger Hope theory,—that the sinner would suffer for ever if his “free will” persisted in holding out

against the Almighty. In that case the *destruction* threatened in the Bible would mean his endless *preservation in misery!* But Mr. Brown was hopeful of the conversion of all sinners in hell, and then, he argued, their *destruction* would mean the "destruction of their sins!" And as you can scarcely conceive of a sinner's "free-will" holding out against God's mercy, when the sinner is actually enduring torment in another world, it means of course that all will be saved. The outlines of this theory were also contained in a paper by Lord Lyttleton in the *Contemporary Review* in 1871. It has been said by one writer that "Lord Lyttleton and Mr. Brown seem to attribute to free-will and hell-torment the regenerating power which the New Testament always ascribes to divine grace and the truth of the gospel."

Now it may be, and no doubt to those who accept this doctrine with unquestioning faith (or credulity), it is, a most pleasant, a most delightful thing to think that all men are going to be saved at last, that instead of "the way that leadeth unto life" being "*narrow*," as Jesus declared it to be, it is exceeding "*broad*," that instead of it being the fact that "*few there be that find it*" Jesus made a profound mistake, although a manifestation of God, and essentially "the Truth," inasmuch as, in this life, or hereafter, every individual that ever existed the wide world through will hear and accept the offers of God's great love, and be brought back—even though through ages and ages of suffering—to the Father's loving arms. If such a doctrine be true let it at once be proclaimed from the pulpits of "Christendom," but if it be false, as we believe it to be, then it requires a very little consideration to perceive how exceedingly dangerous it is, and what a snare it becomes to the thousands who listen to the pleasing delusion, who may be, and without doubt are, easily led to neglect the present "day" of salvation, and trust to the "fool's to-morrow," which, alas! never comes. The fact is the doctrine of "The Larger Hope," or "Eternal Hope," or "Universalism" or whatever other name you like to clothe the idea of the Restoration of all men with, is one of the greatest delusions claiming the attention of thinking men. It is based upon special pleading, and the most fallacious interpretation and application of scripture language, whilst the vast mass of plain teaching affecting the question is either ignored, or twisted in such an unwarrantable manner as would not be tolerated in any other public document in any court of law, or by any competent authority in the universe. "There is not, perhaps," (says one) "a more pernicious example of violence offered to sacred language in the history of the world" as that offered by Universalists to the threats of the Bible relating to the wicked. Well might we take up the language of the prophets and say with Jeremiah—ch. xxiii. verses 16 and 17—"Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. They say still unto them that despise me, The Lord hath said, ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, no evil shall come upon you." "With *lies*"—Jehovah said through Ezekiel (xiii. 22)—"With *lies* ye have . . . strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, *by promising him life.*"

We believe that the doctrine of the restoration of all men, in a great many cases, is a rebound from the doctrine of endless agony so long taught by what are called the "orthodox" churches of the world. Some men and women, many perhaps amongst the Universalists in various ages, have been and are still, gifted with more sensitive or more imaginative minds than others. They have thought upon and brooded over the terrible doctrine of endless pain and endless sin, till they have doubted its truthfulness, as all men *must do* if they will but exercise their reason to a very small extent, unfettered by human tradition. They have endeavoured to realize what that Pagan and Popish doctrine means, considering the millions upon millions who are supposed to be affected by it, including, it may be, some of their own relatives, considering also the excruciating agonies which theologians have taught the inhabitants of hell for ever endure, and the thought, the realization, has brought madness with it, or incredulity,—total unbelief in some cases, in others, a very great modification of the old belief. Many of those who have thus modified their belief, have—through the fact that the key of truth has been unknown to them, and by reason of certain fundamental fallacies underlying their whole belief, adopted this idea of the final restoration of all. They have gone from one vagary to another. It is the swing of the pendulum from one extreme to the other. From believing that the great majority of the human race will—as the Wesleyan Hymn has it,

" Suffer hellish pains, to all eternity "

they have gone to the belief that all will ultimately be glorified, and that possibly Jesus has already evangelised a large portion of them in Hades, and that—as I know some believe now—those who are, under present circumstances redeemed, will be employed in future ages to instruct, enlighten, and win back to God those who have died in ignorance or impenitence now, for which belief the evidence is not forthcoming ; it is a pleasing fancy ; it tickles the ears and the minds of those who listen to it and believe it, as many of their fancies do, but there is an absence of that sober, solid testimony upon which we must build our hopes for the future, and raise a superstructure that the storms will not destroy.

Now we emphatically state that this dogma is based upon false premises, that is, upon false foundations, upon something assumed but not proved, upon something taken for granted which affects the whole structure built upon it, and if that assumption be a false one as we believe, then the whole edifice falls with a great crash ; or in other words the theories rising out of it become mere speculations as unsubstantial as the

" Baseless fabric of a dream."

The starting point of this doctrine among the majority of those who teach it is exactly the same as with those who believe in the endless torment of the wicked. Although branching out into such widely differing conclusions they have a common starting point, a common foundation. What is it ? Why is it this, *The absolute eternity of the soul of man*. That is—with most believers in these doctrines—the basis of the very opposite beliefs built upon them. That every individual is naturally immortal, destined to live for ever, as everlasting as the Creator himself !

The one class—the believers in everlasting misery—assert that the threatenings of “death” and “destruction,” of “perishing” and extermination contained over and over again in the Scriptures must of necessity mean that the wicked will be miserable for ever, seeing that they start with a theory which precludes the literal and natural meaning of these words to a soul which is essentially indestructible, and they argue that the promises of Christ to give “eternal life” to his people mean—not literal life which a person is supposed already to possess—but that they are to be taken in the sense of “spiritual life,” holiness and happiness for ever to those who already possess immortality. The other class—starting with the same Pagan fiction—for such it is,—seeing certain promises in the Bible to the effect that God will eventually be “all in all,” that he will ultimately reconcile “all things unto himself,” argue thus, that if every man actually lives for ever, and yet all evil is to be banished from the universe, and all things reconciled to God, man must at last be brought into a spiritual condition which will fit him to share in that universal blessedness; he must therefore in the great future be restored to favour, hence they think their doctrine proved. Of course there is immense difficulty found in “harmonising” with this view all those threats of the complete destruction of the sinner contained in the Bible, but there are fertile minds among them and have been since the time of Origen, and if the one party can so manipulate the words of the Bible as to make *death* mean perpetual misery, and *perishing* mean preservation in sin and pain, well the other have equal liberty to explain or assert that the death of the sinner means actually the death of his sin, and the destruction of the wicked the destruction only of their wickedness “thus opening the door to the belief in an all-reconciling mercy, supposed to be explicitly announced in certain other passages” such as those to which I referred.

Lest you should doubt the reality of these statements, for it seems hardly credible that plain language can be so perverted, I would remind you that the late Rev. J. Baldwin Brown, a gentleman so highly esteemed by his brethren that he was elected chairman of the Congregationalist Union only a few years ago, endorsed this mode of interpreting Scripture in some letters published by him some years since. “There is” he said “a divine and blessed way of destroying sinners by destroying sin.” The fallacy of the argument is very apparent. It has been pointed out more than once. One of the ablest writers upon the question of Conditional Immortality, Mr. Constable, exposed the hollowness of this contention in the columns of the “Rainbow” thus,—“Paul describes the Gospel thus:—‘This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to *save sinners*’ (I Tim. i. 15). Mr. Brown would have us think that the very same blessed truth would have been conveyed if it had been said that ‘*Christ Jesus came into the world to destroy sinners,*’ for saving a sinner and destroying a sinner mean the same thing with him. Or, let us read our Lord’s awful warning to his generation as interpreted by Mr. Brown: ‘Except ye repent, *your sins* shall all likewise perish’ (Luke xiii. 3). Why, instead of deterring from sin, a premium would here seem to be set upon impenitence! What does Mr. Brown make Paul tell us is the due reward of transgression? ‘The wages of sin,’ read after his interpretation—‘*is the*

death of sin' (Rom. vi. 23). What warning does he make Peter hold out to the false teachers who should privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them? He would make him say that they would 'bring upon their sins swift destruction' (II Pet. ii. 1). Such is the confusion and utter violence to the language and sense of the New Testament which the adoption of Mr. Brown's theory of interpretation would bring upon it."

Now we think there is nothing more capable of clear and unmistakable proof than the proposition that man is absolutely mortal, and that the doctrine of the natural immortality of the human race, upon which—as I have shown—the Larger Hope is mainly based, is utterly false. Both Scripture and science agree in their teaching upon this subject, however much they may differ upon other points. They speak with one voice here. They say there is no survival in death. That man goes into the grave and that nothing at all is left of him save that mysterious breath of life which kept him in being and which sustains the whole creation of God alike. They tell you—the Bible and science I am talking about—that man and beast are upon the same level in this respect, that they are wonderfully organised from the dust of the ground, sustained in being by an all pervading spirit, and that finally they all, by some marvellous law, return again to the ground from which they are formed, while the spirit of life which sustains them returns to him who gave it. Many of the leaders of thought in the scientific world could agree exactly with the declaration of Solomon to be found in Eccles. iii. 19, 20, "That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts, even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." That is the *one place* where they all go to, the *grave*, not to heaven, nor to hell to suffer indescribable agony, nor yet to a third place of embodied existence called Hades, where they may be preached to and evangelised as Universalists declare. The Sheol and the Hades of the Scripture is the grave, where darkness, and silence reigns, where corruption and the worm prey upon the forms that once were clothed with beauty and strength, where "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom" (Eccles. ix. 10), for without doubt Solomon's words are true "The dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is perished, their love, and their hatred, and their envy is now perished" also, when they sleep the silent sleep of forgetfulness in the dust of the earth to which—on account of sin—they are doomed. This is the teaching of the Bible throughout. "Man's foundation is in the dust"—not in the skies. He is not a pure spirit whose home is in heaven from whence it is supposed by some that he hath winged his flight, but he is—as Paul declared—"of the earth, earthy" (I. Cor. xv. 47); his life is not in himself but in God, the very fountain of life, the inexhaustible reservoir of all existence, in whom the whole animate creation live and move and have their being, for he giveth to all life and breath and all things, yea, they are all, men and animals alike, the offspring of God, for "out of him are all things" (Acts xvii. 25, 21; I Cor. viii. 6.) But they are all mortal, man is

declared to be so over and over again in the Bible, and there is no assertion or hint of the contrary doctrine, upon which the whole structure of modern religion is based, anywhere in the word. All the plain language and all the figures employed by the divine penmen to which man is compared, denote the fleeting nature and the perishableness of his present existence, and point out the fact that in death he ceases to exist. His consciousness is suspended, his mind is dormant, his faculties are inactive, his brain—the great and wonderful thinking machine of the body—is completely paralysed, and must remain so for ever in the absence of any power to remove the paralysis, and to re-invest with life the mouldered or mouldering dust. Death is the great suspender of all human activity, what men wish to do they must do while they have life and being for when life ceases the working time is done, therefore the Psalmist declared in Ps. cxlvi 2, “While *I live* will I praise the Lord : I will sing praises unto my God *while I have any being.*” And he goes on to say “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth ; *in that very day his thoughts perish.*” This truth applies to every class, enlightened or not, righteous or unrighteous, and also to the Lord Jesus himself, for he was fashioned as we are, his nature was like ours, he was a son of Adam even as ourselves, and you will remember that he declared, in view of that death which he was about to die, as recorded in John ix. 4, “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day : *the night cometh, when no man can work.*” In view of these facts—which might be corroborated to almost any extent—we conclude that man is not immortal, that there is no separate soul existence, and that therefore Jesus was not, and could not be engaged in the work of preaching to immortal souls in Hades between the period of his death and resurrection as he is declared by some—on very flimsy authority—to have been. This argument we give as the first link in a chain of evidence which, in its completeness, entirely disproves the vain hope of the restoration of all men to life, and happiness, and God.

Starting with this fact, it is surprising to find out how beautifully all other Scripture doctrines harmonise and fit in with this foundation truth and with each other. Not in any way surprising when we remember the author of all revelation, and the perfection of all that he doeth, and that there can be no flaw, or lack of harmony, in any of his works ; but marvellous to those who have been trained up in a system called “orthodox” in which everything is disarranged, and all things seem out of joint, and one doctrine seems to have no relation to another, and in some cases is contradictory and positively ridiculous in view of other doctrines which are bound up in the creed book with it. But commencing with the truth—however humiliating it may be to the pride of man—of man’s absolute mortality, what does the Bible reveal? Does it reveal any doctrine of immortality at all? Does it tell us how mortal men may obtain life for ever, and that in a state of absolute perfection, under conditions in which shall be excluded all those manifold evils to which we are all more or less subject now? Well, it does. In the clearest possible manner. In the most definite way that it can be revealed. Without the slightest ambiguity, and in a manner which still further cuts away the ground from

under the feet of those who believe in endless torment, or (vainly) speculate about "the Larger Hope." It tells us that Immortality or Eternal Life—and these, friends, are *practically* interchangeable terms (whatever theologians may say to the contrary) for eternal or *aionian* life means *the life pertaining to the age to come*, and to live in the age to come means to be made equal to the angels, and to be incapable of *dying any more, endlessly existing*, which surely is the same thing as immortality or deathlessness,—it tells us, I say, that this endless life is the gift of God, to be bestowed only on certain conditions upon the sons of men through the Lord Jesus Christ, who has "brought incorruptibility to light by the gospel" (II Tim. i. 10), and is himself a living exemplification of what that life is to be of which we are invited to become partakers, namely a transformation of the mortal body to an incorruptible body, consubstantial with the nature of God himself, brought about by a resurrection of the dead as in the case of Jesus, or by a change of the living body by the power of the Spirit of God. It tells us that this immortality will be conferred by Christ, at his second coming, when the responsible dead will be raised and judged, the righteous being invested with this unending life, the wicked perishing in their own corruption after having received punishment according to their deserts, after which the Kingdom of God will be established, Christ will reign over all the earth, the righteous will be associated with him in the rulership of the nations, all evil will be destroyed, and in the course of one thousand years every curse banished from the world, at the end of which period God will be all in all. That, very briefly, is the Bible scheme for the banishment of all evil.

Suppose I enumerate the points again, the better to assist your memory, and contrast them with other views held by the large Churches of "Christendom." First, man mortal, and totally unconscious in the death state. Second, Immortality the gift of God, on certain conditions, through Christ. Third, the second coming of Christ. Fourth, the resurrection of the responsible dead. Fifth, the Judgment, resulting in the immortalization of the accepted, and the "second death" of the rejected. Sixth, the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the land of Palestine. Seventh, the reign of Christ and his saints for one thousand years during which all evil is for ever abolished. Eighth, the submission of Christ to the Father, and God all in all. How beautifully, you perceive every doctrine harmonises with each other. What a contrast we have now to look at. For other sects teach, First, that man is immortal or undying to start with. Second, that his soul goes to Heaven, or Hell, or Purgatory, or some other place for disembodied souls, at death. Third, that there will be no Kingdom of God on the earth except "the Church," but that religion will gradually spread (a great fallacy) until all are converted to God. Fourth, that Christ will come at "the end of the world" to raise from the dead all who have ever lived, enlightened or not, and that these bodies will all be re-inhabited by the souls which for ages have been in Heaven, or Hell, or Purgatory, or somewhere else. Each soul will be restored to its own particular body, and I suppose it is thought will have no difficulty in discovering it out of the innumerable millions assembled when that great day arrives! Fifth, that the judgment will then take place to see whether these people who have for ages been in heaven or hell, ought to have been there or not, and when that is decided, they

will go back again to the places they inhabited before, to be glorified or tormented—according to one class of teachers—for evermore; or, in the case of the wicked, according to the teaching of Universalists, to be evangelised and finally brought to repentance and to God, and share the glory of the redeemed throughout the endless ages of the future. Sixth, that Christ will then burn up the beautiful earth upon which we live, and the heavens also, until not a vestige of either remain!

Such are the very opposite views entertained at the present time by those who believe in the Bible, and those who think they do, but don't. Examine the Scriptures and choose for yourselves.

But let me for a moment point out how clearly the doctrine of conditional immortality is taught in the word. The very object of the coming of Christ was to give immortality to men. Adam the first brought death into the world through sin, Adam the second made eternal life available through righteousness. In John x. 10, Jesus said "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might *have life*, and that they might have it more abundantly." The killing and the destroying by the thief we know are literal enough, so also is the life to be bestowed. Further on in the chapter speaking of those *who believed on him* in contradistinction to the unbelieving Jews to whom he was speaking, he said—v. 27,—"*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*" Could language possibly be clearer than this? Eternal life a gift. To be bestowed on his sheep who hear his voice, believe it, and follow him; and they shall *never* perish, their "life is hid with Christ in God," and no man can pluck them out of his hand. But the language clearly implies that those who are *not* his sheep, who will *not* obey his voice, nor follow him *will* perish, or cease to exist, as the word means. "Orthodoxy" teaches that both righteous and wicked will exist for ever, that the wicked will never perish any more than the righteous, and thus they make void the word of God. The Psalmist in one place prayed God to lead him "in the way everlasting," thus recognising the fact that there was a way which was not everlasting, and to this agrees beautifully the words of Christ to be found in Matt. vi. 13, 14, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, *that leadeth to destruction*, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, *which leadeth unto life*, and few there be that find it." That passage from the lips of Christ is not very encouraging to Universalists, unless according to Mr. Brown destruction and life mean the same thing, and the broad way ends the same as the narrow, a most foolish idea, but as a rule our friends are not favourable to quoting texts, they speak about "the tyranny of texts" if you quote them, and say that "the letter killeth," (it certainly kills their doctrine), and they talk about getting at the spirit of the Bible writers, as if there was any other way of doing so except through their words. There is no other way at getting at a man's meaning than through the words he utters or writes, and Bible writers did not say one thing and mean another. They were not like diplomatists who write to deceive or to hide their real meaning. They were plain, humble honest men, who wrote unambiguous words that all might understand, and there is no difficulty in understanding Christ when he spoke of the

two ways and what they led to—Destruction, and Life. To the Jews he complained that they would not “come to him that they might have life,” and that, in all such expressions he meant a literal everlasting existence of the body is made very clear by a reference to a discourse of his contained in John vi. A very large portion of this chapter bears upon the topic under our consideration, but I will only refer you to a few sentences. At verses 39 and 40 we read thus:—“And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, *but should raise it up again at the last day.* And *this* is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, *and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*” Again in verses 47 and 51, “Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, *and are dead*”—literal enough surely,—dead, “their carcasses fell in the wilderness” through unbelief,—“*This* is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.” There is much more to the same effect, and any man, divested of all prejudice, can comprehend the meaning. God desires men to live for ever, he willeth not that any should perish, to this end he has sent his Son, in figurative language he is spoken of as the Bread of life, because he has the power to bestow it, God having “given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him” (John xvii. 2, 3). This life will be conferred at the time of the resurrection as the language of Christ plainly teaches, and only upon such as are made acquainted with the truth, such as believe on him, or, in figurative language, partake of the life-giving bread. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”—those are the conditions,—“and he that believeth not shall be condemned” (Mark xvi. 16.)

Throughout his epistles Paul teaches the same thing. “The wages of sin is *death*; but the gift of God is *eternal life* through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The end of unrighteousness he says, is *death*, “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye” Roman believers “have your fruit unto holiness, and *the end, THE END—everlasting life.*” (Rom. vi. 20-23.) This life and death doctrine takes up a large portion of Paul’s letter to the Romans, as a perusal of his 5th, 6th, 8th, and 15th chapters will abundantly prove. It is not confined to those chapters either, for in the 2nd chapter immortality, or more correctly, incorruptibility, is expressly confined to *those who seek for it.* Verses 6 and 7, “To them who by patient continuance in well-doing *seek for* glory and honour and incorruptibility, God will render eternal life.” Of course those who don’t want to live for ever, and who don’t seek for it, will not have it bestowed upon them. And is not that reasonable? God will not thrust all the glory of the life to come upon the millions of human beings who have no regard for him, and manifest no desire to seek his truth. And need I point out how subversive of popular theology is this one passage from the pen of Paul? If men naturally possess unending life, then, of course, there is no need to seek for it, for what a man hath, why doth he yet seek for; but if a man possess it not, and it be in any way attainable, why then we can understand perfectly well any exhortation to

a certain course of conduct which will result in so glorious a possession.

There is another fact, already touched upon, which demonstrates the falsity of the doctrine of Universalism, and entirely demolishes the arguments upon which it is based; I refer to the revealed nature of the punishment of the wicked. Of course this branches out of the previous arguments, for if the righteous only are to have immortality of nature bestowed upon them, the vast majority of the human race must of course go without it; but apart from this most logical deduction, there are positive threats against the wicked exceedingly numerous, both plain and of a figurative nature, which unmistakably teach the irremediable and complete destruction or extinction of the sinner. The very strongest words which can be found in the Greek language conveying this idea, the same words which were used by profane Greek writers to express this truth, are used in the New Testament and applied to the wicked, and that they are used in their plain, grammatical sense is undoubtedly the case. The wicked are "to die, to perish, to pass away, to vanish, to be destroyed for ever, utterly to perish, and be consumed, to be burnt up like chaff, to be blotted from the book of life, not to see life, to be destroyed body and soul in Gehenna, to die the second death, to be 'ground to powder,' 'broken to shivers,' 'dashed in pieces,'—such expressions in Greek being exactly represented by the force of these English words corresponding to them. These assuredly are not the words which would naturally occur to a writer desiring to convey the idea of universal salvation. They seem expressly chosen to shut the door against hope. They convey the idea not of the destruction of sin, but the sinner; not of the purging away of wickedness, but of the utter death of the wicked man" (Rev. E. White). In fact any one intending to teach the doctrine of the extinction of the wicked could not do it in stronger and more forcible language if they tried. "The crushing of the transgressors" (says the prophet Isaiah) "and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake Jehovah shall be *entirely consumed.*" (Barnes' translation of Isa. i. 28). "The day cometh," (says the prophet Malachi, ch. iv. 1) "that shall burn as an oven: and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, *that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.*" If Universalists can take comfort from the perusal of such passages as these, and they might be multiplied at length, if they can see the "Larger Hope" beaming through these denunciations of destruction, they are of all men most sanguine, or shall we say most credulous. We need not wonder that some of them are opposed to a reference to texts of Scripture when they are so fatal to their fallacies as these.

The final scenes in the history of this world as long as mortality dwells upon it are all opposed to the Restoration fallacy. "Let him that is filthy be filthy still, and he that is unjust, let him be unjust still," are among the last words of Christ in the last chapter of the book (Rev. xxii. 11); and in the narration of the events at the end of the thousand years reign of Christ in Rev. xx., when the final judgment of those who had lived during that period takes place, we are solemnly assured—at the last verse—that "whosoever was not found written in *the book of life* was cast into the lake of fire," which in the verse before is declared to be "the second death." The doom of the wicked is

placed beyond all reasonable doubt by such declarations as these, and it is vain to encourage them by delusive ideas which are based upon a false estimate of the nature of man.

But the believer in the Larger Hope may say that that is not the only basis of his belief, that he takes his stand upon the assurances of God's boundless love, and upon the declared purpose of Jehovah to reconcile all things unto himself. There *are* a certain class of texts that the believers in universal salvation like to quote. "His mercy endureth for ever" they say. Yes! we reply, it is true. As the ages roll on he is the same merciful being, if it were not so all would have been long ago consumed. They tell you again that "God is love," and with all our hearts we assent. It was love which prompted him to make any provision for the salvation of mankind, a benevolent feeling towards the human race even though they were alienated from him by wicked works. "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," we believe that, but we must not omit the other part of the verse, which is all important in the controversy "*that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*" (John iii. 16). You see, these words make salvation altogether conditional. Conditional upon believing in Jesus the Son of God. If we would not perish, if we would be delivered from sin and the grave, we must believe the gospel of God's love as manifested to the world in his beloved Son, and to believe we must understand, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17.) But what if men will not believe and obey the gospel? What if—when the voice says "Come"—they deliberately stay away, and refuse the offers of Divine mercy and compassion? What if they absolutely reject God's mercy and treat it with contempt? Will it still be thrust upon them? Nay, verily, it will not. If we believe not there will be no deliverance and no after-chance. So that the question is "How shall we escape perishing, if we neglect so great salvation?" For "our God is a *consuming fire*" as well as a God of compassion and love, and the Apostle says in Heb. x. 26, 27, "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, *which shall devour* (or eat up) the adversaries." . . . "It is a *fearful thing* to fall into the hands of the living God." The same Being who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the One whose justice swept away the contemporaries of Noah, the vile inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, the inhabitants of Canaan whose cup of iniquity was filled to the brim, various nations of antiquity, and who sent his armies—the might of Rome—to destroy the murderers of his Son, and whose anger will ever be manifested against those who are insensible to the claims of his love. Yes! friends, we read of justice and retribution as well as mercy in the Bible. God has destroyed millions in the past on account of sin notwithstanding his mercy and his love, and in the time to come the Psalmist's words will come true "All the wicked will God destroy." They will be put aside like dross (Ps. cxix. 119), and the dross will never turn into gold. But, you object "God will reconcile *all* things to himself." Yes, oh! yes! we believe that as much as you. That is the grand object of Jehovah. This is what he has purposed in himself, to gather together in one all things in Christ *in the dispensation of the ful-*

ness of times" (Eph. i. 10, 11.) His plan is slowly working out, "Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's—at his coming," then his glorious reign during which all things are brought into harmony with God, who is eventually all in all. All finally existing things will thus be gathered together through the instrumentality of Christ into oneness with the Father, but it will be by the exclusion of all discordant elements and the suppression of every foe. But, you say, there will be, as Peter declares in Acts iii. 21, a *restitution of all things*" and that covers the past. Now I ask what do you mean? Where do you put the limit? Do you mean that all things which ever existed will be restored? Or do you limit it to the human race? It is easy to glibly quote such passages as these but what do they mean? Is Balaam's ass to be restored, and the golden calf, and the idols of Canaan, and a thousand things which might be mentioned besides? Are these included in the *all things* of which the Apostle spoke? Of course you reject such a suggestion. Well, are all the men and women, the gross idolators, the low, degraded, beastly beings that ever lived, those who were less sensible than Balaam's ass, to be restored? Decidedly not. The Apostle does not say so. Let him speak for himself, let us have his own words, and let us believe them with all our hearts. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that he may send the Messiah who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: whom the heavens must receive until the time of restoration of all things, *whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began.*" Now that puts a different face upon the matter. There is to be a restoration, but it is to be of certain things declared by the prophets and nothing else. A restoration of the Jews; a restoration of the Kingdom of David, a restoration of Paradise, a restoration of the Tree of Life, these are the things of which the prophets wrote and spoke, to be restored in and through that prophet like unto Moses, but adds the Apostle "it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, *shall be destroyed from among the people.*"

This prophet—the Lord Jesus—is the being in whom centres all the work of God in the redemption of the world. Through him God will work until the last curse that blights the happiness of men is obliterated from the earth, and death has ceased to mark his prey for the cemetery, and every form of evil is extinguished for ever. Through him God will make all things new and cause the former things to pass away. In due time Christ will appear from heaven to commence this work of regenerating the world and moulding it into harmony with God. To those present is offered the distinguished privilege of co-operation with Christ in this glorious work. If you will make yourselves acquainted with his requirements and obey his will, you will experience in due time the inconceivable and ineffable grandeur and power of an incorruptible nature, with all its attendant honours in the Kingdom of God; but if you trifle with the truth, if you "count yourselves unworthy of eternal life," if you despise the testimony, remember these words from John the immerser—who was declared by Christ to be "more than a prophet," and let them sink deep into your hearts,—“He that believeth not the Son shall not see life (that is eternal life); but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John iii. 36).



ADDENDUM.

“THE SPIRITS IN PRISON.”

I. PETER III. 18, 19.

IT is obviously impossible to deal in the course of one address with all the arguments and passages which may be and are referred to in favour of the doctrine of Universal restoration; there is, however, one passage which is greatly relied upon by the defenders of that view, to which, perhaps, reference should be made. I refer to the passage I. Pet. iii. 18, 19. There are many who do not believe in Universal Salvation, who stoutly oppose that view, who yet believe that Jesus, between his death and resurrection, went—that is, his soul or spirit went—and preached unto the spirits of those who were drowned in the time of Noah. Among these is to be found the Rev. Edward White, the author of the well-known work “Life in Christ.” Dean Farrar states in his very emphatic manner, that “if language have any meaning, this language (*i.e.* of the above passage) means that Christ, when His Spirit descended into the lower world, proclaimed the Message of Salvation to the once impenitent dead” (*Early Days of Christianity.*) Now it will at once be perceived that this interpretation of the passage is based upon the belief in the existence—if not the immortality—of the human soul after death. Of course if that could be proved, if it were not opposed to the plain teaching of Scripture from beginning to end that man is completely mortal, that in the death state he “knows not anything” (Eccles. ix. 5, 6), that in *Sheol* or *Hades*—where this redeeming work is said by Dean Farrar to have been carried on—“there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom” (Eccles. ix. 10), nor remembrance of God, nor giving of thanks (Ps. vi. 5), but complete unconsciousness, and absolute incapacity to hope in God or in his truth (Isa. xxxviii. 18, 19), if, we say, that view

could be proved in opposition to these utterances of "holy men of old," then, rather than believe in the awful dogma of endless torment, we should be wishful to see established this wider view of redemption; but in the absence of that proof we do not see that this passage can fairly be placed in opposition to all the other plain teaching of the Bible. For, if our view of human nature be the correct one, there were no immortal spirits existing to preach to, and Jesus himself, being made like unto his brethren, was himself, between death and resurrection, perfectly unconscious in the tomb.

And is it not a fact that his own solemn language confirms our view of the case, and gives no encouragement to Dean Farrar's interpretation of the passage? "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day:" he declared, "*the night cometh, when no man can work*" (John ix. 4.) Did not Jesus, in these solemn words, cut the ground from under the feet of these interpreters of Scripture? The night referred to evidently was the night of death, the time when labour ceases, the time for repose and inactivity and silence, the time when, in the most absolute sense "*no man can work*;" but according to these expositors, Jesus was actually—in the death state, in the night time—working more effectively than he was in the day, or during his life time, for we cannot but believe, that if these wicked inhabitants of the old world were really existing, with all the evidences of a supernatural world around them, the experience of which they had had for so very long a period—upwards of two thousand three hundred years,—and if during that period they had been enduring punishment of any kind, we cannot but suppose that they would most eagerly accept the offers of salvation from the lips (if a spirit can be said to have lips) of Christ himself. And so, instead of death being the night time, when neither Jesus, nor any other man, can work, Jesus was mistaken—according to these interpreters—for he worked very effectively indeed!

But let us look at the language of Peter and see if any other interpretation can be put upon the passage more in harmony with the many other declarations of divine truth, and in harmony with the words of Jesus himself to which we have just made reference. That there is a little difficulty and ambiguity about the passage we admit, and if the whole of the teaching of Scripture were in favour of the view that Universalists, or those who favour the Larger Hope, place upon this passage, then this might be quoted as apparently confirming that view, but that not being the case, we must endeavour to find out the true application which puts it into line with all other inspired declarations.

What appears to strike me in reading *all round* the passage is the absence of any reason for introducing any argument or reference to the fact—if it were one—that the gospel was preached to these dead sinners. It has no connection with what the Apostle is writing about. Such a view is foreign to anything he appears to have in mind. He is not debating that question at all, but he is writing about suffering and long suffering. The Christians to whom he wrote were to be patient, they were not to render "evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing" (verse 9.) This would result in a blessing upon them, in life and good days according to the teaching of the Psalmist (verses 10,

11; Ps. xxxiv. 12.) If they suffered for righteousness sake, they were not to fear, but keep a clear conscience, for it was better, if God so willed, that they should suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing, for to suffer for well-doing, even unto death, would ultimately result in their being quickened in spirit nature unto life eternal. The example of Christ is then referred to, who "also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God," and the "long-suffering of God" is also brought to their remembrance, for he waited "in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing," the long period of one hundred and twenty years, during which time his Spirit—which was the Spirit of Christ—strove with the men and the women of that guilty race, Noah proclaiming the judgments of God which were about to fall upon them if they repented not, and himself—in faith—preparing the ark, "whercin few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water," while all others, with whom the Spirit strove in vain, who despised the long-suffering of God, were destroyed in the flood, were "spared not" as Peter's second epistle declares (ch. ii. 5.) As God had evinced this patience with sinners, as Christ also—as he continues to argue—had "suffered in the flesh" (ch. iv. 1) they were to arm themselves also with the same mind, and patiently endure whatever their enemies caused them to endure.

This is the argument and exhortation surrounding the passage, and what perhaps led up to the thought of God's extreme long-suffering in the days of Noah; but that great forbearance of the Almighty, the fact that for so long a period he gave the people of that time opportunity for repentance, makes one wonder the more that they should—of all others—be singled out to be preached to in this supposed Hadean condition, according to the teaching of these modern divines. But the passage does not convey the idea at all that the soul, or spirit of Jesus went and preached to the spirits of these antedeluvian sinners. Writing of Jesus suffering for sins and the object of his death, the Apostle continues, "being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit." Now what does that language mean? Flesh and spirit here stand in contrast to each other. The one is the antithesis of the other. It is a frequent thing in Scripture to find "flesh" and "spirit" thus contrasted. "Flesh" is a term constantly used to denote mortality, human nature, to represent that which is weak and perishable; "Spirit" is a term used to indicate that which is divine, incorruptible, immortal, and glorious. For instance: "*All flesh is grass, . . . the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the breath of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass*" (Isa. xl. 6-8). "He remembered that *they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again*" (Ps. lxxviii. 39). Uttering his condemnation against the people of Judah for relying upon help from Egypt instead of depending upon Him, he warned them of the weakness of their allies in the words—"Now the Egyptians are *men*, and not *God*: and their horses *flesh*, and not *spirit*" (Isa. xxxi. 3). Here "men" and "flesh," are contrasted with "God" and "spirit." The one weak, vain, and perishable; the other, strong, powerful, invincible, almighty, and deathless. So Jesus—the quickened Jesus—after his quickening, after

his resurrection from the dead, is spoken of as "the Lord the Spirit" (II. Cor. iii. 18, R.V.), and is said to be "fashioned after the power of an endless (or Gr. "indissoluble") life" (Heb. vii. 16). Now Jesus was made "in all points like unto his brethren." His nature was the same as ours. As "the children were sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same," being mortal, subject to death like all others of the race (Heb. ii. 14-18). As a man, he suffered, was "put to death in the flesh" in a violent manner on the cross, but adds Peter was "quickened by—or in—the Spirit." Several able Greek critics omit the article and render it, "quickened in spirit," but whichever way it is translated, whether "in the Spirit," or "in Spirit," or as in the Authorised Version "by the Spirit," it is impossible fairly to fasten the popular idea upon the words. According to current notions, his spirit did not need quickening. As soon as his body died, that was supposed to be gloriously alive. It was never dead, or even unconscious—they teach us. But the passage is not dealing with his spirit in the popular sense but with Him—Jesus—the man "slain in the flesh." It declares that *He* was "put to death in flesh [nature], and quickened, or made alive in spirit [nature]." It was not a something that was *kept alive*, but a dead person that was quickened, made alive, recalled to life; reanimated. "The word" says one writer, "is never used in the sense of *maintained alive*, or *preserved alive*."* It is another way of declaring the truth which he himself announced in Patmos "I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades" (Rev. i. 18); or of the truth expressed in Rom. vi. 9, 10, "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over him. For the death that he died, he died unto sin once: but the life that he liveth, he liveth unto God." It most certainly means one of two things, either that Jesus being "put to death in flesh [nature], was made alive in spirit" [nature], which is divine and incorruptible as we have seen; or, that being "put to death in flesh, he was quickened, or made alive" again "by the Spirit," that is by the Spirit of God, by whose power our Lord was raised from the tomb (I. Cor. xv. 15; Eph. i. 19, 20).† Either view is subversive of the view taken by those who indulge in the Larger Hope theory, viz., that the Spirit of Jesus, during the time his body was in the tomb, went and preached to the spirits of men confined in Hades.

* "Compare the following places, which are the only ones in which it occurs in the New Testament: John v. 21, *twice*; vi. 63; Rom. iv. 17; viii. 11; I. Cor. xv. 36, 45; I. Tim. vi. 13; I. Pet. iii. 18; in all which it is rendered *quickened*, *quickens*, *quickeneth*; I. Cor. xv. 22; *be made alive*; II. Cor. iii. 6, *giveth life*; and Gal. iii. 21, *have given life*. 'Once the word refers to God, as he who giveth life to all creatures, I. Tim. vi. 13; three times it refers to the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, or of the doctrines of the gospel, John vi. 63; II. Cor. iii. 6; Gal. iii. 21; seven times it is used with direct reference to the raising of the dead, John v. 21; Rom. iv. 17; viii. 11; I. Cor. xv. 22, 36, 45; I. Pet. iii. 18.' The sense then cannot be that in reference to his soul or spirit, he was *preserved alive* when his body died, but that there was some agency or power *restoring* him to life, or reanimating him after he was dead."—*Barnes' Notes on the New Testament*.

† "There was no power in his own spirit, regarded as that appertaining to his human nature, to raise him up from the dead, any more than there is such a power in any other human soul. That power does not belong to a human soul in any of its relations or conditions."—*Ibid.*

Now the Apostle continues—after stating that he was “quickened in (or by) Spirit”—“in (or by) which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which aforetime were disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was a preparing, where few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.” In an Appendix to a Volume published by Dr. John Forbes, Professor of Oriental Languages in Aberdeen University, in which this passage is referred to, criticising the grammatical construction of the sentence in the original, this learned Dr. asserts that the true rendering of it in English would be “Unto the spirits that are in prison He went and preached when they were disobedient in times past, what time the long-suffering of God was waiting in the days of Noah.” That preaching was effected through the instrumentality of Noah, this Professor believes, as referred to in II. Pet. ii. 5; where Noah is described as a herald, or “preacher of righteousness.” As to the exact rendering of the passage, Doctors of divinity may differ, but this is what we take the passage in reality to mean. We never heard but one who contended that Jesus, in spirit nature, after his resurrection, went and preached to these lost souls; but either he did it then, or it was done in the days of Noah. But we have seen from many passages of Scripture that they who go down to *Sheol*, or *Hades*, or in other words the grave, cannot hope in God, and are perfectly unconscious of everything, having no knowledge or wisdom in *Sheol*, and if the many passages which assert this fact, and the many others which so forcibly insist upon the mortality of man, be the very truth, then this idea of preaching to spirits in *Peter's day* cannot be correct, and we have necessarily to fall back upon the other view, that it was in Noah's day that the preaching took place—which was an actual fact—and that the “spirits” were still “in prison,” in the prison house of the grave, in the Apostles' time.

But if this be the case, an objection might be raised as to the use of the word “spirits.” Why are they referred to as “spirits in prison?” In reply we may ask, does the word “spirits” necessarily imply disembodied entities? Is it a reference to the spirits of men or to the men themselves? It is a fact that the word “spirits” is used in the Bible to represent men in the flesh an instance of which we have in the warning of the Apostle John contained in ch. iv. 1-3 of his 1st epistle. “Beloved” he writes, “believe not *every spirit*, but *try the spirits* whether they are of God; because many *false prophets* are gone out into the world. Hereby know we the spirit of God; *every spirit* that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and *every spirit* that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God.” Now it is very evident that the spirits mentioned here were substantial enough. They were not disembodied entities. They were men in the flesh, the *false prophets* who had gone abroad, teaching perverted views of the truth concerning the nature of Jesus, views that were out of joint with the truth, and against which the early Christians had to be warned. The “spirits” to whom Peter refers were of the same substantial nature when they were preached to in the days of Noah in the time of their disobedience, when the ark was being prepared, and they repented not.

The word "prison" used by Peter must be understood to refer to the grave, or the sepulchral state. The Romanists try to build their doctrine of Purgatory on this passage, but there is not the slightest confirmation of their view to be found in it. There is no hint of a purifying punishment in connection therewith. The grave is the great prison house where all—saints and sinners alike—are confined till Christ unlocks the doors. He holds the keys of death and the grave. And the gates of hell—*Hades*, the grave—shall not prevail against his church for all time, because he who has conquered the tomb will one day release its captives who sleep in him. There are some against whom the gates of hell will prevail, some who will "sleep a perpetual sleep and not wake," some of whom it is written "They are appointed as a flock for Sheol: Death shall be their shepherd: and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall be for Sheol to consume, that their be no habitation for it. But," added the writer of these truths, "God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol: for he shall receive me" (Ps. xlix. 14, 15). Sheol was the prison in which these "spirits" were confined, and that is only another name for the grave, a place of unconsciousness, a place of silence, a place where beauty consumes away, but from the power of which the "soul," or person, or life, of the righteous will be redeemed. This view, too, receives especial confirmation from the Syriac Version, in which this passage is rendered "and he preached to the souls* which are held in Sheol; those which of old were disobedient in the days of Noah." †

This view of the case appears to give some ground for the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ, because it is argued that if *he* went and preached to the Antedeluvians in the days of Noah, he must have pre-existed to do so. I confess that there is some force in this objection, and a difficulty is better admitted than denied, but we are not bound to admit a personal preaching. Whatever preaching took place was through the instrumentality of Noah. He was the preacher, but the Holy Spirit was the one who qualified him to preach. It was "the Spirit of Christ" which was in the prophets (I. Pet. i. 11), enabling them to foretell his life and death so accurately—the Spirit which afterwards produced the

* The Hebrew word *Nephesh* translated "soul" is translated "person" and "persons" thirty times in the Old Testament; "creature" nine times; "body" seven times; "man" and "men" five times; "life" and "lives" one hundred and twenty times, referring to the life of both man and beast; and in a number of other ways meaning the living, breathing individual, and not an entity distinct from the body.—See "*The Soul: What is it?*" By the Author.

† "With respect to St. Peter's phrase 'the spirits in prison,' the best exposition is perhaps to be found in the Hebraistic ideas, latent in the Greek words; and thus the Syriac version, being cognate with the Hebrew, is the most likely to enunciate the true reading. Here we find, 'And he preached' etc. (as quoted above): whence it would seem that the Greek word 'spirits' was used as a substitute for 'souls,' and 'prison' for *Sheol* or *Hades*. The translation would then read 'to those persons who are now in the sepulchral state, or dead,' as defined in the sixth verse of the following chapter. In this rendering the consistency is apparent. Instead of preaching to disembodied spirits, the persons themselves were typically addressed by Noah's act of faith in building the ark [and by his efforts as a preacher of righteousness,] and these being dead when the apostle wrote, he mentions that they are 'now in Hades' or the sepulchral state (I. Pet. iii. 19)."—*Biblical Psychology*, by J. L. Forster.

Messiah; with which he was anointed at his baptism; which quickened him when he was in the tomb; and transformed him into "the Lord, the Spirit." This Spirit strove with the people in the days of Noah. The Apostle Peter seems to identify the one anointed with it, with the anointing power, the one who—in his day—had become consubstantial with the Deity through the Spirit, with the Spirit by which he had been raised and glorified. In the personal sense Jesus was not existent in Noah's day, the Spirit which was afterwards embodied in Jesus, and which proceedeth from the Father, pleaded—through Noah—with the men of that generation, and this can be the only sense in which the Apostle's words can be construed when the whole of the evidence is fairly considered.

If we look at the history of the flood, and the circumstances that led to it, we shall find nothing whatever to confirm this modern view of the Larger Hope. The language is very emphatic indeed, and is really subversive of the view taken of the words of Peter which we have been examining. We are told that the Almighty declared that "His Spirit should not strive with man for ever, for that he also is flesh" (Gen. vi. 3). In the same chapter we have the statement that "the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground; both man, and beast, and creeping thing, and fowl of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them" (verses 5-7). In the margin of the Revised Version it will be found that the correct rendering of the Hebrew word translated "destroy" is "blot out"—"I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the ground."—"*The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth*" (v. 13). It will be noticed also that "man, and beast, and creeping thing, and fowl of the air" are all classed together, were all to share precisely the same kind of destruction, or blotting out. No hint of survival is given, and neither before this chapter or after is there ever given the slightest hint of the natural immortality of the soul of man. "All have one breath"—"all go unto one place." These people were sinners exceedingly before the Lord. They were an offence to him. Their very existence caused him pain and sorrow. "Every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually." So he will blot them out from his sight. He will put them out of existence. He will put them aside—as the Psalmist declares he does "all the wicked of the earth"—*like dross*, like worthless material, because they are unfit for the glory, honour, and incorruptibility which can only be had by those who seek it (Ps. cxix. 119; Rom. ii. 7). "Orthodoxy" says that the Almighty did not "blot out" the essential part of their nature. The soul, or spirit,—the thinking, willing, planning, sinning part, *the real person was not destroyed at all*, God had created that *indestructible and deathless*, so that the Almighty gained nothing so to speak by sweeping them away by the flood, they were simply transferred to some other part of the universe where their blasphemies would ever rise to heaven, and their sins never cease! But this was not the case. God sent the flood to

destroy them, to blot them out, to exterminate them. "And I, behold, I do bring the flood of waters upon the earth, to *destroy all flesh*, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is in the earth shall die" (v. 17); "Every living thing that I have made will I blot out from off the face of the ground" (ch. viii. 4).

And so it came to pass. The flood came. "The fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened" (ch. vii. 11). For forty days and forty nights the pitiless rain descended. The waters rose and still kept rising. Higher and higher till hope died out of the hearts of all flesh on the earth. Too late they made frantic efforts to escape a watery grave—it was all in vain. "The waters prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, till houses, and trees and mountains were covered "And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both fowl, and cattle, and beast, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: *all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life*, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living thing was destroyed ("blotted out," Heb.) which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and creeping thing, and fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed ("blotted out," Heb.) from the earth" (ch. vii. 21-23). Can any language be more emphatic? Does it not seem designed to exclude the interpretation placed upon Peter's words? Is there the slightest hint of survival? Was not man blotted out equally with the lower orders of creation, and did he deserve to live any more—or so much as they? Possessing higher powers he only abused them! Having the power of nobler thought his thoughts were only evil continually! Having the power of will he willed only to act with violence and lawlessness! Having the power of speech he used it to blaspheme and dishonour his Creator; so he was swept away, and Noah only, the one righteous man on the face of the earth, with his family, was left alive. Truly as it was in the days of Jesus, so it was in the days of Noah—"Wide was the gate, and broad was the way, *that led to destruction*, and many were they that entered in thereby. For narrow was the gate, and straitened the way, *that led unto life, and few were they that found it*" (Matt. vii. 13, 14).

Perhaps I ought to notice a verse in the 4th chapter of Peter's epistle, which is generally quoted in connection with this other passage and supposed to refer to the same event. The words occur at the 6th verse, "For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." A considerable variety of views have been held as to the meaning of this passage, some maintaining that it referred to those who were *spiritually dead*; others to the sinners in the time of Noah, and others again to "those who had suffered martyrdom in the cause of Christianity." It appears to me distinctly to refer to those who were actually dead at the time the Apostle wrote, because the word "dead" is used in the literal sense in the previous verse, and that is the natural meaning attaching to the word. It does not, however, appear to me to refer to the sinners of the old world, but to those who had died for their faith during a time of persecution which had not then passed away. The connection shows that he is exhorting those to whom he was writing—

by the example of Christ, verse 1—to be prepared to suffer, as he did, for conscience sake and for truth, and it was a very natural thing in doing so to refer to those who had died under persecution, as an example to them to suffer likewise. In doing so he refers to the reward of faithfulness. And here we have the same words used and placed in contrast—“flesh” and “spirit.” The gospel was preached even to the dead—to those who had died—with what object? “That they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.” The two natures are here contrasted, the mortal, flesh nature, and the spirit, or divine and immortal nature. They heard the gospel preached to them, they accepted its truths, the consequence was that persecution followed; they were judged with a judgment according to men, men who were pagans and despised their religion, and tried to uphold the religion of the Roman Empire,—judged and condemned to death, but their life “was hid with Christ in God, and when he who was their life should appear, they also would appear with him in glory” (Col. iii. 3, 4). Their hope was based upon the coming of Christ to raise the dead, to transform their nature, to make it like his own, to give them a new, spirit nature which should never die, and so though the effect of the gospel being proclaimed to them resulted indeed in their being unjustly judged and condemned in the flesh by men, yet the time was at hand when the reward would be given, and they would “live according to God in the nature of the spirit.”* It is obvious, therefore, that it was to a voluntary dying in the flesh, after the example to Christ, that a quickening, or living again according to God in the spirit is promised—not to the dead in Hades. “‘The dead’ in this passage, consequently cannot denote those who were dead already, previously to the coming of Christ, otherwise the Apostle’s exhortation, founded on the example of Christ, is divested of meaning. Those that are already dead have [according to popular teaching] no ‘flesh’ in which they could be ‘judged according to men.’ Since [then] the being quickened and living ‘according to God in the spirit,’ is dependent upon their arming themselves with the same mind as Christ to suffer ‘in the flesh,’ those here intended cannot have been already dead at the time when the gospel was preached to them.” (Dr. Forbes).

We have now carefully examined these two passages, and I think have shown clearly that they do not fairly convey the meaning our friends of the Larger Hope place upon them. They are in perfect harmony with the general teaching of the Bible. That teaching ought not to be misunderstood it is so exceedingly plain. Jesus himself distinctly taught the destruction of the wicked. He makes quite clear the fact that the “way of life” was narrow, and declared that but few found it, while the way was broad that led to “destruction,” and, he said, “many there be which go in thereat” (Matt. vii. 13, 14). Here—as elsewhere—“life” and

* “There is a *particle* in the original, —*μὲν*, indeed—which has not been retained in the common translation, but which is quite important to the sense: ‘that they might indeed be judged in the flesh, but live,’ etc. The direct object or design of preaching the gospel to them was not that they might be condemned and put to death by man, but this was indeed or in fact one of the results in the way to a higher object.”—Barnes.

"destruction" are the two opposite destinies, and if our minds are free from Platonic philosophy, we shall have no difficulty whatever in understanding these words in their plain, literal sense. The nature of the destruction of the wicked is defined often enough by Jesus and other messengers of God. John the Baptist referring to the work of his great successor said,—using the figure of a husbandman—that he would "gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. iii. 12). Such a figure of speech is easily understood. The wheat (representing the righteous) was gathered *to be preserved*, the chaff—the useless material—(representing the wicked) was to be "burnt up" with unquenchable fire, which means—not a fire that never goes out, but—a fire that does not go out till its work is done, that cannot be extinguished while there is anything left to burn. So, in the parable of the tares, it is represented that at the harvest, they, the tares, (representing the wicked) were to be bound in bundles to be burnt: while the wheat was to be gathered into the barn (Matt. xiii. 30).

These examples might be multiplied. But we have said enough. Those who believe in the final salvation of all men are no doubt benevolently disposed but do not accept all the testimony. Let us not, therefore, be led away by their views to indulge hopes we have no warrant for, and to grow careless in our own lives, expecting all will come right at last. The way of life is still narrow, and well will it be for us to be found walking therein; and "if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear"? (I. Pet. iv. 18).



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FOURTH THOUSAND.

FATHER, SON,
AND
HOLY SPIRIT.

A LECTURE
BY
JOSEPH BLAND
(OF KIDDERMINSTER)

REVISED AND ENLARGED.

Delivered in Kidderminster, Birmingham, Derby, Dudley, Halifax,
Blackburn, Stourport, and London.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

SOUTH SHIELDS:
R. SMAILES, PRINTER, STATIONER, ETC., LAYGATE LANE.
1888.

2825

NOTE TO THE READER.

A LITTLE while ago I received a note from a brother, suggesting that I should write a pamphlet on "The Trinity," as there was no cheap work specially devoted to that doctrine in circulation amongst us. Previous to this it had been suggested to me that this Lecture, which was first delivered on January 30th, 1887, should be printed. I have decided to publish it, but in a considerably enlarged form. My object has been to vindicate the teaching of the Bible, and to prove that there is but one God, and that He is one. I am well aware that there are passages not dealt with in this Lecture which appear, on the face of them, to teach the pre-existence of Christ. They are all known to the writer, and can be harmonised with the truths herein set forth. They could not be all dealt with in a single Lecture. While they can be thoroughly reconciled with the many passages here dealt with, and *with the facts concerning the birth of Christ*, I would remind the reader that these passages and the facts of the case *cannot be reconciled* with the belief fastened unto certain passages quoted in favour of the doctrine of the Trinity. I would also draw attention to the fact that numerous alterations have been made by the Revisers of the New Testament (who were mostly Trinitarians) which make the truth more clear, and which seem to show that additions have been made to the words by biassed copyists in favour of the Trinitarian belief in ages past. The seeker after truth will not fail to compare both versions, and to get all the help possible from critical sources. The truth will make you free, and the desire of the writer is that you may be free from the false and mystifying and bemuddling and unscriptural dogma of Papal Rome and the Protestant Churches which have drank from the currup stream which flows therefrom.

J. B.

May 3, 1888.

FATHER, SON, & HOLY SPIRIT.

SYLLABUS.

GOD: Can we know Him?—How?—The Bible or Tradition?—The Trinity: an acknowledged mystery—"Mystery" in the Bible, and to whom it is applied—The Athanasian Creed and Infidelity: An examination of the doctrine—Its unscriptural nature proved—Its heathen origin—What saith the Scriptures?—One God, not Three—Paul and the Pope, a contrast—Dr. Christlieb on the Trinity?—What Moses, Jesus, and Paul declared—HOLY SPIRIT—What is it?—Whence is it?—How it is employed—Its potent force—Why rendered "Ghost"—Jesus—His Nature—Whose Son is he?—Pre-existence denied—His dependence upon God—His Miracles: how accomplished—God in Christ—How?—The Submission of Christ—"I and My Father are One"—In what sense?—Two Personalities—"My Father is greater than I"—The knowledge of Christ limited—The Death of Jesus—False notions concerning it—Jesus appointed "Heir of all things"—The Purpose of God in the age to come—Christ subject to the Father—God all in all.

[T is with the greatest possible reverence that we approach our subject this evening. We are aware with what awe, with what superstitious awe, many of our contemporaries regard all references to a doctrine—which professedly they do not understand—supposed to be embodied in the words which form the basis of our remarks to-night. Any questioning of that belief, any doubts entertained or expressed respecting its truthfulness or scripturalness is regarded by large numbers as well-nigh akin to blasphemy, while its denial is "without doubt" considered sufficient to exclude the sceptical altogether from the pale of salvation. Any feelings of this kind, or any expressions to this effect, have no weight whatever with us. They do not result from a robust, manly, Bible-faith. They are the feelings and expressions of weakness, and, instead of manifesting faith, exhibit only ignorance

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and credulity. It is not with a superstitious dread of that kind that we approach the subject, but with that profound reverence which every inquiry into the nature and existence of the Almighty demands. God is a great being, the greatest in the whole universe. "Holy and reverend is His name" (Ps. cxi. 9). "Who in the heavens can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him" (Ps. lxxxix. 6-7). It is with a reverence of this kind, inspired by the greatness of the subject, and not with the awe of superstition that we approach the theme. The latter reflects no credit upon the individual in whom it is manifested, nor any honour upon that Being who is feared with a tormenting fear, while the former is that which is demanded by Him, and is alone acceptable in his sight.

The fundamental fact underlying all religion is the existence of God. All religious hope must begin and end in Him. The belief in God is the very first principle of the truth. Where may we know Him? We cannot by searching find Him out. If we may know Him at all it must be by His own revelation. We may soar into the heavens, we may descend into the bowels of the earth, but we cannot find out God. Everywhere—above, beneath, around us, are the marks of His footsteps and handywork, are the symbols of His greatness and skill, but there is no voice in nature which tells us that which we most desire to know. We behold the glory of the sun by day, and the milder radiance of the moon by night, and we look up with wonder and awe and amazement at the silent glory of a myriad stars of light in the heavens, all of which reveal the grandeur of some Being who originated them, and reflect His glory, but we appeal to them in vain to whisper a word about that Being whose power they constantly set forth. We listen to the ocean's roar, and behold its unceasing action, and wonder at its ebb and flow, and contemplate the innumerable inhabitants of its mighty waters, but it tells only of the wisdom and power of some Being whom we wish to know, and whose voice we long to hear. We look abroad upon the earth and we see the impress of a divine hand all round, design in everything, a won-

derful adaptation in all creatures for the work they have to perform, but they cannot tell us of their Creator, where He is, how He exists, what is His name. We wander in the darkness if He make not Himself known unto us. But this He has done. The Bible is His revelation. It is the supply of our mental and moral and spiritual needs. It is the illuminator of our darkness; the lamp that shineth in a dark place; the hand let down from heaven to lift us out of our own natural degradation and misery. The ladder by which we may climb to immortality and union with God. The Bible reveals God to us in a way no other book does or can. It has the impress of His own hand upon it, and is therefore authoritative. This we shall not stay to prove, as we are addressing those who, we suppose, accept the divinity of the Scriptures. Hence to stay to prove that fact is unnecessary. It is the source to which we appeal. In this alone, perhaps, we agree with those who hold a doctrine concerning God so utterly diverse to our own. Those who believe in the mysterious, unfathomable, impenetrable, and incomprehensible doctrine of the Trinity at least accept the authority of the Bible, and in that we stand on common ground. We fear it is more in name than in reality that they do so, for its pages are untainted with their belief.* But we will accept the statement that it is their authority, and we will test them by their own standard and prove them wrong; we will weigh their belief in the balances of their own choice and find it wanting, where alone it can have any weight with our minds.

The words "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," or, as they prefer it, "Holy Ghost," are very frequently upon the lips of the multitudes who attend the churches and chapels of this land. The words in some way occur at the close of most of the hymns in some hymn-books, with the intimation that they are

"Three in One, and One in Three."

The great majority of the people who so lightly chant the words never trouble their brains to think about the matter, and I never knew a clergyman yet who encouraged his congregation to well reason the doctrine out. Ignorance and docility and submission are great virtues in the estimation of some so-called shepherds

* See pages 14-15.

of the sheep. They are not favourable to a discussion of the subject. "It is too sacred to discuss," as a clergyman once said to me. Whenever you endeavour to open up this question with a Trinitarian, you are invariably met with the remark that the doctrine of the Trinity is "a mystery," that it is higher than our reason can grasp, that it is presumption on our part to try to comprehend it—that it is, in fact, "incomprehensible!" And the passage of Scripture that is bound to be quoted is the one which states that "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God," and therefore we ought not to pry into them. Of course they thus quietly assume that the doctrine is true and *is* one of the secret things which belong to God. They never in this connection quote the other portion of the passage, "But those things which *are revealed* belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deut. xxix. 29). God *is* revealed, and it is a sin to remain in ignorance of Him; and nothing manifests the weakness of the position of the believers in the Trinity more than the manner they shirk discussion, and shelter themselves under the word "Mystery." The doctrine has to be kept under a glass case. The clergy are only safe to talk about it in the pulpit—"Coward's Castle," as it has truly been called. "Mystery!" Where do we find that word in the Bible in large capitals? We find it in the 17th chapter of Revelations, and at verse 5. The Apostle describes a vision which he saw of a "woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication; and upon her forehead was a name written." What was it? "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND THE ABOMINATIONNS OF THE EARTH." This woman was "drunken with blood—the blood of the saints, and of the martyrs of Jesus." John wondered with great astonishment when he saw her, and we are not surprised. To whom does the vision refer? The chapter very plainly settles it. It refers to that "great city which (in John's day) reigned over the kings of the earth." (Verse 18). The woman represents an apostate church sup-

ported by the temporal power, as the Papacy and some of her daughters have ever been. Rome is the seven-hilled city, where the woman's power has been manifested, and it is the ecclesiastical power whose headquarters are there which has been the persecutor of the saints. The whole earth has been corrupted by her doctrines—"the wine of her fornication,"—and about them all is there an element of mystery, as well as about the name upon her forehead. Rome is the fountain-head of the mysterious dogma of the Trinity. It comes from her to the Church of England, and the stream of corrupt doctrine dribbles down to the smallest sects which have split away from the church "as by law established." Nowhere is there a creed to be found so mysterious and bewildering to the intellect as what is called "The Athanasian Creed." It will bemuddle the brain of any man to try to comprehend it. It is safest to let it alone if you would keep outside of a lunatic asylum. It asserts the most absurd and ridiculous nonsense imaginable. It contradicts itself, and yet if you do not believe there are three Persons, three Gods, three Eternals, and three incomprehensibles, who are, after all, *not three*, but One, you will—it asserts—"without doubt, perish everlastingly." No wonder some clergymen disbelieve it, and will not repeat it.* Thinking men who are honest can't go on repeating a lie. Mr T. Hughes, Q.C., (now, I believe, a Judge), speaking on "Infidelity, and the methods employed for extending it," at a Diocesan Conference held at Chester, some time back, said: "No one revered the Prayer-book more than he did; but for all that *there were points which ministered to infidelity. The most salient of these was the retention of the Athanasian Creed. While ninety out of every hundred of an ordinary congregation did not know the*

* "I have my own views about it," a clergyman once very significantly said to me.

"The Bishops claimed to be successors of the Apostles, but they were not lineally—by organic transmission—such successors; and if they were it did not much matter, since we did not believe in organic transmission. The life of Christ's Church was derived, not from something mysterious trickling through a Bishop's fingers when he laid hands on a priest's head, nor from the methods of the Church of England, but from the spirituality of its members. *He never read the Athanasian Creed, BECAUSE HE DID NOT BELIEVE IN IT; and he was lukewarm about the Thirty-nine Articles.*"—Extract from sermon preached at St. Bride's Church, Fleet Street, London, by Rev. H. R. Haweis, as reported in *Daily News* of Dec. 6th, 1886.

scientific meaning of such words as 'substance' and 'person,' it was notorious they did understand the Creed to affirm that damnation was a penalty declared by the Church to attach to inability to accept intellectually a series of abstruse propositions in metaphysics."† This is the testimony of one of the sons of the Church—that one of its leading doctrines, as stated by a principal creed in the Prayer-book, *ministered to infidelity*. This testimony is true. I believe that Mr Bradlaugh himself was first led to doubt and disbelieve through the foolishness of a Church of England clergyman, and his inability to satisfy his mind upon this very matter. If the doctrine were true it would not act thus upon the human mind. Our reason is challenged by the Bible writers. We are not to quench thought, but "Prove all things, and hold fast to that only which is true." The Apostle appealed to those to whom he wrote as "wise men" who were to "judge what he said." It is a bastard Christianity which is afraid to let in the light. Light is perilous to popular doctrines. Discussion shows their weakness, and unreasonableness, and unscriptural nature. It is so with all their doctrines. They will not stand looking into. A Scriptural examination will show that there is no foundation for the belief in eternal torment, or an eternal tormentor; that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is a myth; that the idea of the existence of disembodied ghosts either in heaven or hell is a theological fable; that the doctrine of substitution is not based upon righteousness; that baby baptism is a meaning less farce, and confirmation a vain performance; while purgatory and prayers for the dead are simply means to relieve survivors

† Though these "abstruse propositions in metaphysics" are beyond ordinary comprehension, or any other comprehension, the Bishop of Exeter a little while ago took comfort from the fact that an idiot, while dying, pronounced a jingle on the Trinity! "Speaking at the annual meeting of the Western Counties' Idiot Asylum at Exeter, the Bishop of Exeter justified his conduct in confirming five of the inmates in the spring, and wished those who had deprecated his conduct had seen the devout reverence of the carefully-prepared candidates. He referred to the case of a boy, with whom he had been very much struck in his childhood, called "Silly Billy." This poor idiot child, just before he died, gave utterance to a great thought—

"Oh! what does Silly Billy see?
Three in One, and One in Three,
And One of them has died for me."

—*Liverpool Echo*, July 19th, 1886.—Surely we ought to accept the doctrine after that!

of spare cash. All these doctrines, and others, are false, and without Scripture warrant. Hence we say LET IN THE LIGHT. Let us have the truth though the heavens fall, or, as that is not very likely, though all ecclesiastical vested interests be swept away, which, perhaps, considering the credulity and ignorance and foolishness of the masses, is about as unlikely as the other. Bible doctrines will bear looking into. They do not offend the reason. They do not confound the intellect. They do not shock the moral faculties of our nature. No sophistry is required in their defence. The conscience is not troubled by the nature of them. They are "true and righteous altogether." David said that "The law of the Lord is perfect." . . . "The statutes of the Lord are right" (Ps. xix. 7-8), and we may say the same of all the doctrines contained in the Book. They are reasonable and defensible, and will stand discussion. Those who are so timid about their doctrines being looked at are sorry followers of the robust Paul, whose "manner was" to "reason out of the Scriptures," even amid "much contention," and at the risk of much persecution as well. (Acts xvii. 2-3 ; xviii. 4, &c.)

The fact is this doctrine of the Trinity comes—like many others—from a heathen source. All heathen nations have their Trinitarian deities. Take the following instances as proof; and let me say that I am indebted to a defender of the Trinity for some of the facts:—The Emperor of China offers once every year sacrifice to the Spirit of Trinity and Unity. LAO-TSE, the great philosopher, to whom the Chinese pay almost divine honours, who lived 600 years B.C. says:—"Tao (*i.e.*, the intelligent principle of all being) is by nature one: the first begat the the second; both together brought forth the third; these three made all things." The Indian "Trimurti" (or Trinity) is Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, who are also represented and worshipped as three persons, though the original divine principle is but one. One of their "Purannas" (their sacred writings) plainly declares that the great unity is to be distinctly recognised as three Gods in one person! In a commentary on the "Rigveda" (a book of sacred hymns collected between 1,300 and 600 years B.C.) it is said:—"There are three Deities, but there is only one Godhead, the great soul." The Chaldeans. the Babylonians. the

Phœnicians, the Egyptians, the Grecians, the Scandinavians, the Pomeranians and Wends, the ancient Irish, the ancient Prussians, and the ancient Americans, each had their Trinity. One of the great idols of the last-named was called "Tangalanga," *i.e.* "One in Three and Three in One." The three gods who emanated from the original spirit they called "Trinimaaka" (*i.e.*, Trinity.) Just as the ancient nations had their three-headed image representations of the Deity, so have the so-called Church of Christ. The Papacy has in some of its Churches, for instance, images of the "Triune" God. There is one in the monastery of the Trinitarians of Madrid, with three heads on one body! There is thus, to a large extent, an identity of belief between Pagan and Christian, so-called. And it is a fact that the writers of "Christendom" are very fond of referring to the Trinitarian beliefs of the heathen world in confirmation of their own views. It is a most singular proceeding. Imagine Paul or any of the Apostles ~~going~~^{GOING} to the heathen world for "arguments" to support their belief! To that world that was "lying in the arms of the wicked one!" To that world which, with all its "wisdom, knew not God," by whom all its philosophic reasonings was esteemed foolishness." (I. Cor. i. 19-21.) There is something wrong when heathen authorities have to be appealed to as affording the best and most copious arguments on behalf of the doctrines of Christendom. Yet so it is with this doctrine: Bible arguments are few, and far-fetched, and unreliable. Pagan views can be appealed to with great success. We will allow "orthodoxy" the privilege of reference to heathendom, and we will go to the Bible. That is our armoury from whence we get our weapons. To that we confidently appeal. "To the law and to the testimony: *if they speak not according to this word IT IS BECAUSE THERE IS NO LIGHT IN THEM*" (Isa. viii. 20).

The moment we go to the Scriptures we are bound to acknowledge the importance of a knowledge of God. It is our duty to strive to rightly apprehend what is revealed of Him. Jesus Himself—an authority surely high enough—has stated that "eternal life" is dependent upon a knowledge of God and of Himself, the One sent by the Father. It needs no apology after that for trying to understand the testimony. And it shows

how culpable are those who would prevent us from doing so if they could. Of course if God is "unknowable" and "incomprehensible," and his nature and existence an unfathomable "mystery," it is no use us making the attempt, or in Jesus assuring us that eternal life depends upon its accomplishment. But this he does. We turn to the 17th chapter of John, and there—commencing at verse 1 we read thus:—"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to Heaven and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may also glorify Thee. As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And *this is life eternal, that they might KNOW THEE, the only true God,* and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." This passage is an exceedingly important one. It proves the necessity of a knowledge of God; but it does more. It is important in its bearing upon the doctrine of the Trinity, *and is in itself fatal to that view.* Who is the speaker? Jesus. He is addressing His Father in heaven. He asks Him to glorify the Speaker, thus showing *His dependence* upon the Father. He acknowledges that the power He possesses is derived. "*Thou (the Father) hast given Him (the speaker) power over all flesh*" for the purpose of conferring immortality upon such "*as thou hast given him.*" And then comes the assertion that the Father is "**THE ONLY TRUE GOD,**" who must be known in conjunction with the speaker—Jesus—*who is sent* by the Father, commissioned and qualified by the Father to do what He has to do. Thus, it is seen, we have two distinct persons mentioned in the passage, one of whom derives his power from the other, who is referred to as "*the only true God.*" Now that is precisely the doctrine set forth by us—*the unity, the oneness of God.* We do not discard the words "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," but we deny most emphatically what is taught by our contemporaries, and popularly believed concerning the phrase. We deny that there are three persons "co-equal and co-eternal" in the Godhead. We believe that "God is *one,*" not *three.* This one God is *the Father,* who dwells in unapproachable light, upon whose form no human eye has ever gazed, nor can do so and live (I. Tim. vi. 16); whose existence is "from everlasting to everlasting," by whose power all things exist, and for whose glory all things—animate and inani-

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mate—were brought into being, for He is “the Fountain of Life,” the great Reservoir of all existence; the Supporter and Upholder of all things, “who giveth to all life and breath and all things,” who, though dwelling in inconceivable glory in heaven is “not far from every one of us” in a manner to which we shall make reference before we close, “For in Him we live, and move, and have our being,” for we are the “offspring” of God (Acts xvii. 25-28.)

This is what the Bible teaches about the Father. If you feel at all inclined to doubt it, turn, with me, to a passage from the pen of Paul. It is in the 8th chapter of his 1st Epistle to the Corinthian brethren. Paul would never, *could never*, have written such words as those I am about to quote had he believed in three co-equal personalities. In the 4th, 5th, and 6th verses he writes thus:—“We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that **THERE IS NONE OTHER GOD BUT ONE.** For though there be many that are called gods”—that is, by the Gentiles around them—“whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many), yet to us,” who believe the truth, to those who are called Christians, “**THERE IS BUT ONE GOD, THE FATHER,** of whom, or, out of whom, are all things, and we in Him; and”—besides this one God, distinct from Him—“one Lord (or Ruler), Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him.” No testimony can be much clearer or more explicit than that. It is simple, it is unambiguous, it is easy to understand, and we ought just to accept it and be satisfied—“To us there is but *ONE God,*” and that one is “The Father,”—*and no one else.* In the 4th chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians he refers to a number of “one’s.” “There is,” he says, reading from the 4th verse—“*one* body and *one* spirit, even as ye are called in *one* hope of your calling; *one* Lord” (that is Jesus, Lord means “ruler” or “king”) “*one* faith, *one* baptism, **ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL, WHO IS ABOVE ALL, and through all and in you all,**” even above the “one Lord Jesus,” mentioned in the previous sentence; hence the “co-equal” theory is not, cannot be true. The Father is supreme. His glory He will not give to another. Yea, He would pour contempt upon any who would presume to claim equality with him. “To whom,” he asks, as recorded in the 40th chapter of Isaiah, at

FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT.

the 25th verse, "To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the *Holy One*." It is one of the stock arguments of Trinitarians to point to the plural word used in the 26th verse of the 1st chapter of Genesis in proof of the existence of more persons than one in the Godhead—"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. In fact it proves nothing of the kind: it is as "sound" an argument as the one drawn from the three-fold use of the word "Holy" in the 6th chapter of Isaiah, verse 3, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory." Some find a Trinitarian argument in this passage. How hard put to must they be, when they try to twist it out of such an ascription of praise to the *Holy One* of Israel! The passage in Genesis i. 26* is susceptible of altogether a different interpretation. The word translated God (and there are quite a considerable number of words in the original translated Lord and God) is *Elohim*, a plural word meaning "mighty ones," and referring here, and in some other places, to the angels, who were simply the messengers and instruments of Jehovah's power, who, through the spirit of the Eternal God residing in them and conferred upon them for the purpose, executed His behests, though *He was the first cause and originator of it all*. Hence, we find

* There are those who take the ground that though the word *Elohim* is plural in form, yet it is singular in meaning. The following letter and extracts are not without interest. The letter was written to the Editor of the *Christadelphian* by a gentleman interested in the truth. It was as follows:—"The following quotation, which I have copied from the 'Introduction to the Science of Religion' by Max Muller, may perhaps interest you. The plural form of *Elohim* in the 1st chapter of Genesis is usually advanced as a sort of confirmation of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, but if Max Muller's view is correct it cuts the ground from under the feet of the Trinitarians. This is the passage:—'*Eloah* is the same word as the Arabic *Ilah*, God. In the singular, *Eloah* is used in the Bible synonymously with *El*; in the plural it may mean gods in general, or false gods, but it becomes in the Old Testament the recognised name of the true God, plural in form but singular in meaning.' I have come across another quotation which supports the contention of Christadelphians, and which may, therefore, be of interest to you. It is from a recently published book called 'Positive Aspects of Unitarian Christianity,' page 38, note by Dr. G. Vance Smith: "In the New Testament several words are used to denote religious worship. It is not without significance that only one is used in reference to Christ, which is also expressive of the respectful homage or obeisance which one man may pay to another, e.g., Matt. xx. 20, compare Matt. xviii. 26. *It should also be noted that no single instance occurs throughout the Bible of the ascription of praise or prayer to the Holy Spirit as a distinct or personal existence.*" The italics are mine. Referring to the Greek Testament, I find the word used in each passage is *proskenuo*, which means, literally, "to prostrate (oneself) before (in token of respect), to do obeisance to, to salute." (Liddell and Scott's Lexicon.)

Him asking the questions in the 40th of Isaiah, verses 13 and 14, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counsellor hath taught Him? *With whom took He counsel?*" Why, it is just what they say the "three persons of the God-head" did at the creation—take counsel together: "Let us" do so and so, though the "us" might as well mean three thousand as three; but the idea is here repudiated: "*With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of understanding?*" Not one. No! there is no equal with God. There is no other eternal power. One arm alone sustains the universe. His voice alone commanded, and it was done. "I am the first," he declares, as we read in the 44th of Isaiah, verses 6 and 8, "and I am the last; *and besides Me there is no God. . . . Is there a God beside Me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any.*" Again, in the 45th chapter of the same book we have similar words at verse 5: "I am the Lord, and there *is none else*; there is no God beside Me." It might be objected that it is the threefold Deity who here speaks, but that is a suggestion hardly worth a thought. If there was not a doctrine to support, no one would think of suggesting that the speaker in these places was a combination of three individualities. It is not "us" in these cases, but the personal pronoun "I," "Me," the "first," "*none beside Me.*" What can express unity or oneness if these passages do not? Besides, the other view receives a fatal blow from the constantly recurring words, "The Holy One" and "The Holy One of Israel," words which occur *no less than thirty times in the Book of Isaiah alone.* "The Holy One, remember that,—not "the holy three."

Now, this idea—shall we not rather say, this sublime doctrine—of the Unity of God is stamped upon every page of the Bible where reference is made to the subject at all, if we except one spurious passage which occurs in the 1st Epistle of John (ch. v. part of 7th and 8th verses), which all scholars admit to be an interpolation, and which is omitted from the New Version.† It is admitted by defenders of the Trinity that the

† "For there are three that bear record [in Heaven—the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one; and there are three that bear

doctrine is not clearly taught in the Old Testament. One very able German writer—able and scholarly in some things, but weak on this question—admits that only the “germs of the Trinitarian doctrine are exhibited” in the early Scriptures. “But these germs,” says he, “are not the unfolded flower. A clear developed dogma of the Trinity is not to be found in the Old Testament, and that for good reasons. It was all-important under that dispensation that, in the face of heathen polytheism, the great fundamental truth of the divine unity should be impressed on the religious consciousness of God’s ancient people: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.” Too plain an utterance of Trinitarian doctrine would in such times have obscured the truth of the divine unity, and misled into Tritheism. And for the like *pædagogic* reasons our Lord did not at first reveal the tri-unity of the divine nature to His disciples.*” What wonderfully reasoning this seems to be! Just let us look at it a moment. The “divine unity” was “the great fundamental truth” necessary to be impressed upon the minds of the Jews; hence “too plain an utterance of Trinitarian doctrine” would have obscured this “great fundamental truth” and led the people astray! Led them into Tritheism, that is, into the belief that there are three Gods in the Godhead! Just what they ought to have believed, according to this gentleman’s doctrine. They

witness on earth] the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one.”—The reasons which seem to me to prove that the passage included in brackets (as here given) is spurious, and should not be regarded as a part of the inspired writings, are briefly the following:—I. It is wanting in all the earlier Greek manuscripts, for it is found in no Greek M.S. written before the sixteenth century. Indeed, it is found in only two Greek manuscripts of any age—one the Codex Montfortianus, or Britannicus, written in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the other the Codex Ravianus, which is a mere transcript of the text, taken partly from the third edition of Stephen’s New Testament and partly from the Complutensian Polyglott. But it is incredible that a genuine passage of the New Testament should be wanting in all the early Greek manuscripts. II. It is wanting in the earliest versions. . . . It is wanting in both the Syriac versions—one of which was made probably in the first century; in the Coptic, Armenian, Slavonic, Ethiopic, and Arabic. III. It is never quoted by the Greek fathers in their controversies on the doctrine of the Trinity—a passage which would be so much in point, and which could not have failed to be quoted if it were genuine; and it is not referred to by the Latin fathers until the time of Vigilius, at the end of the fifth century.”—Dr. Albert Barnes, a Trinitarian commentator, who adduces a number of other reasons, also to prove the spuriousness of the passage.

**Modern Doubt and Christian Belief*, by Theodore Christlieb, D.D., University Preacher and Professor of Theology at Bonn, 1877.

certainly do not say three Gods; they say three persons, and that each of the three is God; but *that there are not three after all—only one!* You have to imagine a plural unit! One multiplied by three is not three, but one—*that's* the doctrine! For "the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, yet there are not three Gods, but one God!" Queer arithmetic, isn't it? You never get such a puzzle as this in the school books. So this very important doctrine of the Trinity was not clearly revealed (without a belief in which you will "perish everlastingly"), lest it should lead the Jews astray, by teaching them to believe what practically is supposed after all to be the right thing! Hence Moses told them—solemnly invoked them to listen—"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is *one* Lord," when all the while He was a triune being, which fact it was dangerous for them to know! That is a little bit of Trinitarian sophistry which we will leave for you to ponder over, and make the best of.

Now, that which Moses, the great law-giver of Israel, the man who was eminently faithful in all work pertaining to the Deity (Heb. iii. 2), was so anxious at the commencement of their national life to so deeply impress upon the Israelitish mind, viz., that God was one, and that He was a "jealous God," who would not give His glory to another—is taught all through the book. The Bible does not speak with two voices upon this supremely important subject. Moses, Isaiah, and Jesus all agree, as also do the Apostles. There is no antagonism between them, nor could there be. Jesus came to amplify and fulfil what had been written before. "Think not," said He, "that I am come to destroy (the teaching of) the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. v. 17). He and His disciples taught none other things than those who had written and spoke before. Hence the supremacy of the Father was a cardinal point in their teaching, and is continually cropping up. To the Jews whom Jesus was addressing upon one occasion, He said, as we read in the 44th verse of the 5th chapter of John, "How can ye believe, which receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from THE ONLY GOD ye seek not?" The rendering in the Authorised Version is, "seek not the honour that cometh from God only;" but the Revised Version rendering is doubtless

the most correct—"the only God," and, of course, the speaker was referring to His Father in Heaven. On one occasion a devout scribe, who appeared to have realised what God required of him, and to have understood the spirituality of the law, one with whom Jesus was so well pleased that He said to him, noticing the discretion of his remarks, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God"—ventured to put a question to Jesus. He had been listening to the great teacher as He answered the Sadducees and confuted their false notion concerning the non-resurrection of the dead. He was pleased with the manner in which Jesus had dealt with them; he perceived, we are told, that "He had answered them well," and he thought that he, too, would like to put a question to one whose wisdom was so apparent. Perhaps it was a test question. He may not have been quite sure in his own mind that Jesus was all He claimed to be—that He was indeed divinely sent and divinely taught, and so he thought that he would prove Him and see whether He was in harmony with the teachings of the prophet Moses, whose writings he felt assured were divine; and so, in all sincerity, he came to Jesus with the question, "What commandment is the first of all?" the most important of all, to be observed above all? The answer to the question is to be found in the 12th chapter of Mark's history; but I will again read from the New Version, because, doubtless, it is the more accurate of the two, and although the Old Version plainly teaches the truth for which we contend, yet the better translation more clearly and more definitely sets it forth. Commencing, then, at verse 29, we read thus: "Jesus answered, The first is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, THE LORD IS ONE; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto Him, Of a truth, Master, *Thou hast well said that HE IS ONE, and there is none other but He*: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." This statement from the lips of Jesus

sets forth in the most explicit way possible the Unity of God, and the complete harmony between Jesus and Moses—"the Lord is one," "Thou hast well said that He is one," and completely excludes the notion that any co-equality was claimed by the speaker with the one Lord. It would have been fatal to the claims of Jesus to have gone among the Jews teaching anything else besides the Unity of God; and the "orthodox" doctrine of the Trinity is one of the most repugnant imaginable to the minds of the Jews to this day, and probably one of the chief reasons why they resist all efforts to bring them over to the Christian faith. They are confronted with the monstrous dogma of the Trinity, which they well know is not taught in their Scriptures, and which they are never likely to accept. Jesus, as we have seen, did not teach it; if He did, He chose a singular way of doing so, and was—if that were the case—strangely misunderstood by the devout scribe; yea, His reply to that individual was specially adapted to confute such a belief. It is the same also with the Apostles. They never write of the "Eternal Three" of whom they sing in the Parish Church! They could not, "*For there is ONE GOD, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,*" as Paul wrote to Timothy (I. Tim. ii. 5). What a singular passage to harmonise with the popular belief! "The man Christ Jesus" is actually declared in our day to be God, indissolubly connected with the Father, one of the "inscrutable three," an essential element in the being *between whom and mankind He mediates!* A mediator between Himself and men! You have only to use your reason, friends, and the doctrine will be put aside as the folly and vain speculation of unenlightened man. How strong the contrast between that utterance of Paul and, say any utterance of the Pope of Rome, the so-called vicar of Christ on earth, the head of the largest church in "Christendom." It is only this month that the will of Pio Nono, the late Pope, has been published to the world. It appeared in the *Daily News*,* and commenced thus:—"LAST WILL: *In the name of the Holy Trinity,—I recommend my soul to the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons and one*

*January 5th, 1887. This Lecture was first delivered on Sunday, January 30th, 1887.

God. I supplicate Maria Santissima, ever immaculate, her spouse St. Joseph, the Saints Peter and Paul, Saint Michael Archangel, St. Luigi Gonzaga, my patron saints, and all my protectors and advocates, to assist me in the grand passage from time to eternity as they have assisted and protected me during the course of my life." That is not very apostolic. "One God, *the Father*," says Paul; "*Three persons* and one God," says Pio Nono. "*One mediator*," says the Apostle; "*All my protectors and advocates*," says the Pope, who, for the most part, are dead saints (?), who "know not anything," and are as ignorant of the fact that the late Pope ever existed, as he is now unconscious of all transpiring events; for the dead sleep soundly, and the supposed flight of the soul to heaven, or hell, or purgatory, is only another Pagan and Papal myth.

But we read of "Spirit" in the Bible, and of "Holy Spirit," and sometimes the words are rendered "Holy Ghost." What are we to understand by them? This is a matter not difficult to explain. The Father is the one and only God, as we have seen. We further learn from the Scriptures that He dwells in heaven, that that place—wherever it may be—is His throne, that in a special manner He is located there, dwelling in "unapproachable light" and glory inconceivable. The Bible cannot be understood if this is not the impression conveyed. Jesus, in the prayer He taught His disciples, told them to use the words, "Our Father, which *art in heaven*" (Matt. vi. 9). "IN HEAVEN," surely those words convey to the mind the impression that God is in a special and personal sense present there. When Paul, too, speaks of God dwelling "in the light that no man can approach unto" (I. Tim. vi. 16), it is evident he could not have held modern views. If God is the impalpable essence merely, "without body or parts," that He is supposed to be, without locality, pervading all space, present on earth in the same sense as He is in heaven—what meaning could the words of the Apostle have? They speak of locality, of a place of dazzling glory that cannot be approached by mortal man, where the Almighty is concealed (with one exception—the Lord Jesus, who is a "partaker of the divine nature") from all but angelic eyes by light so luminous, so resplendent, so glorious, that it is absolutely

unapproachable by all but those who have become assimilated to His own exalted nature. The Scriptures throughout agree with this localization of the Eternal. "There is a God *in heaven*," said Daniel to the Babylonian King (Dan. ii. 28); "God is in *heaven, and thou upon earth*," are the words of Solomon in Eccles. v. 2. In the 102nd Psalm, we are told at verse 19 that the Lord "looked down *from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth*, to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death." "Unto Thee," says the Psalmist in another place, "lift I up mine eyes, O *Thou that dwellest in the heavens*" (Ps. cxxiii. 1). The same truth is very prominent in the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple, to be found in the 8th chapter of the First Book of Kings, where he repeatedly uses the words, "Hear Thou *in heaven Thy dwelling-place*, and when Thou hearest forgive." There is another consideration that will weigh with those who respect the Bible, which is this: After the resurrection of Jesus we are told that he did not remain upon the earth, but that He ascended into heaven. Who did He go to? The testimony is clear. Mark tells us (ch. xvi. 19) that "He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." Peter tells us that "He is at the right hand of God exalted" (Acts ii. 33). Stephen, we are told, "looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God" (Acts vii. 55-56). In what sense can these passages be true, unless we admit that the Almighty is located, corporeally present, dwelling in "unapproachable light?" How singular, too, to think that one of the persons of "the Trinity" has a body which ascended to heaven, while the other "persons" of "the Trinity" are "without body and parts!" And yet He has gone to "the right hand" of the Father! And if Jesus has gone to the right hand of God, what does it mean if we say that Jesus himself is God? Has He, then, gone to dwell in *His own presence*, and sit at *His own right hand*? These are little — no, not little, but insurmountable difficulties for Trinitarians to grapple with, and must perplex those who believe that doctrine, and yet think. But to return. It is true we cannot tell where,

in the wide expanse called heaven, the dwelling-place of Jehovah is.

“ We know not in what hallowed part
Of the wide heavens His throne may be,”

and that is not necessary; we know that He exists, that He dwells in heaven, and that, though concealed from our mortal view, our prayers can reach his ear, and our cry bring help from Him. But though God is thus personally present in heaven, He is universally present by His all-pervading Spirit. This Spirit is not a being—not a personal God distinct from the Father as theology teaches. It is “the Spirit of the Lord,” a power emanating from the Father, co-extensive with the universe. The very terms employed where the words occur exclude altogether the idea of a separate personality. It is the “power of the Highest,” by which He executes His will throughout the extent of all His wide domains. The Spirit of God is the operating power that produced all things. All things are created out of God—not out of nothing; and, if He so willed, everything could be resolved again into that one primal element or force, which is the basis of all things, viz., His Spirit. There was a time when the sun and moon and stars had no existence, and when this earth upon which we tread appeared not. How came they into existence, and what causes them to revolve in such marvellous order so continuously without a clash? The Bible tells us, “All these things,” saith the Lord, “have Mine hands made” (Isa. lxvi. 2). “All things,” says John, “were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made” (John i. 3). Yes! but how? Job tells us in the 26th chapter and the 13th verse, “By His Spirit,” he says, “He hath garnished the heavens.” What scientific men called “energy,” and “force,” and “motion,” and such like terms, the Bible calls “Spirit”—the Spirit of God—and “His free Spirit.” Hence the Psalmist prays, “Uphold me by Thy free Spirit.” And this “free Spirit” is universal. It pervades unbounded space; it is the life of every living thing. The mightiest orb that is fixed in the heavens, or that whirls with swift velocity through the spacious firmament, and the tiny dewdrop that sparkles on a blade of grass are the production of the universal Spirit of the Eternal God. Every form of

vegetable and animal life, from the mighty oak or the giant trees of California to the daisy, and from the elephant to the ant, are emanations of the same wondrous power. It is so with the fishes of the sea and the birds of the air—from the whale to the minnow, and again to the millions of animalculæ that exist in a glass of water, and from the ostrich to the humming bird—these, in all their diversified shapes and colours, are brought forth, not by blind chance, but by the creative power of the Spirit of God, directed by his inexhaustible wisdom. It was the "Spirit of God" which "moved"—or brooded—"upon the face of the waters" at the first, and originated all the life upon the globe (Gen. i. 2). "Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit," the Psalmist declares, "they are created: and Thou renewest the face of the earth. Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled: Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust" (Ps. civ. 29, 30).

" Through realms of boundless space,
His Spirit works His will;
And with Creation's endless forms,
The heaven and earth doth fill."

It was by the power of Jehovah's Spirit that man was created from the dust, the dust itself being an outcome of the same force. The man formed was then caused to breathe into his nostrils the breath, or the spirit of life, contained in the atmospheric air, which is essential to his very existence, and the dust-formed man became a "living soul," or, as Dr. Kitto renders it, "a living animal." Apart from this "breath" or "spirit of life," there could be no existence. We are quickened by it in the first instance, and we die when we can breathe it no longer. These facts help us to understand Elihu when he said—"The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (Job xxxiii. 4). This Spirit of God has not only originated our being, but sustains us in life. We breathe it continually. It is "in our nostrils," as Job declared (chapter xxvii. 3), a fact which excludes the idea of personality; hence we can understand what is said elsewhere in the Book of Job that "If God set His heart upon man, if He gather unto himself *his* spirit and *his* breath, all flesh shall perish together, and

man shall turn again unto dust" (Job xxxiv. 14, 15). In this manner the words of the wise man come to pass, and "the dust returns to the earth as it was" at first, "and the spirit (of life, and of God) unto God who gave it" (Eccles. xii. 7). "We live and move and have our being" in this unseen all-pervading power of God, and the whole creation is the result of God's wisdom developed by its potent force. By it God knows all things. It is the connecting link between Him and us, and everything besides. We are enswathed and encircled by this unseen power. Hence He knows our very thoughts and all our words. His ear listens to them all. There is no need of a telephone, nor of a battery and wires, to connect us with His throne. The hidden force itself is His, and by it He knows when a sparrow falls to the ground, or an earthquake happens, when a good deed is done, or an evil word spoken, when a man dies, or a child opens its eyes for the first time to the light of this world. We cannot escape from it—it is everywhere. By its power, we are "searched" and "known" most intimately by Jehovah. Hence He knoweth our "down sitting" and our "uprising, and understandeth our thoughts afar off" He "compasseth our path and our lying down, and is acquainted with all our ways." Not a word we speak is hidden from Him, and He besets us behind and before. The contemplation of this wondrous power led the Psalmist to exclaim, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." "Whither," he asks, "shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell (Heb. *Sheol*), behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee" (Ps. cxxxix. 1-12). All God's wonders in the natural world are wrought by this power, which proceeds from Him (see Ps. xxix.), and it has been constantly employed for the higher purposes of the enlightenment of man. By ~~X~~ God spoke

in past times to the prophets, "for holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II. Pet. i. 21). How often do we read that "the Spirit of the Lord came" upon this one or the other one; or, what is the same thing, "the word of the Lord came" unto so and so, inspiring them to do or to say what they had no power to resist. By this mighty force Samson did the remarkable deeds attributed to him. It was not by his own natural strength that he slew the young lion that roared against him, but because "the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him," enabling him to rend the lion "as he would have rent a kid" (Judges xiv. 6.) By the power of this Spirit he slew "the thirty men of Ashkelon" (ch. xiv. 19); broke the strong cords that bound him; and slew a thousand men with the jaw-bone of an ass (ch. xv. 14-16); by its power he carried away the gates of Gaza, and pulled down the temple of Dagon the Philistine god. All these mighty works were the result of divine power communicated by God through His Spirit to this Israelitish judge. By the same power Elisha detected the deception of Gehazi, as Peter did the lies of Ananias and Sapphira;* by it all the miracles of the Old and New Testament were effected, and a great deal might be said concerning it if we only had the time.

This Spirit was designated *Holy Spirit* when it was thus set apart for a special use. It is the *same power* as that continually employed in all the works of Nature; but when diverted into particular channels—when used for extraordinary purposes

* Sometimes the incident mentioned in Acts v. 1-11, in connection with the deceitful conduct of Ananias and his wife is referred to to prove the personality of the Spirit as a distinct being from the Father. It does nothing of the kind. We are surprised that it should be referred to for such a purpose. It is said that Peter declared that they lied to "the Holy Spirit," and in so doing they "lied unto God." Exactly. And how many Gods are there? One. Who is that one? *The Father* (I. Cor. viii. 4, 6). The Spirit of this one God was given to the Apostles to perform wonderful works. By its power Peter was immediately made acquainted with the deception of Ananias, who, in trying to deceive Peter and the other Apostles, attempted to deceive the Spirit. In so doing, he endeavoured to deceive God, inasmuch as the Spirit is His, proceeds from Him, has its root in Him, is *God in manifestation*. But there is not the slightest proof here for the belief in a personal being distinct from the Father. The truth is made additionally clear from the words of Peter to the wife of Ananias when she came three hours afterwards, and repeated the falsehood of her husband. "How is it," he said, "that ye have agreed together to tempt THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD?" That's the idea—God's Spirit, to tempt which is to tempt *Him*.

—it was called “holy,” just as all the vessels employed in the tabernacle were called “holy,” because sanctified, or set apart, for special divine use. By translating the Greek word, *pneuma*, “ghost,” the translators have spoilt the meaning, although, as Max Müller says, ghost “originally meant spirit, and spirit meant breath.” The translators of the New Version have preserved the word “ghost” against the recommendation of the American Company of Revisers, though they have given the alternative rendering, “Holy Spirit,” in the margin, but we must remember that they were nearly all Trinitarians, and the word “ghost” seems to favour the idea of personality more than “spirit.” We never find them, however, translating the Greek word *pneuma* “ghost,” except when it has the prefix “holy.” Why not? Because it would look so absurd. We should smile if we saw the word “ghost” substituted for “spirit” in all places where it occurs. We need only quote one passage to show its absurdity; you can follow up the idea. “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the *ghost*, if so be that the *ghost* of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the *ghost* of Christ, he is none of His!” (Rom. viii. 9). The word ought always to be rendered “spirit;” “ghost” is obsolete and misleading.

Now, I must only—for want of time—briefly indicate the truth concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a great deal I wished to say under this head, but I shall have to refrain.† It is most evident from the Apostolic writings that those who followed Jesus in the days of His flesh, who were associated with Him in His ministry and work, never had such conceptions of His nature as the religious guides of the present day. They were careful to honour their Master's name, and give to Him His proper place in the work of redemption, to exalt Him to the position He ought to occupy, but they never used such terms concerning Him as we hear now. Rather, their words are subverted and made meaningless by current ideas. The term “God the Son” never occurs in their writings, but “the Son of God” is a description of Jesus we frequently meet with,

† This latter portion of the Lecture has been considerably lengthened.

as is also the one He generally used Himself, "Son of Man." When, upon one occasion, they had been telling Him what the popular conceptions were concerning Him in answer to His own query, He turned upon them with the personal question, "But whom say ye that I am?" We are then told that "Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ (*i. e.*, the Anointed), *the Son of the living God.*" To which Jesus made reply, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." *The Son of God*, therefore, is the right description of Jesus, as revealed to Peter by the inspiration of the Deity, and as borne out by other parts of Scripture. But in what sense was He the Son of God? Was it merely in a moral sense, or was there a further reason? Was He constituted so in a special manner—in a way to which none other could lay claim? He was. Not only in a moral sense was He the Son of God, but by divine begettal. He is "the *only begotten Son of God*" (John i 18; iii 16). But here, again, the creed-maker was wrong and contradictory, for while he tells us that "The Son is eternal, co-equal, and co-eternal with the Father," he tells us also that he was "begotten before all worlds," and therefore contradicts himself, for he that is begotten by another *cannot have existed from the same point of time as the one by whom he is begotten*. Anyone's common-sense will tell them that that is true, and that the creed must, therefore, be false and contradictory; and the same common-sense also will lead them to acknowledge that if Jesus be the *Son of God*, HE CANNOT BE GOD HIMSELF, or else He must needs be *His own Son* and *His own Father!* Father implies precedence, priority of existence, antecedence. *No son can possibly be as old as his father*. The very terms father and son destroy the "co-eternal" claim, and are fatal to the Trinitarian belief. Of course, people have talked about "the eternal sonship of Christ," but you know how it was characterised by Dr. Adam Clark: "*Eternal nonsense*," he said it was, and he was right.

But the New Testament says nothing about Jesus being "begotten before all worlds" existed; they give us the particulars of His begettal. The very first chapter in the Book tells

us that when Joseph was in trouble about the condition of Mary, the future mother of Jesus, who was espoused to him, it was communicated to him by an angel in a dream that "that which was conceived in her was of the Holy Spirit,"—supernaturally produced by the direct operation of the power of God" (Matt. i. 20). Luke tells us in his first chapter that the angel Gabriel was sent by God to this virgin of the house of David, and that he said to her, "Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus; He shall be great, *and shall be called* THE SON OF THE HIGHEST: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." She wondered how, under the circumstances, it could possibly be, and expressed her wonderment to the angel, who "answered and said unto her, the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: *therefore also*"—(here, you see, we have the reason)—"THEREFORE ALSO *that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called* the SON OF GOD." Consequently He was not called that for any other: *any previously existing reason.* That was the commencement of His actual existence, and of His relationship to the Father. That was when and how He was begotten. That was the commencement of His life. He had existed in type and promise, *and in the purpose of the Father,* but not as a personal being before. The Spirit or Word which in the beginning was with God, and proceeded or flowed out from God, and was God—for He was its root, and it cannot be separated from Him, or considered apart from Him—this Word thus became flesh, that is, in the manner indicated by Luke, and (says John) "dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." But though His origin was in this way higher than any other member of the human race, though His paternity was a divine one, though—in this sense—He could say to the Jews, "I came down from heaven," "I am from above, ye are from beneath"—not that He literally came down from the skies, as He is ignorantly

supposed by some to affirm, any more than the Jews, to whom He spoke literally, came up from beneath, but He was referring to His divine origin and to their origin from the dust—yet we must remember that “the word became *flesh*,” that He was “made of a woman,” and that woman a member of the Adamic race, under its condemnation, and not immaculate as the Church of Rome affirms of the Virgin Mary, whom they call “the Mother of God,” and regularly worship, and to whom they pay the greatest homage. Hence Jesus was “the Son of Man,” “the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, the Son of Adam” (Matt. i. 1). He was “*the Man Christ Jesus*” (I. Tim. ii. 5), “made in all points like unto His brethren,” and as they “are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of *the same*” (Heb. ii. 14), being himself frail and mortal, subject to sorrow and suffering as all His brethren were. God “sent forth His Son *in the likeness of sinful flesh*” (Rom. viii. 3), so that He trod the earth like other people, depending upon the same laws for sustenance, and having no power springing from himself to do the mighty works He did. He was—after begetting—born like other children, and grew as others grew. His knowledge and wisdom increased with increasing years. It is written of Him that “He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke ii. 52). How remarkable to write such a passage of one *who was God*, in whom *all wisdom* resided, who was the source of all knowledge and power! Growth in wisdom affirmed of the *All-wise!* and increase in favour with—*Himself!* At His baptism the Spirit of God descended upon Him, and qualified Him for His future work. It is testified that God gave “not the Spirit by measure unto him” (John iii. 34). Its power was placed at His disposal. He was not limited in the use of it. Here was the source of His miraculous power. It resided not in Himself. It was God’s power given to Him to freely use. He Himself disclaimed any personal power. “I can of *Mine own self do nothing*,” He declared (John v. 30). Surely the words, “*Mine own self*,” represented the personality of Christ. By the power of the Eternal Spirit He was able to calm the raging storm, to straighten the bent limb, to cure the paralytic,

to restore reason and calmness to the violently insane, to open the deaf ear, and give sight to the groping blind; He was able even to restore life to the dead, and to multiply a few loaves so that a vast multitude of hungry men might be fed, and yet abundance remain. There is no limit to the power of the divine Spirit. He who possesses it can perform in a moment what in the ordinary course of nature it takes months to accomplish, and by this agency Jesus, the Anointed One did the wonderful works recorded of Him. How very plainly this is set forth in the New Testament by the Apostles. On the day of Pentecost, Peter—himself filled with the Holy Spirit—said to the assembled multitude, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, *a man approved of God*, among you by miracles and wonders and signs WHICH GOD DID BY HIM in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know" (Acts ii. 22). This exactly states the facts of the case. *God did the works by Him*. He was the instrument—the power was that of "the only God." So, also, in his words to Cornelius, the same Apostle sets forth clearly and unmistakeably the same truth for which we contend. In the 38th verse of the 10th chapter, he said to that devout Gentile, "GOD ANOINTED JESUS OF NAZARETH WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND WITH POWER: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; FOR GOD WAS WITH HIM." How is it possible to understand or to reconcile such passages with the Trinitarian belief? If Jesus was Himself the omnipotent God, would He require "anointing" by another power to enable Him to do works He could do by His own almighty arm? Does it not strike you as most singular on the part of the Apostle to speak of one God anointing another God—who was equal in power with himself—with a third God, to enable Him to do what He had the ability residing in himself to do, if the Apostle had the modern view? Why speak of Jesus as "a MAN APPROVED OF GOD," if He were God himself? Why say that "God did" the works "by Him," if He were the first great cause, and did them by His own power? And if they were done, as is so very clearly asserted, by the Father's power, could He have done them apart from that power? The answer is unmistakeably

clear: He could not, and Peter is in entire harmony with the words we have quoted from the lips of Jesus, "I can of MINE OWN SELF DO NOTHING."

Not only did He derive the power He manifested from the Father, and cheerfully acknowledge that He was its source, but also that the doctrines He proclaimed, and the words of wisdom which He spoke, were of the Father also. The prophecy of Moses was exactly fulfilled in Him. Speaking through him, the Lord said, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, AND WILL PUT MY WORDS IN HIS MOUTH; and He shall speak all that I SHALL COMMAND HIM. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto MY WORDS *which He shall speak* IN MY NAME, I will require it of Him" (Deut. xviii. 18-19). This prediction is applied to Jesus in the New Testament. He was "*that Prophet*" of whom "Moses wrote" (John i. 21, 45). Peter applied the words to Him (Acts iii. 22-23); and Stephen quoted them before his unjust judges who put Him to death, and who slew "the Just One" as well (Acts vii. 37, 52). How strange that men should contend that He came in His own name, and spake His own words, and did His own deeds in the face of such testimony! "He whom God hath sent," said John, "speaketh *the words of God*" (John iii. 34), and he gives the reason why, or, rather, the *modus operandi*—"for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." If we refer to the 12th chapter of John and the 49th verse, we find Jesus enforcing the same truth: "For I have *not spoken of Myself*: but THE FATHER *which sent Me, HE gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.*"

Being begotten by the Spirit of God, and anointed by that same Spirit, He was a manifestation of the wisdom, and power, and love, and character of the Deity. He was sent by the Father to redeem man from death. He was an expression of the Father's love to fallen humanity. God worked in and through Him, but we must not say that the agent is *the same person* as the one whom He represents. The Apostle Paul clearly states the case in his second letter to the Corinthians, 5th chapter, 18th and 19th verses: "*All things are of God, who*

hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that GOD WAS IN CHRIST, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." It is not the doctrine of the "Incarnation of the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity" Paul sets forth here: it is not the coming in human form of a previously existing "eternal son!" but it is something more comprehensible—something without that element of "mystery" in it which is associated with the Trinitarian conception of the Deity. "God was in Christ." Now, surely, the words God and Christ are not here synonymous? Surely, when it says that "God was in Christ," it does not mean that Christ was in Christ, or that God was in Himself! which it must do if Christ is God. No! the truth involves no such absurdity. "God was in Christ" by His Spirit. He revealed Himself by this medium. The voice of Jesus, the utterances of Jesus spoken by the power of the Spirit, was therefore the voice of God, who spake through Him, and qualified Him with wisdom and power to accomplish His redeeming work. God, however, was supreme. Who can doubt it in view of Christ's own words—"My Father is greater than I?" (John xiv. 28).* Who can doubt it in view of the statement of Paul, who says, "I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; AND THE HEAD OF CHRIST IS GOD" (I. Cor. xi. 3). Has the man authority over the woman? Is Christ superior to the man? Even so is God—the one God—head over Christ. But how can this be if they are both one—if Christ is God? is he then head over himself? A similar gradation of rank is observable in I. Cor. iii. 21-23, "For all things are yours;" "And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." Such testimonies as these ought to settle the question of the superiority of the Father in the mind of every impartial, unbiassed person, and such individuals will notice also the fact arising out of this relationship he bore to the Father—a fact observable throughout his life—of his entire submission to the will of God, and of his

*The Son is not less than the Father, nor does He differ from Him, either in essence or in origin. How small would be the Fatherhood were the Son but half God!"—Sartorius. "My Father is greater than I."—Jesus. Shall we accept Christ's estimate of Himself and His Father, or that of the theologians?

constant dependence upon him whose "Servant" he was, and whose behests he came to obey. His own will was put aside for that of God. "Not *my* will," he said, when contemplating the bitter cup he had to drink, "but *thine* be done." He is repeatedly styled the "Servant" of God. This is more observable in the revised version. In Acts iii. 13, we read that "the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Servant Jesus," another most singular statement in view of that doctrine which describes him as "co-equal" with God! He was God's "Servant," and as a faithful servant, he was glorified by God. So in the 26th verse of the same chapter we read, "Unto you, first, God, *having raised up his Servant*, sent him to bless you, &c." (See also Acts iv. 27, 30; Matt. xii. 18; Isa. xlii. 1; lii. 13; liii. 11). As the Servant and Son of God, he prayed to him for those things he required, thus acknowledging his dependence upon him. He acknowledged the Father to be his God. Thus he said, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; *and to my God*, and your God." (John xx. 17). He used the same language after he was glorified. In his promise to those who should win the victory at Philadelphia, he said, "To him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of *my God*, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of *my God*, and the name of the city of *my God*, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from *my God*: and I will write upon him my New name." (Rev. iii. 12). Then again we have the expression of Peter's—"The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (I. Pet. i. 3) and these passages are not consistent with the Trinitarian conceit. It was because of Christ's obedience and submission to the will of God that he is now exalted to his right hand, and "made a Prince and a Saviour" to man (Acts v. 31). This is very plainly stated in the 2nd chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, where Paul argues that because of his humility, and obedience unto death, "even the death of the cross," "GOD ALSO HATH HIGHLY EXALTED HIM, *and given him a Name which is above every name.*" What! exalted a being equal in power and glory with himself? Exalted the creator of all things? *Given a name higher than any other to him who, in his own right, is highest?* Surely our Trinitarian friends never critically examine

such passages as these. *God* has exalted him. "Thou (the Son) hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; *THEREFORE GOD, EVEN THY GOD, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*" (Heb. i. 9).

Enough has already been said to show that he is a *being* separate and distinct from the Father, and that they are not "One" in the sense claimed by believers in the Trinity. We know well the passage that springs at once to the minds and to the lips of those who hold this belief. "I and my Father are one," they quote somewhat triumphantly. (John x. 30). It must be lack of consideration, or lack of discernment, which makes them quote this passage. It immediately follows a passage in which he declares "*My Father . . . is greater than all.*" Surely he did not mean they were one person, one Deity! The very words, "*I and my Father*" imply *two* individuals—Father and Son. Is there no other sense in which they can be one? If not, what a fix we are placed in when we read his prayer for all who should believe in him. I pray "*that they all may be one; AS THOU, FATHER, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us* : that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me (by promise, and in the purpose of the Deity from the very beginning John xvii. 5)—*I have given them* (not that it was actually conferred upon them at that time, for they are not *yet* glorified, but by promise); *that they may be one, EVEN* (or in the same sense) *AS WE ARE ONE: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one.*" (John xvii. 20-23). Here, then, was a oneness contemplated between His Father, himself, and all his brethren. A unity of thought and purpose, and action. God dwelling in each of them by his Spirit, producing likemindedness. This was the sense in which he used the words, "I and my Father are one," as is clearly proved by the words, "that they may be one, *EVEN as we are one.*" (See also John xiv. 10, 11, and compare verse 20.)

The evidence that he was a separate individual from the Father is voluminous. "It is written in your law," he said to the Jews, "that the testimony of *two men* is true. I am *one* that bear witness of myself, *and the Father* that send me (is the second that) beareth witness of me" (John viii. 17-18). Again

he said, "*My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of Myself*" (was he then God? If so, how could he speak thus) John vii. 16-17. These and many other passages clearly show that they were not one, but two, the sender and the sent, the Father and the Son, the "one God" and "the man Christ Jesus." The introduction to the various epistles show also this distinction of persons. Just to quote the text will be sufficient to show this:—

I. Cor. i. 1.—Paul, called to be an apostle of *Jesus Christ through the will of God.*"

Gal. i. 1.—Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, AND GOD, the Father, who raised Him (Jesus) from the dead."

Eph. i. 1-2.—"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by *the will of God*, to the saints. . . . Grace be to you, and peace from GOD our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be THE GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c., so also the other epistles.

All such expressions as these are plain and easy of comprehension, in view of the simple truth that Jesus was the Son of God, called to power by the Father, but when you read them, with the doctrine of the Trinity in your mind, how perplexing and incomprehensible they appear.

I wish now to draw attention to another fact inconsistent with, and contradictory to, the Trinitarian conception of Christ, and one which they, who thus believe, can never satisfactorily explain, viz., the fact that *the knowledge of Jesus was limited*. There were some things unknown to Him. The veil that hid *all* future things was not removed. He said so Himself. Referring to future things (relative to a particular period) to His disciples, he said "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, NEITHER THE SON, but the Father" (Mark xiii. 32. The same truth is expressed in Matt. xxiv. 36, the revisers of the New Testament supplying the words "neither the Son," omitted in the authorised version.) After he was raised from the dead, the disciples who anticipated the restoration of David's Throne and kingdom, or in other words the establishment of "the kingdom of God," put the question to Him contained in Acts i. 6, "Lord, wilt Thou *at this time* restore the kingdom to Israel?" To which He replied, "It is not for you (at this time) to know the times or the seasons *which the Father hath set within* (or appointed by) *His own authority.*" The

time of the establishment of the kingdom was a secret reserved to Himself, but afterwards He revealed these times and seasons to Jesus, and Jesus made them known by an angel to John in Patmos, who wrote the visions in which "the times" were revealed, so that the servants of God might know the events that were to transpire upon the earth. This fact is made known in Rev. i. 1, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, WHICH GOD GAVE UNTO HIM, to shew unto His Servants things which must shortly come to pass." You will ask a Trinitarian in vain for an explanation of that passage. If Jesus were God he would have perfect knowledge. The mere veil of flesh when He was upon earth would not have concealed the knowledge of the Deity enshrined within. He would have been able to scan all the pages of the unopened future, and no day or hour would have been unknown. There would have been no limit to his knowledge, but all things would have been naked and open to his eye. But we find there were events unknown to Him, and that subsequently *God revealed them to Him* that He might make them known to others. How fatal is this to "orthodoxy." How inconsistent with that belief for "God the Father" to reveal to "God the Son" what, *if he were God*, he must have known already. Thus are the upholders of this doctrine involved in endless perplexities which it is utterly impossible to satisfactorily solve.

The death of Jesus is another difficulty which cannot be met fairly by the believer in the "Godhead of Christ." There is an old Wesleyan hymn I remember which declares that

"The immortal God hath died for me."

It is both absurd and untrue. How can that which is immortal die? The very meaning of the word "immortal" is of course directly opposed to that statement. Surely the height of absurdity and contradiction is reached when it is asserted that "deathless" beings die, that "immortal" beings are "mortal." Besides, consider—the death of God! "The immortal, eternal, only wise God"—DEAD! And again we ask how many Gods are there? "One," says Paul. And that one dead? No! no! God cannot die. But Jesus died. Jesus was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. His nature was like ours, and He died as really and actually as does every descendent of Adam, but because of His perfect obedience and sinlessness of life, *God*

raised Him from the dead, to die no more (Rom. vi. 9-10). Throughout the New Testament you will always find His resurrection, His redemption from death ascribed to the power of God, even the Father. "He (Jesus) asked life of Thee (God), and Thou gavest ~~to~~ Him, even length of days for ever and ever" (Ps. xxi. 4) "Who (*i.e.*, Jesus) in the days of His flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears *unto Him that was able to save him from death*, and having been heard for His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect (in nature by God), He became unto all them that obey Him the author (or cause, or medium) of eternal salvation" (Heb. v. 7-9.)

Having by his perfect life and obedient death pleased his Father, we thus see how it came to pass that his life was restored and immortal life conferred upon him, and behold the reason of his glorious exaltation, and we learn further from the 1st verse of the 1st chapter of Hebrews, that God hath appointed him "heir of all things." This is another truth which clashes completely with the popular conception of Christ. He is looked upon as the Creator of all things, as the absolute controller and possessor of all, yea this very verse in Hebrews is quoted to prove it, for does it not say, we are asked, that God made the worlds *by him*? Well, if God had made the material worlds by him, it would not prove that *he* was God also, for the Almighty can use any agent through whom he may manifest his power. But such an interpretation makes the different clauses of the verse clash with each other, for if he were indeed the absolute creator of all, how very singular it would be to read of him being "appointed heir of all things" by God!—One God appointing another heir to that which is his own! And yet they are not two either, but one! So that it comes to this mysterious idea that God appoints *himself* the heir! Truly it is very bewildering. An "heir," too, we remind you, is not a possessor, but one who has the prospect of possessing an inheritance in the future. So Christ is an heir. He is "heir of the world." The future possessor of all things. He will come back to the earth to claim his own by and by, and he will force every earthly potentate to vacate his throne and yield up his sceptre to him, and he will reign the universal king of men. For

this great future work of Christ the ages that have passed away have been preparatory. They pointed forward to the age of glory to come, and were arranged with a view to it. This is what is affirmed by the passage in the 1st chapter of Hebrews. The rendering in the authorised version of the last clause in verse 2 is an unfortunate one, and does not convey the correct idea. It is not a question of creating the material worlds by Christ to which reference is made by the writer. The revised version makes the matter a little clearer if we consult the margin. For the word "worlds" they have substituted the correct word "ages," and for the word "by" they have substituted the word "through." The sense of the whole passage is that "God . . . hath spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom (or, for whom, or, on account of whom) also he made (or constituted) the ages"—that is the idea. Everything in the past led up to Christ. The same idea occurs in Eph. iii. 8-11. The Apostle tells us that the grace of God was given to him that "he should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship (or dispensation—revised version) of the mystery which, from the beginning of the world ^{ay}, as the revised version reads, "which from all ages") hath been hid in God, who created all things"—not "by Jesus Christ" as the text reads, those words are spurious, and are omitted from the revised version—"God who created all things; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God. According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." The last verse we have quoted is also an unfortunate rendering of the original. You will find by referring to the margin of the revised version that the revisers have given as the correct translation of the passage, according to the "purpose of the ages." I don't know why it was not put into the text. It is the correct idea. The Greek words rendering ^{es} "eternal" means "of the ages," and the word "purpose" denotes a "plan" or "arrangement." It should, therefore, read "plan" or "purpose" or "arrangement of the ages," and the whole sentence should read "according to the purpose of the ages which he made for Christ Jesus our Lord." We thus see that God had a plan before him which, in all the ages past, he has been working out according

to the counsel of his own will, and that those ages were all arranged with a view to Christ. The promises made to the Fathers related to him in the Abrahamic age. The types and shadows of the Mosaic economy found in him their fulfilment. The prophetic age pointed forward to him—for “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy”—and the prophets testified both of the sufferings of Christ and of the glory that should follow.

All these past ages pointed forward to one that is yet to come, an age of which Christ will be the acknowledged head of all mankind. The present is the age of Gentile power, and running along parallel with that we might say is also the age of the Church, but these are to be followed by the Millennial age. God's purpose, though ripening fast, is not completed yet. There is a good time coming—a time of unspeakable gladness and unutterable glory. It does not enter into our purpose to speak now of this, but all present evil is to be banished in due time. The world has wandered from God, but it is to be redeemed and brought back to him. Christ is the means by which this great redeeming work is to be accomplished. He is the outflow of God's exceeding love to the human race. He is the medium through whom God will reconcile the world to himself. If the first Adam had not sinned the second Adam would not have been needed to put it (sin) away. If death had never entered the world, its antithesis—resurrection, would have been unnecessary. But sin came. Christ is “the Lamb of God” to bear it away. He was redeemed from death himself by the power of the Father, and made available as a name of righteousness for all who will unite themselves to him. God exalted him, as we have seen, to his own right hand, and has conferred upon him “all power in heaven and in earth.” (Matt. xxviii. 18.) By-and-by he will send him back to earth.

“To reign for God and dwell with men.”

He will come to complete His redeeming work. He will raise from the dead, and confer endless life upon His brethren. He will subdue all enemies to His sceptre. He will destroy all evil, and uproot every curse which blights the hearts and homes of men, from the earth. He will bring all things into complete subjection to the Father, but the power by which it will be accomplished will all be of God. And when all things are thus subdued, and every evil is banished, and death itself

—the last enemy to be overcome—is destroyed—“*then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.*” This teaching we know is perfectly inconsistent with Trinitarianism, but so much the worse for that doctrine. The teaching is that of Paul, and we assert that it is perfectly irreconcilable with that belief. An impartial study of I. Cor. xv. 24-28 is sufficient in itself to give the death-blow to the doctrine of the co-equality of Christ with God. “Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father”—(here again it is clearly declared who God is—“**EVEN THE FATHER**”); “when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For *He* (*i.e.*, God) hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under him, *it is manifest that HE IS EXCEPTED WHICH DID PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIM.* And when all things shall be subdued unto him, **THEN SHALL THE SON ALSO HIMSELF BE SUBJECT UNTO HIM, that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL.**” It is an incontrovertible fact that Paul was not a Trinitarian. Christ works by the power of God; rules by the power of God; subdues all things by the power of God; and when His work is done He submits all to the Highest—to Him who is God over all. What confusion, what perplexity, what absurdity is introduced into this beautiful passage by theologians! How can Christ if He be God become subject to God? How can it be right of Paul to describe the work as being done by God through the Son if the latter is all-powerful and equal with the Father? Oh! we prefer Paul to Athanasius, and Peter to the Pope. There is but one God, the Holy ONE of Israel. We worship Him through the Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot consent to give His glory to another. We believe in the Christ of the New Testament, but not in the Christ of the sects. To us, as to the Apostles, from whom we quote the words again, “There is ONE GOD and one mediator *between God and men*—**THE MAN CHRIST JESUS,**” and to this One God we join with the angels of heaven in ascribing “Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, for ever and ever. Amen.” (Rev. vii. 11-12.) ,

6.6

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THE STRUGGLE FOR ETERNAL LIFE;
 OR
 THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF THE "SURVIVAL OF
 THE FITTEST."

If at any time you are able to visit the Natural History Museum, South Kensington, London, and pass through the great hall connected with that building, you will find a statue fashioned in the form of the late Professor Darwin, the eminent naturalist, whose dust is buried in Westminster Abbey, where only the great and wise and noble of the land can find a final resting place. This statue has been erected by contributions from nearly all parts of the civilized world. It was unveiled some considerable time since* by Professor Huxley—since passed away—at that time the president of the Royal Society, in the presence of a "distinguished company," including the Prince of Wales, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and a whole host of men of so-called "light and leading." The name of this man is indissolubly connected with the theories which he propounded. Darwinism is now a creed with many men of science; though there are, one might almost say, infinite variations in the beliefs of those who proclaim themselves the disciples of this man, an illustration in the mental world of that which he endeavoured so laboriously to demonstrate in the physical. The fact is that scientific thought is an everchanging current. The greatest men existing, the most learned *savants* of this and other lands differ exceedingly in the theories they propound. There is much uncertainty upon most scientific subjects. One eminent man of "acknowledged authority" writes a work to demonstrate a certain theory, and to show by "unanswerable" arguments that it is true and beyond the shadow of a doubt, and another one equally eminent in the same profession writes another and shows that there is not the slightest ground for the conclusions of his learned friend, that his "unanswerable" arguments are altogether based upon false premises, and that they are not worth a moment's consideration. These variations among the professedly wise of this world are extraordinary, astounding, and often most absurd. It is so in nearly every branch of study. We could illustrate it abundantly and most amusingly. In astronomy, in geology, in physics, in anthropology, in all these branches of science the same diversity exists in the minds of the learned. The speculations and theories and philosophies of one century are the laughing-stock of the next. There is an endless dance after truth, and on many topics it seems to baffle the search, and to hide itself from those who seek. The same diversity exists greatly in those particular branches of study with which the name of Darwin is

inseparably connected. The Bible account of the creation of all things, of the appearance of man upon the earth, and of his distinct creation as recorded in Genesis is rejected by the learned, and they tell us that there has been a gradual evolution of all things, in the vegetable and in the animal world, brought about by purely natural means; that one form of life has evolved from another, higher forms from lower, until the present state of perfection has been reached. The various changes in the animal world have been brought about by "fortuitous circumstances," which are purely imaginative, for no such changes are ever observed now, and they tell us that there has been a process of "natural selection" and a "struggle for existence" in which only the fittest forms of life have survived, while others have been exterminated because they have not been adapted to their surroundings, or because they have not been able to cope with the superior craft, cunning, and strength of those which have survived.

Darwin himself never denied the existence of the Creator, for when he first propounded his theory of creation, he taught that all animals were descended at most from four or five progenitors, and that analogy led him to infer that all organic beings which have ever existed, were descended "from one primordial form, into which life was first breathed by the Creator." But many of his most eminent followers deny this theory, and their efforts are mainly directed to shut God out of the universe altogether. They tell you, in the language of Dr. Louis Büchner, an eminent German naturalist, that all the facts of the case in relation to the existence and development of the various forms of life in various ages "are perfectly irreconcilable with the idea of a personal almighty creative power;"* and so they endeavour to account for the existence of all things on grounds which exclude the Almighty from His own domain.

It has been said of some of his extreme followers that "to such violent ends did they force his theory, that the master was sometimes constrained to doubt whether, after all, he was himself quite a Darwinian." And in reference to the things he taught, the *Standard* newspaper—commenting in a leading article on the circumstance of the unveiling of his statue—said the "main truths" of Darwinianism "are generally accepted, but only very rash, very ignorant, or very young men will venture on asserting that its doctrines will a century or fewer years hence be what they are at present. 'Science,' to use the words of Professor Huxley, 'commits suicide when it adopts a creed.' Already, indeed, the theory is becoming the battle ground of rival schools of Darwinians, and is found to be so elastic that the holders of almost any doctrine except that of direct creation may range themselves amongst its adherents. The ranks, both of the Evolutionists and of the Darwinians, embrace believers in monoism and dualism, materialism and idealism, in the eternity of creation and in the finite origination of the world, in atheism, in primordial creation, in 'creative causation,' in the eternity of matter and the 'finite origination of matter,' in the derivation of man and in the separate creation of man."†

*See *The Bible True*, p. 21. †*The Standard*, Wednesday, June 10th, 1885.

Thus among the learned scientists of the present day there is, as you perceive, little unity of thought, but they are altogether at loggerheads, as to whether God created all things, or whether the universe, so to speak, created itself, as to whether life is the result of spontaneous generation—of which no proof can be produced—or whether all living organisms have evolved from “one primordial form” or from a few progenitors originally created by God, or from the special creation of the “germs” of each species as a recently-published work on “Scientific Theology” endeavoured to set forth. Monstrous demands are made by all these systems of thought, if such we can call them, on the credulity of mankind; you are asked to set aside the miracle of direct creation, for the miracle of the evolution of life and sensitiveness and intelligence from matter without the aid of intelligence and almightiness to cause the evolution, and you are further asked by some to believe that the material world has all, in the ages that are past, been evolved and fashioned and put into the marvellous order in which it now exists by certain forces and laws behind which there is no all-wise and eternal God!

When we read some of the far-reaching arguments of the believers in natural selection and evolution, and know how greedily they are accepted by those who wish to disprove the Scriptures, we are assured that it affords ample proof of the truthfulness of a remark of Hugh Miller, “Never yet,” said he, “was there a fancy so wild and extravagant but there have been men bold enough to dignify it with the name of philosophy, and ingenious enough to find reasons for the propriety of the name!”* Take one of Darwin’s illustrations of the theory of natural selection, published in the 1st edition of “Origin of Species,” (pp. 183-6), an illustration that perhaps he was subsequently ashamed of, for his deductions drawn from the circumstances were “quietly excluded, without a word of apology or explanation, in all future editions after the first.” How does he account for the enormous head of the whale tribe? He says, “I will give two or three instances of diversified and of changed habits in the individuals of the same species. Where either case occurs it would be easy for natural selection to fit the animal, by some modification of its structure, for its changed habits, or exclusively for one of its several different habits. . . . In North America the black bear was seen by Hearne swimming for hours with widely open mouth; thus catching, almost like a whale, insects in the water. I see no difficulty in a race of bears being rendered by natural selection more and more aquatic in their structure and habits, with larger and larger mouths, till a creature was produced as monstrous as a whale.” What think you of that for science? A man sees a black bear swimming with open mouth for hours, and Darwin, the philosopher, sees no difficulty why, in this manner, a race of bears should not be gradually changed in habit and structure, till they turn into whales! “It would be easy,” says he, “for natural selection to bring about such a change!” What a theory—“absurd in the highest degree” as one has

*The Old Red Sandstone, chap. iii.

declared it—"to think that a bear 'lost at sea' could become by natural selection in the course of time—say 10,000,000 years—a very rudimentary whale! We can hardly wonder that humour has been brought into play when such theories are advanced, and that some have caused a smile by writing in illustration of such marvellous transformations:—

"A deer with a neck that is larger by half
Than the rest of his family's—try not to laugh—
By stretching and stretching becomes a giraffe!"

And again:—

"A very tall pig with a very long nose
Sends forth a proboscis quite down to his toes,
And then by the name of an elephant goes."

Now while some of the scientists teach and believe in the separate creation of man, this theory sets forth that he has developed or evolved from the monkey, though even among those who teach this there are diversified views, some contending that he has descended from one kind, and others from three kinds of apes. The objections to this theory are enormous. They were well put, by Mr. Crawford, some years back, at the meeting of the British Association in Nottingham. This gentleman was the President of the Theological Society:—"He could not," he said, "believe one word of Darwin's theory; which he regretted much, as it was believed in by so many men of eminence. It was a surprising thing to him that men of talent should nail themselves to such a creed. It was said man was derived from a monkey. But he wished to ask, from what monkey? There were 200 or 300 kinds of monkeys, and the biggest of them all, viz., the gorilla, was the biggest brute. Then there were monkeys with tails, and monkeys without tails, but curiously enough, those which had no tails, and were consequently most like men, were the stupidest of all!"

Now we have been unable to discover in the Bible any support for this evolution theory. If it be contained in the first chapter of Genesis as some contend, it is most obscure, and certainly it has not the slightest application to man, who was a distinct creation from the dust of the ground, made in the image and likeness of God, and animated by his all-pervading spirit. In the 5th verse of the 2nd chapter of Genesis it is declared of "every plant of the field" that they were created "before they were placed in the earth," and of "every herb of the field" that they were formed "before they grew;" and that lends but little support to the theory propounded at the present time.

That there is a struggle for existence, and, in a certain sense, a survival of the fittest, we readily admit. It is so in the brute creation; it is so with man. The weak get pushed to the wall; the cute and the cunning and crafty often outdo their fellows; the powerful conquer the weak; whole races of men get exterminated by the superior abilities and greater powers and enlarged capabilities of more enlightened if no less scrupulous men. This sort of thing has been going on for ages, and still goes on. It is the mere animal instinct to push on and succeed, no matter who may fall. The fittest in this physical and mental

struggle often survive and succeed. It is an endless struggle for life, but it is not a struggle for endless life. It all terminates by and by. The grave bounds and ends it all. It is not of this struggle that we are going to talk about further to-night. The former remarks have been suggested by the title, which itself was suggested by the use of similar words in the scientific world. There is no doctrine of evolution on what are called natural and scientific grounds which changes man into a higher being than what he now is. No higher race of beings have evolved, or, by any process of natural selection developed from mortal man. He is what he was thousands of years ago, and if no other law than what is called natural law—the ordinary law of nature—be brought into play, he will remain the same. The endless struggle for life will not keep him out of the grave. All the science of the schools leaves a man there. It is very cheerless. There is nothing bright and gladsome about it. It tells us nothing of a future. It altogether destroys the hope in the "orthodox" mind that within all men there dwells a soul which survives bodily death, and which, when that period arrives wings its flight to another sphere. Science is very pitiless to this popular belief. It demonstrates the fact that life depends, both in man and beast, not on the possession of an indwelling soul, but upon the power to breathe an all-pervading breath of life, from which, if either are cut off, they die and return to dust. In this they have facts to deal with. It is a position which can be demonstrated, and in this we can join hands with the enquirers into Nature's laws, for here they are in harmony with that Book to which—not blindly—we have pinned our faith, and which declares, in the third chapter of Ecclesiastes, at the 19th and 20th verses, that "That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." That is the teaching of both science and the Bible. Man is of the dust. He was fashioned from it in the first instance, and through sin he was sentenced to return to it at the last. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." This death is universal: it has passed upon all men. There are no exceptions. In this at least there is one law for the rich and for the poor: the grave hides them all at last. Death is a relentless foe; it pursues man with steady and unfaltering step until at last it grips him with a power from which he struggles in vain to be free. There is no remedy on earth for this calamity. There is no elixir of life. "In Adam all die." The multitudes of men and women around us are marching to the grave; a funeral procession is what we behold. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

Now we look in vain to men of science for a knowledge of the means to escape from the grave. They know nothing of any ~~gress~~ therefrom. They are not cognisant of any law by which the portals of the ~~Truth~~ ^{grave} may be opened, and a dead man caused to live. They look sceptically upon any suggestion as to the possibility of such an occurrence. It has not, they say, "come within the range of their experience," and therefore they either doubt or deny the possibility of its

accomplishment. But a great many things have not come within the range of the experience of modern scientists which are nevertheless infallibly true. Suppose the resurrection of a dead man has come within the range of some other man's experience ; suppose we have the unimpeachable testimony of not one man only, but a number of men, to a fact of this description ; suppose they have stood by the grave-side and seen a man about whose death there could be no mistake, called upon to come forth, and immediately after they saw him appear ! Suppose again, they saw on another occasion a funeral procession wending its way to the burial ground suddenly called upon to stay in its course, and they heard a voice addressed to the corpse being conveyed to its resting-place bidding him arise, and at once the one addressed sat up and returned to his home alive ! Suppose again, to take another case, that a number of men are for several years associated together in a particular enterprise, having constant intercourse and fellowship with each other, on the most intimate terms, hardly ever separated, but living together as one family. By-and-by the leader of the band through special circumstances is arrested by the authorities and charged with certain political and religious offences, upon which charges he is condemned to die. Suppose further, that the sentence is carried out, and according to the mode of execution practised in the country to which they belong their leader is put to death, and they are all filled with a terrible fear lest a like fate should overtake them. Their dead leader is taken from the place of execution and laid in the tomb, and every precaution is taken that his dead body shall not be stolen by his old associates. Suppose that in the lapse of a few days this same man reappears upon the scene, shows himself to his former companions, who cannot possibly be deceived as to his identity, gives them many proofs of the reality of his existence during a period of forty days ; talks with them, eats with them, drinks with them, walks with them ; suppose he is seen not by one only, or a dozen, but by upwards of five hundred who know him before he was put to death ; suppose the same men who were filled with such a terrible fear when he was put to death suddenly grow exceeding bold in the declaration that he lives again, that he has been raised from the dead, and are willing to sacrifice their lives in defence of their testimony—should we not say that the evidence of such men was worth credence ? that their testimony was reliable ? that such a fact had come within the range of human experience ?—especially if we knew that all the men who so spake were honest, truthful, God-fearing men. Undoubtedly we should. Well, now, this is what we get in the Bible. Christ has been raised from the dead : the writers of the New Testament are the witnesses. It does not, of course, enter into our subject to-night to go into the authenticity of their writings—that we assume on good evidence. To-night we have to deal with the fact and with its consequences to others, and with what it may mean to us. It is possible for dead men to live again—Lazarus did ; the young man—the only son of his mother, who was a widow—was restored to life ; so were others ; so was Christ—He lives to die no more, "Death hath no more dominion over him" (Rom. vi. 9). But we are taught to view Jesus in a relative position. He was raised

from the dead for a purpose ; He is the centre of a system which revolves round Him ; He is the "first-begotten from the dead" to die no more, but others are to be begotten after the same pattern ; He is the "first-fruits" from the grave, but a great harvest is to follow. Death is in the world through sin, and the serpent's trail is visible all through the ages that are past, but that trail-mark is to be obliterated in the future from the universe. The world, which has been blighted by sin, and saddened by pain, and cursed by death, is to undergo a new birth, is to have its evils removed, and its curse destroyed—for the sting of death will one day be extracted, and upon this earth shall never more be witnessed scenes of suffering and sorrow and anguish, and the funeral march will be unknown. This is the purpose of God revealed in the Bible, to immortalise certain ones of the human race—on his own conditions. He has made a commencement with Christ : *He* liveth, though once he was dead, and *He* is "fashioned after the power of an endless life" (Heb. vii. 16). By his resurrection "life and incorruptibility have been brought to light" (II. Tim. i. 10). The way has been, not shadowed forth, but clearly made known how mortal men may live for ever, and how corruptible beings may put on incorruptibility. It will be well, just here, to make our position quite clear, to state exactly what the Bible states upon the subject : "Eternal life is the gift of God." Paul states that fact in the sixth chapter of Romans and the 23rd verse, and in a great many other places besides. Jesus reveals the same truth over and over again ; Peter and James and John and Jude assert the same great truth. By "life" is meant not mere happiness, not a spiritual condition of the mind—but existence, a state the opposite of death ; and by "eternal life" is meant a life in the age to come, which it is not difficult to prove will be a perpetual existence, a life that lasts for ever, that knows no end, that is permanent—a deathless existence. That this is the meaning of the phrase innumerable Scriptures declare. The words have no other legitimate meaning. It is only a false theology which has led men to spiritualise such expressions, and to say that such expressions as perish, destruction, death, and life are not to be taken literally, but are to be understood in a mystic sense. The popular view is that a man is naturally immortal or deathless, and that therefore a promise of eternal life means, not literal life, because the man already possesses that, but a deliverance from spiritual death and perpetual misery hereafter, and the conferring upon him of supreme happiness when he dies. This is a theory, however, based upon a fable ; based upon a false conception of human nature ; based upon the heathen speculation of the immortality of the soul—an idea foreign altogether from the Scriptures, where it is never once taught, but where its falsity is continually exposed. No ! Man is mortal ! Man is a perishing being. Man does not naturally live for ever. That is an attribute of God alone : "God only hath immortality," says Paul (I. Tim. vi. 16). He alone can "lift up his hand to heaven and say, I live for ever." But man fades as a leaf ! He is but as the grass of the field, and the best thing about him as the flower of the grass, both of which wither, and fade away, and perish. The plan of Jehovah is to save men from this dying, perishing condition. His benevolence

has devised a scheme, perfected through Christ, to rescue men from the grave. Hence we read in the 16th verse of the 3rd chapter of John, that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish [as they otherwise will] but have everlasting life." That it is a literal life meant is plain from the fact that it is connected—in the sixth chapter of John—with resurrection. In the 39th and 40th verses of that chapter we read, "This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Again, further on in the chapter, commencing at verse 47, Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me [no one else] hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." On another occasion, when answering a question of the Sadducees concerning the resurrection, he made it quite plain that literal life was meant; yea, the very nature of the discussion—the resurrection of the dead—precluded any other interpretation. "They which shall be accounted worthy," said he, "to obtain that age and the resurrection from the dead"—you see all men won't be accounted worthy of this high privilege and honour, but those who are, "cannot die any more," they died once, really and truly enough: but a change of nature having been wrought, they "can die no more: for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke xx. 35, 36).

We will take it for granted that our contention is now made plain, viz., that the life promised by God, through Christ, in the Scriptures, is a literal life of an enduring kind, a life that no disease can destroy, and no power take away, conferred upon, or rather promised to, those who are naturally mortal, and destined in the ordinary course of nature to return to the dust of the ground, where, if the arm of the Almighty be not stretched out to save them, they must abide for ever. It would be possible at very great length to prove this contention and to show that the ordinary mode of interpreting these words is fallacious and misleading, and without Scriptural warrant; but to-night we will not pursue the argument further, but leave what has already been advanced to appeal to your judgment and consideration, assured that if you will give to the matter that earnest study which so important a subject deserves, you will come to the same conclusions as those at which we have arrived. A very important enquiry is that which must next engage our attention, that is, upon *whom* will this endless life be conferred, *why* will it be conferred upon them, and *how* will they be made to realise so great a boon? Our subject states that there is a "Bible doctrine of the Survival of the Fittest." This is true. Universalism is a fable. The doctrine that all men will finally be saved is utterly false. It has no foundation

whatever in the Word of God. It is based upon false premises, and supported by wrong inferences, and sustained by special pleading, all of which can be easily detected by the man truly instructed in divine things. There is no doctrine of universal salvation in the Bible. Yea the way to life is narrow, **NARROW**, much narrower than many people think, "and few there be that find it." Christ said so, and He ought to know. He is a better authority to go to than all the 19th century divines whom you may consult, and as I have said, He declared the way of life to be narrow, but the way of destruction exceeding broad (Matt. vii. 13, 14). In the Struggle for Eternal Life the Fittest only will survive. But it will be a survival based—not on physical strength, or craft, or cunning—but upon *character*. Those only who are able to adapt themselves to divine circumstances will be the favoured of heaven. There will be a divine selection for the life to come of such as have sought, and known, and done God's will. All others will fall short of the favour of God. They will not be required. "Thou puttest aside," says the Psalmist, "all the wicked of the earth like dross" (Ps. cxix. 119). The good metal is by certain processes evolved from the ore, the dross is put aside, cast away, is of no use.

This process, or doctrine of the Survival of the Fittest, has been exemplified many times in the temporal judgments which God has sent upon mankind. We read of the extreme wickedness which characterised the period before the flood. The contemporaries of Noah were steeped to the lips in wickedness. "The wickedness of man was great in the earth," yea, "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." "The earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (Gen. vi. 5, 11). The Almighty determined to put out of existence such a mass of animated corruption. Their life was only an abomination, therefore he resolved to put them aside like dross. But in viewing the bulk His eye fell upon Noah, of whom it is testified that "he found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. vi. 8). What was the reason? Because "Noah was a just man, and perfect (or upright) in his generations, and Noah walked with God." (Gen. vi. 9). An exception was therefore made in his case. He was selected to carry out the purpose of God. He built the ark. He was a man of faith. He reverently obeyed the Most High. All that God commanded him he carried out. By and by the flood came, previous to which God shut him and his family in the ark which he had made. The mass of corruption was swept away, but Noah was safe. God took care of him. He alone was righteous. It was a case of the Survival of the Fittest. We have another illustration of the same truth in the case of Lot. "The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah was great, and their sin was very grievous," and because of that the Lord said, speaking after the manner of men, "I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, and if not, said he, I will know" (Gen. xviii. 20, 21). You remember how Abraham pleaded with the Deity on that occasion, and said, "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" It was against Jehovah's purpose to do this, for "the Judge of all the earth doeth right." Yea, he would even spare the whole place if fifty, or

forty, or thirty, or twenty, or even ten righteous persons could be found therein. They were not to be found. But the one righteous man who dwelt therein, "just Lot," whose ears were "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked" (II. Pet. ii. 7, 8), with his family were spared. They had the opportunity of escape afforded them. They were urged to avail themselves of it, and they did so, with the exception of one, who disobeyed the word of the Lord, and was overtaken in the judgment that overthrew the cities of the plain. This is an illustration of the Bible doctrine of the Survival of the Fittest, and of the fewness of those who will ultimately be saved.

Another illustration of the same truth is to be found in the 33rd chapter of the prophecies of Isaiah. This is a chapter which, without doubt, refers to the invasion of Palestine by the Assyrians, and to the desolations that would result therefrom. The prophet represents the alarm that would overtake a certain portion of the inhabitants when these judgments should come. "The sinners in Zion are afraid," says he at verse 14; "fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell in (or more correctly, who among us can abide) the devouring fire? Who among us can abide perpetual burnings." It is a passage sometimes quoted to prove the terrible doctrine of endless torment; but to that it has no relation whatever. It refers to judgments coming upon the nations upon the earth. Fire, war, the devastation of their cities, and these words "represent the outcries of terrified sinners in Jerusalem, who rightly feared that the perpetual conflagrations of war, the devastations of fire and sword caused by the invader would end in their destruction, for who, they ask, can dwell in these perpetual burnings?" What is the divine answer? Why, that only the Fittest will survive. That all others will be swept away, shall be, as previous verses declare, devoured as chaff and stubble, that they should be as the burnings of lime; as thorns cut up they should be burned in the fire (verses 10-12). But who should abide notwithstanding these perpetual burnings? Why, as the 15th verse declares, "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." It will be seen from such a description that these were the fittest from a moral and a spiritual standpoint to survive, and over them was the protection of Jehovah to be cast.

Now the principle upon which men will attain to the age to come and be permitted to share the life of God is the same. It is based upon character. It was so in the first place with Christ. Though Son of God as well as son of man, He was made perfect through suffering. He was subject to temptation and trial even as we are, but He overcame. In Him was no sin. No guile was found in His mouth. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled. He was separate from sinners. He carried out all His Father's will, though that will involved the shame and the agony of the cross. He was obedient unto death, even to such a death as that. Ah! but it was a trial hard to bear. Think of the scorn and derision which He

endured ! Think of the scourging and the mockery, and the brutal jeers ! Remember that they spat upon His noble form ! Remember that they pierced His brow with thorns, and His hands with nails ! Remember the bitterness of that cup which He drained to the dregs ! Behold the man outstretched upon the cross, forsaken of that Spirit which had dwelt upon and within Him during His previous work ; listen to Him as, "left to the utter helplessness of His own humanity, He felt the anguish of the hour, and cried out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?'" (Matt. xxvii. 46). Behold Him further as strength fails, and His head droops, and His eyes glaze with the film of death. See ! there is one final effort, He utters a loud and piercing cry, and His head is bowed in death. But God left Him not in the grave. Because of His righteous character, because of His complete obedience to the divine behests, because He laid down His life at His Father's bidding, "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Phil. ii. 9). He brought Him forth from Joseph's tomb ; He changed the human nature to the divine ; He made Him the medium of salvation for men ; He is the future King of all mankind, and He is the medium to put away all evil, and finally reconcile all things to God.

Now, my friends, if ever you and I are to attain to the glory and perfection of a life like Christ's it must be on the same principle of obedience to the will of God. And obedience to His will necessitates, of course, a knowledge of the same. Those who remain in ignorance of the truth must not expect to be promoted to the glory of the age to come. If they do, it is a vain expectation. Knowledge is the basis of faith and obedience, and this knowledge must be of a more comprehensive kind than that generally supposed. There must be a realization of the purpose of God and an appreciation and acceptance of the same. "This is life eternal," said Jesus, on one occasion. Ah ! what ? Surely, now, we can get at what is required. What does it depend upon ! Well, turn to His own words in the third verse of the seventeenth chapter of John : "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." From this it is necessary, you will perceive, to have a proper apprehension of God, "the only true God," and of the anointed Jesus, and of their requirements. This will involve a remodelling of the whole of your religious belief, that is, if you have been trained in what is called the "orthodox" faith. Many previous misconceptions must be abandoned. You will realize upon an understanding of the truth that there is but *one* true God, as Jesus declared, and not *three*. The doctrine of the Trinity, with its mystifications and obfuscations, will have to be abandoned when the true light shines, and Jesus, you will perceive, is the Son of God and not one of an inscrutable and incomprehensible three. To "know" Jesus in the scriptural and comprehensive sense involves an understanding of His nature, of the work He came into the world to perform, and of the manner that work relates to what He has yet to do. You will then understand why He was born of a woman, a daughter of David, of the tribe of Judah, of the seed of Abraham. You will understand why He was a sharer of our condemned nature, why He was put to death for sin and raised

again from the dead. It does not enter into the purpose of the address to-night to fully expound all these things, but simply to indicate them as necessary to be understood in order to obtain eternal life. It is further necessary to know for what purpose Jesus was anointed, for that is the meaning of the word Christ. It is not an ordinary surname, as many suppose it to be, but an official title, announcing a fact, the fact that He was anointed of God for a special purpose of His own. To understand this you must of necessity have a knowledge of the Gospel, for it is the Gospel which is "the power of God unto salvation," as Paul declares (Rom. i. 16). Doubtless you will be fully prepared to admit that, but are you sure that you understand the Gospel preached by Christ and His Apostles, the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God? The fact that Christ is coming again to overthrow all the dominions of earthly monarchs, and to establish a glorious kingdom upon the ruins thereof, the headquarters of which shall be at Jerusalem, but the power of which shall extend to earth's remotest bounds. This is what the Kingdom of God means, and of that Kingdom Jesus is the anointed King. The throne of David, which is an Israelitish throne, is covenanted to Him, was so covenanted ages ago, and has been confirmed by promise over and over again. "The Lord God shall give unto him," said the angel to His mother, "the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i. 32, 33). The invitation of Christ is to men and women to share the honour of joint-rulership with Him in this coming age, for which they will be qualified by a change of nature, in which "mortality will be swallowed up of life." (See Is. xxv. 8; I. Cor. xv. 51-55.)

When these matters are properly understood and believed there is an appointment of God to be observed by which the believer may become associated with Christ, and pass—prospectively—from death unto life. By nature he is under the law of sin and death. He is under condemnation. The death penalty has passed upon him. He is in Adam, and in Adam all die. He must be in Christ if he would be made alive for ever. And there is only one mode of effecting this relationship. We must "be buried with Christ by baptism unto death." He must recognize the claims of the divine law upon him, and voluntarily submit to it in symbol, he must recognize Christ as the only life-giver,—“the Resurrection and the Life”—and seek an union with Him in this appointed manner, dying symbolically and rising from the dead in a figure, "For if we have been planted together (says Paul) in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." (Rom. vi. 3-5). This ordinance is not understood nor properly carried out by the sects around us. A few drops of water sprinkled upon the brow is not the baptism of the Bible. It is so much ridiculous nonsense. It is one of the pranks that theologians play with the commandments of God. It does no good. It does inconceivable harm. It is a falsehood to assert that either man, woman, or infant is "born again and made an heir of everlasting salvation" by so foolish and unscriptural a ceremony, and it is a manifestation of ignorance and credulity on the part of those who believe

the lie. The very terms of Scripture—a *burial*, a *planting*, and the word *baptize* itself, an *immersion*—falsify the clerical belief, and in the New Testament we have no account of others than believers being immersed. Now, when believers have in this manner submitted to the commandment of God and been incorporated in His family, they have fairly commenced the “struggle for eternal life.” It depends upon how they walk now whether they obtain it. It is well to remember certain sayings of Christ. “Many are called but few chosen.” “Strive (or agonize) to enter in at the straight gate: for many I say unto you will seek to enter in and shall not be able” (Luke xiii. 24). “Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out demons, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” All such passages from the lips of Christ show that effort will be required, that supineness means failure, that none but sincere, earnest men will succeed, and that many will be sadly disappointed at the last. The language of the Apostle means precisely the same. “Fight the good fight of faith” is Paul’s exhortation to Timothy (I. Tim. vi. 12), “lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called.” That means two things: that eternal life is something altogether outside a man, and that there must be an earnest effort to secure it. The same Apostle exhorts the Corinthian believers to “so run that they might obtain.” There was an awful danger of failure. “Every man,” says he, “that striveth for the mastery (in the Olympic games) is temperate in all things,” in order that he may succeed. “Now, they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an *incorruptible*. I, therefore, so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (I. Cor. ix. 24-27). That is what all must do who would succeed in this race for life. They must run, they must wrestle, they must fight, they must pray. The faith must be kept and the commands be obeyed. These are sprinkled about the pages of the Bible, that, therefore, must be read and studied. It is our chart on the sea of life, our light in the midst of surrounding darkness, telling of life in the midst of death. “The Word of Life.” Hold it fast; give heed to its counsels, for in so doing there is great reward. Just a few closing words as to when this life will be bestowed. We have it not now, as we have seen, and as experience teaches us all. The cemetery tells us this tale. The closed shutter and the tolling bell warn us, often enough, that we are mortal now—those in Christ as well as those in Adam. But those in Christ are living in hope. “In hope of the promise of *life*, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began” (Titus i. 2). They are “heirs,” as Paul wrote to Titus, ch. iii. 7, “heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” This life is not yet manifested; it is bound up with Christ who is in heaven. The Apostle John says in the third chapter of his first epistle at the 11th and 13th verses, “This is

the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his son. He that hath the son hath the life, and he that hath not the son of God hath not the life." "Ye are dead," Paul wrote to the believers in Colosse (Col. iii. 3-4), "and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Now, that's the time when this life will be bestowed. At the appearing of Christ; at His second coming—the great hope of the New Testament believers. They looked forward to no heaven-going at death, nay, nor at any other time, for they expected to live and reign with Christ upon the earth, as hosts of passages declare. Till He appears they sleep in the dust of the earth, but at that time the sleepers will awake, and come forth from their graves, and stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and receive in body according as they deserve. The righteous will "enter into life," the wicked will be destroyed for ever. The struggle for life will be over. Death will be swallowed up in victory. The fittest only will survive. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" and God. What a glorious and magnificent hope. The scientific speculators of our day talk, as we have seen and know, about higher forms of life having evolved from lower, of the development of the man from the monkey, and so on; but here we have to contemplate not an unprovable speculation, but an unimpeachable fact, more glorious than it has ever entered into the heart of the Huxleys, and Darwins, and Spencers to conceive, viz., that God, through Christ, is going to accomplish the grandest scheme of evolution by the power of His Almighty Spirit of which angels or men can speak; nothing less than the development of powerful, glorious, deathless and incorruptible beings, from these weak, frail, mortal, corruptible, dust-formed bodies; for "he shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. iii. 21). Truly this is the most marvellous physiological transformation of which the world has ever heard, but this is the life and the salvation of which the Bible speaks, and which formed the hope and desire of holy men in the days gone by. In due time it will be made manifest, the "Lord of Life" will come from the heavens, and around Him He will gather, as His associates in the future, the pure and the noble, and the righteous, of every age, in the aggregate a great multitude which no man can number, an exalted company, a blessed throng, a glorious assemblage, the worthy ones of the centuries past, the strugglers for eternal life, who alone are counted worthy to survive for the ages and ages to come.

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THE JUBILEE YEAR.

THE present year is what is called the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty, Queen Victoria. On the 22nd of June, 1837, owing to the death of William IV., she was proclaimed Queen of England, hence in a little while she will have reigned for the long, the comparatively long, period of sixty years. It is not a long period in itself—indeed it is but a mere speck of time—when we think of the ages which have rolled away in their unceasing flight, or when we think of that Being who “from everlasting to everlasting” changes not, to whom the flight of time makes no difference, and with whom “a thousand years are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night” (Ps. xc. 2, 4); but it is a long period in one single human life which hangs upon such a slender thread, the tenure of which is so insecure, and to which the large majority never attain. “Threescore years and ten” is a boundary beyond which few indeed pass, and, when they do, how often it is but to realize the truthfulness of the Psalmist’s words and find that the strength which enables them to linger on to fourscore years is but “labour and sorrow,” which is soon cut down and they are gone (Ps. xc. 10). It is a very long period, too, in the comparative sense, for an earthly sovereign to reign. How few, it is surprising how very few, among all the sovereigns who have ever reigned over men have wielded the sceptre for so long a time! Their little lives have soon passed away. Some of them have caused a great stir in the world for a brief period. At a great cost of human life they have enlarged the boundaries of their kingdoms, and been “a terror in the land of the living” (Ezek. xxxii. 23-27), and then have passed away from the scene of action and been hidden in the dust of the earth. Like a great stone cast into the waters they have made a great splash, have disturbed the political sea, have somewhat displaced its waters, and have then disappeared beneath the surface to rise no

more ; while the waters have gone on flowing, to use a figure of speech, as though they had never disturbed its placid surface. If we look through the list of kings mentioned in the Bible we find that among all the Kings of Judah there are only two whose reign exceeded fifty years—Uzziah (or Azariah), who reigned for fifty-two years, and the wicked, though ultimately repentant, Manasseh, whose reign lasted fifty-five years ; while amongst all the Kings of Israel there was not one who sat upon the throne for that length of time. Not one among them reigned so long as our present Queen. In the history of England the fewness of the sovereigns who have reigned so long as fifty years is almost as noticeable. Three Kings only have hitherto acquired this distinction, viz., Henry III., who reigned fifty-six years ; Edward III., who reigned fifty years ; and George III., who not only reigned the longest (over fifty-nine years), but lived longer than any other English Monarch, dying at the age of eighty-one, having previously lost his sight, and, worse than that, his reason also.

To the present occupant of the throne belongs the unique distinction, in this country, of reigning for sixty years, and we know of only three other monarchs in the whole course of human history, who have surpassed her in the length of their reigns, Rameses II., of the Sixty-ninth Dynasty of Egypt, who reigned for the long period of sixty-seven years, Shapur, of the Second Persian Dynasty, who reigned 1600 years ago, and Louis XIX., of France, who has beaten all records in this respect, having occupied the throne for the still longer period of seventy-two years. In the case of Rameses II.,—who is supposed by some to be the Pharaoh who so bitterly oppressed the Israelites, though for various reasons we doubt it, believing that Thothmes IV. was much more likely to have been the tyrant of Bible history, the King who was drowned in the Red Sea—he was associated with his father, Seti I., on the throne at the age of twelve years, or his reign would not appear so long. In the case of Louis XIV. of France, his father died when he was only five years old, and the Regency was intrusted to the hands of the queen-mother, Anne of Austria, so that he was too young to understand his position or take any active, intelligent part in the rulership of the nation. Among all the host of names that figure upon the page of history, none others, we believe, are to be found whose rule has exceeded that of our Queen, and, we sincerely hope that,—in the absence of that greater Sovereign for whom we wait and pray, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords—her life may be spared for a much longer period, for we are not likely to see one occupy her position whose life will be purer and more blameless, or who will more worthily wield the sceptre of this vast and ever increasing Empire.

These facts considered, it is easy to understand why there is very much talk about the Queen's Diamond Jubilee ; why, among her subjects, there is a general desire to commemorate the event, and to make the year a memorable one in her own life and in the history of the nation. Her reign has not been an uneventful one, but one of the most remarkable periods in English history. Her arms have been victorious—with one or two slight exceptions—in the various wars of her reign. The British flag has been planted in every quarter of the globe. British ships,

under divine providence, practically rule the waves ; and British power is everywhere respected the wide world through. The Queen herself has been faithful to the Constitution, and not pressed her own individuality against her Ministers, but has allowed them to steer the affairs of the State according to their wisdom ;—had it been otherwise, her popularity would not be so great as it is. Her dominions have been largely increased, and the wealth of the nation has been greatly added to ; while the period of her reign has been characterized by great advances in knowledge and scientific attainment, not only in England, but throughout the world. The late Poet Laureate wrote, in his Ode commemorative of the Queen's Jubilee in the year 1887, as he glanced back upon the achievements of half a century—

“ Fifty years of ever-broadening commerce !
 Fifty years of ever-brightening science !
 Fifty years of ever-widening empire ! ”

What remarkable inventions in engineering, in modes of travelling, in electrical appliances there have been ! What stupendous enterprises have been carried out by the skill and ingenuity of man ! What advances in manufacturing arts, in education, in the circulation of knowledge has the last sixty years chronicled ! It is marvellous ! Think of the railway and steamboat accommodation ! Think of the telegraph system—over-head and under water—by which every part of the world is, or may be, united with every other part ! Think of the wonderful telephone, by which you may speak to your friends many miles away ! Think of the microphone, or sound magnifier ; of the phonograph, or talking machine ; of the brilliant illumination of the electric light ! Think of the marvels of photography, and especially of the cinematograph and the recent discovery of the Rontgen rays, by which the internal organs of man are laid open and bare before the eye of science, opening up wonderful possibilities for the surgeon to ease pain and correctly diagnose the cause of suffering ! “ Miracles of science ” these things have been called ; and it would be possible to take up the whole evening—and I suppose many others besides—in describing the marvels of science which the last sixty years has witnessed. Doubtless the discoveries and accomplishments of the past sixty years will frequently be referred to during the present year as matters of which the nation and the world might well be proud.

It is natural, under these circumstances, that there should be a spreading desire to do honour to the Queen. But how will this Jubilee be kept ? What will be its chief features ? What, too, will be the motives animating the persons who take leading parts in the various celebrations that will take place during the year ? As to the latter question more than one answer can be given. Loyalty to her Majesty, and admiration for her character and life, will influence some ; a desire to benefit the less fortunate people around them will influence others in what they will propose. And here we would render full justice to, and express admiration for, the expressed wish of Her Majesty, that works of mercy, and aid to the suffering, should be the chief thoughts in the minds of her subjects. It is a decision which does great credit to the Queen, and which will result in the alleviation of much suffering and sorrow in the case of thousands of her poor subjects now, and in years to come.

But how many will there be who, in what they do, will seek their own honour and advancement and glory, and have more regard to the praise they will receive from men, and the good it will result in to themselves, than to any benefit that others will receive! What sycophancy will probably be witnessed during the year to gain the Royal favour! What a strong desire will be manifested to gain the title which it is thought will be conferred upon many! How these unworthy motives will creep into much that will be done! As to the way it will be kept, that will be varied also. There will be a great deal of feasting, and drunkenness, and merry-making, and toast-drinking, and vain talk, no doubt. There will be many works of utility started also, whatever the motives that prompt their initiation may be. Some will further educational movements; others will favour buildings for the purposes of recreation; others will raise sums of money for religious purposes; whilst others will advocate the claims of art, and will possibly decide to erect statues to commemorate the diamond jubilee of the reign of the Queen, while a vast sum of money will be raised for hospital work, a most beneficent work, to carry out the wishes expressed by the Queen.

But how will the masses of the people be affected by the Queen's jubilee? That there is a vast amount of poverty and misery in the land—notwithstanding the improvement in trade—none can deny. The state of the country is appalling—religiously, morally, socially. Notwithstanding all the advancement of the past sixty years, and the great increase of wealth, a very large portion of the nation are little the better for the change. The wealth is in few hands. The people largely live—as the old saying has it—“from hand to mouth.” The lord of the land lives in luxury and ease and splendour, for which, in many cases, he has done nothing; and the poor man lies hungry at his door, or toils the year in and the year out for the miserable pittance which keeps the life in his body,—the wonder being how the wife is able to make “both ends meet” out of the scanty wages her husband receives. All is not contentment in this year of the diamond jubilee. Alas! No; it is far from that! Is there no political restlessness? Do we never read or know of any legal and lawful injustice? Are we never aware of any land agitation in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland? Is it not of frequent recurrence? Is there no reason at the bottom of it? Is there no injustice in the present condition of the ownership of the land? Is it right that a very few men should hold nearly the whole of it, and have it settled or entailed on their heirs for ever? Why, too, this rapidly spreading socialistic movement which is causing much uneasiness in high places? Is there no sense of injustice and wrong at the back of the agitation? And is there not a great deal of reality in it? Does not the competition of the age fall heavily upon the poor, and grind many of them to the earth? Can you wonder that there is discontent when, in London, and probably in many other large cities, “women are really working for three farthings an hour,—and for twelve, fourteen, and sixteen hours a day!” This is solemn fact! The *Daily News* was sometime ago commenting upon these facts, and quoting some of the rates paid by the sewing shops. Imagine “shirts made at three farthings each, flannel drawers for Chelsea pensioners at one shilling and threepence per dozen, soldiers' leggings at

two shillings per dozen." There are tailors, too, at the East end of London, one of their correspondents stated, "making boys' trousers at two shillings and sixpence per dozen pairs!" Is it not akin to what was charged upon the rulers of the Jews by the prophet Micah? "Hear, I pray you," he said, (as recorded in the first three verses of Ch. III.), "O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel, is it not for you to know judgment? Who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones; who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones and chop them in pieces as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron." As an evidence of the poverty existing to-day we may quote a statement which appeared in print only this last week, viz., that "since the year 1889, up to the present time, the population of the casual wards in London has grown from 34,000 to 128,000, and this in addition to the enormous growth in the number sleeping in 'shelters.'" * Will the jubilee do anything for the poor and oppressed that will tend to *permanently* benefit them? I do not mean—a few wealthy persons in different places gather them together and give them a feast for one day in the year just to commemorate this special event of the Queen's long reign? But will they lighten their burdens? Will they relieve their debts? Will they ameliorate the condition, to any extent, of those around them? And we can answer the question—they will not! It is the Queen's jubilee, not the nation's. We have no national jubilee in this land. Anything of the kind is in honour of either some private or, as in the Queen's case, some public individual. It is not a permanent institution; it depends upon circumstances. When it arises—though, as we acknowledge, some works of benefit to others may be started—it is not an universal good, it is not the result of a legislative act by which great benefits are conferred upon the majority, and the poor and the down-trodden can make a new start in the race of life.

Now for a little while we are going to talk about a jubilee year which answered these requirements, and to refer to a most unique method of celebrating it, far surpassing in wisdom, and far eclipsing in utility, any scheme likely to be formulated in this nineteenth century—advanced, and civilised, and Christian as we are supposed to be—a method which was divinely originated, the particulars of which were embodied in one of the most remarkable laws ever incorporated upon the statute-book of any nation, nothing to equal it being known in the history of any other people than those to whom we are about to refer. It is the Jewish people we have in our mind, whose whole circumstances from the very

* We have said nothing in this address as to the moral condition of society; of the vice, the profanity, the utter disregard of the claims of the Almighty upon the minds and the bodies of men, existing among all classes, high and low, rich and poor; of the low habits, the drunkenness and debauchery and impurity which are rampant; but these things are known to every observant man, and a grief to every friend of God. If a French statesman could state in the French Senate only on Thursday last—amongst other alarming statements as to the morality of the nation—that "every day new agencies of an immoral character were formed, debauchery was rife, and there were more than 10,000 haunts of vice in Paris"—what might not be said of London and other large cities of this so-called Christian Empire?

commencement of their history to the present moment have been full of interest, and who are destined to exercise a still more important part than they have hitherto played in the history of the world. We depend of course largely upon the Bible for the history of this remarkable race, and that history we accept. It is not the time to go into the reasons why we accept the truth of the Bible history. We have done so before, and may do again; but it is not our subject to-night, so that incidental references only will be made to that important fact.

It is a marvellous nation; it has a marvellous history; for it is the only nation with whom God has established direct intercourse upon the face of the whole earth. "You only," Jehovah said to them on one occasion, "have I known of all the families of the earth."—(Amos iii. 2.) God's hand was in all their ways. Abraham was selected, in the first place, from all the other inhabitants of the earth,—a man doubtless of lofty intellect, and manifesting characteristics altogether pleasing to the Deity. To him was given a son by miracle, and from this one man there sprang a great nation, even as "many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable."—(Heb. xi. 12.) The details of their history we have no intention of dwelling upon to-night. It was, as we have said, marvellous, for the hand of God was visible in it; and His arm was made bare and its power wonderfully shown when they had developed into a nation and were delivered from the cruel bondage in which they were held by the Egyptians. From that country they were brought under the leadership of Moses and Aaron, to the borders of a land which had been previously chosen by Jehovah for them, and promised ages before to their ancestors as an everlasting possession. This land was very remarkable for its position, and for its fertility. It was a "land flowing with milk and honey," exceedingly fruitful, and extremely beautiful,—a land described by God Himself as "the glory of all lands;" or, in other words, the best and most fruitful under the sun.—(Ezek. xx. 6, 15.)—Into this land they were led by Joshua, the wicked Canaanites being dispossessed and judicially destroyed because of their abounding iniquity. Here they became a great people, developing into a kingdom under a king specially selected by God, and chosen because he was "a man after God's own heart." The laws which governed the nation were divine also; they were received from God by Moses at Mount Sinai through the ministration of angels (Acts vii. 53); so that with a land divinely chosen, with a constitution framed by the Divine Legislator, with a king specially selected by the direction of God, and the nation itself a chosen people—selected above all others (Deut. x. 15)—what have we but a veritable kingdom of God in the midst of the earth, separated from all other kingdoms and, when obedient to the divine law, shielded from every foe by the mantling protection of Jehovah's almighty power. "Surely," says one writer, "there never has been such a spectacle as this Israel once made. Mormonism in the midst of the United States of America does not make such a contrast as the Israelite polity in the pagan life of the world. Like a gem in the sand, or a nugget of gold in the rock, this marvellous nationality challenges attention as the wonder of the ages. However did it get

there? What produced it? Shall we ever see the like of it again?"* This question we shall answer before we conclude; but a word now about the laws of this people, which, as we have seen, were not of human origin, but were divine in their conception, and were given through the instrumentality of angels. These laws are unique; there are no human laws like them. They prove their own divinity, and indirectly the divinity of the books which contain them. They were not evolved from human brains, and are not framed from the accumulated wisdom and experience of a nation. It was a brand-new constitution given to them at the very commencement of their independent national life. Moses was not its author. If he was he would in all probability have taken the credit of it, for it would have added lasting fame to his name,—it would have marked him out as the prince of legislators for all time; but he takes no credit for it—he ascribes it all to God. It is true he was wise, "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians;" but the laws of the Egyptians were not such as we have in the Bible, and their wisdom never produced anything like them, so lofty in tone, and so fatal to the interests of the few, but careful of the interests of the many. They differ from all human laws. We have often dwelt upon the injustice and the uncertainty of human law as illustrated in our own land. How prolix, too, it is! What volumes and volumes of it there are! There is no uniformity either about its interpreters, as many, alas, know to their cost, for its doubtfulness has now become a bye-word, and men sarcastically speak of "the glorious uncertainty of the law!" How unjustly the laws often operate we know full well, made as they are by wealthy men and the representatives of class interests, who frequently use all the powers they possess to thwart beneficial legislation when it clashes with those private interests which they know too well how to defend. We are not going to analyse all the Jewish laws to-night; suffice it to say that the Ten Commandments are the basis of the whole. The commandments given on the stone tablets, written by the finger of God, are the nucleus around which the others gather, and they mean honour and glory to God and justice and duty to man. Among these laws are to be found those which refer to the year of jubilee, which were binding upon the nation—a part of their constitution—and which describe, or rather command, observances wonderfully different to anything which will be carried out in the sixtieth year of her Majesty's reign. Some doubt exists as to the actual meaning and derivation of the word "jubilee." According to some it means "a ram's horn, or a trumpet." Again, it is thought by others to mean "certain prolonged and penetrating blasts of the trumpets, understood in ancient Israel to convey a peculiar significance."—(Thus the Hebrew word, rendered "jubilee" also appears in Ex. xix. 13, and Josh. vi. 5.) Again it is thought that it is derived from the Hebrew *jubal*, which formerly signified to play upon instruments, and which was the name of one of the sons of Lamech, who is described in Gen. iv. 21 as the "father of all such as handle the harp and organ" (or pipe as the latter word means); and again others think that it is derived from the verb *hobil*: to bring or call back, to restore, to return. Certainly it was

* "The Bible Re-examined," p. 82.—J. H. Chamberlin.

connected with the sounding of trumpets, and also with calling back, restoration, and returning ; but, whatever the actual meaning of the word, we have full details as to the institution, and therefore can have no doubt as to what is meant by the jubilee itself. These details are given for the most part in the 25th chapter of the book of Leviticus. That chapter commences by telling us that the Israelites were commanded when they came into the land promised them, when they were its inheritors, that then they were to let "the land keep a sabbath unto the Lord ;" that is, they were not to till it, but let it rest, depending upon God for sustenance. This was a trial of their faith, and does not sound very much like a human command. For six years they were at liberty to sow their fields and follow agricultural pursuits, but the seventh year was "a sabbath of rest unto the land—a sabbath for the Lord," in which there was to be on sowing, or pruning, or gathering in of that which grew spontaneously ; but all this was to help the poor, the fatherless, the widow, and the stranger, (verses 2-7 ; Exod. xxiii. 10, 11). Again we say that this was very much unlike all human law. Besides this provision there was a release from debts that were owing by the poor Hebrews to their brethren, and the well-to-do were specially warned not to forbear helping the poor by lending them what was necessary because the "year of release" was at hand, when they would have no further claim upon them for what they had advanced ; but they were to open their hands wide to their poor needy brethren, and God would, as a consequence, bless them in all their works and in whatsoever they put their hands to. The Hebrew bond-servant, having served six years, was also free this year to leave his employer if he pleased, who was commanded not to send him away empty, but furnish him liberally out of his flock, and floor, and wine-press ; remembering that the whole nation were once in bondage in the land of Egypt. This year of rest reminded them that the soil was the Lord's, that He was the proprietor ; and also afforded them much time for spiritual refreshment and study of Jehovah's law, besides the release from physical labour which they enjoyed.—(Lev. xxv. 2-7 ; Deut. xv. 1-18.)

Then they were to number—from the time of their entrance into the land or from this seventh year—"seven sabbaths of years, or seven times seven years," that is forty-nine years ; that—to use the words of the Lord in the ninth verse of this 25th chapter of Leviticus—"Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month." This was the great Day of Atonement, the day in which those solemn commands were observed in reference to the sins of the nation, when the High Priest entered into the most holy place of the Tabernacle to appear where Jehovah's presence was manifested, and to make atonement for himself and the nation. The forty-ninth year was a year of release and a sabbath of rest for the land, and the fiftieth or jubilee year was the same, so that when this happened there were two years together in which they should "not sow, neither reap that which grew of itself, nor gather the grapes of their undressed vines." What a trial would this be to the selfish and unbelieving and to those who had no faith in God's providence and care, forbidden as they were to subdue the field with the plough or to scatter their seed in the furrows. Do you, can you, think

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that these were human provisions—mere human laws? No; they are too unselfish. They are, as we shall see, too generous—altogether exceptional to any statutes ever adopted by an Gentile nation the wide world through.

A joyful sound was the sound of the jubilee trumpets. It was the year of redemption; it was "the acceptable year of the Lord;" it was a time of great rejoicing and festivity; it meant the freedom of the slave, for when the blast of the jubilee trumpet was heard "liberty was proclaimed throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof,"—every hired servant was at liberty, the insolvent debtor was delivered from his creditor, and all alienated lands returned to the absolute and unfettered possession of the legal representatives of the original possessors to whom they had been allotted. Houses and buildings in cities were exempted from this law, but all other buildings were subject to it, as were all buildings in the Levitical cities. The prophet Isaiah has beautifully laid hold of these features of the jubilee year in depicting the mission of Christ. It is indeed the Spirit of Christ that was in the prophet giving utterance to the words. Jesus Himself quoted them and applied them to Himself. I refer to the words found at the commencement of the 61st chapter of Isaiah's prophecies: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord . . . to comfort all that mourn, to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion; to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified." That is the spiritual counterpart of the enactments of the jubilee year. The law was a shadow of good things to come; and this release from debt, and liability, and slavery, seems to find a beautiful counterpart in the deliverance from sin and the grave proclaimed through Christ, and in the peace and joy and everlasting glory which through Him may be conferred upon the sons of men.

I will ask you now to look a little more closely at the law of this Hebrew jubilee year, as it affects more especially the occupancy of the soil. Everyone, as we have seen, returned to his possession when the trumpet announced that the year of release had come. We have in this chapter (Lev. xxv.) an account of the land laws of the Jews.* It would be well for politicians to study them. They, for the most part, profess to have some reverence for the old book, and believe (they say) in its divinity. This ought to commend its legislative enactments to their minds; but we know how empty the profession is in the majority of cases, and how unlikely it is that they will ever initiate legislation on the land question like that commanded to the Israelites through Moses. These Israelitish laws deal exactly with the questions agitating the minds of men to-day. Land nationalisation, private ownership, sub-division, succession, and mortgage are all dealt with, and in a most comprehensive manner. The

* For a more complete examination of "The Land Question," see the Author's published lecture upon that subject.

very first principle recognised in relation to the matter was that the land belonged to the Lord. It is ever spoken of as "the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."—(Lev. xxv. 2.) Now in the 23rd verse of the chapter we read thus: "The land shall not be sold for ever;" or, as it reads in the margin, "for cutting off," or "to be quite cut off,"—that is, as I understand it, the possessor shall not have power to sell it absolutely. † He could not deprive his heirs of their patrimony. No person could purchase it beyond the jubilee year, but were bound, as the next verse states, to grant a redemption for the land,—from north to south and east to west. The reason is given: "For the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me." God, you perceive, was the absolute proprietor of the whole, a principle which we fail to find recognised in English law. The Jews, as a nation, were put in possession on conditions of obedience to the Divine law, part of which related to the land. It was intended for every family of the nation to have a share of the land. Upon their entrance to Canaan the land was divided by lot to the several tribes; and, as the territory so divided was conquered, the various tribes divided it into individual portions, one of which was allotted to each family according to its numbers.—(Num. xxxiii. 52—54.) The land apportioned to each possessor was, in case there was no issue, to pass to the owner's brothers, and, if there were no brothers, to the next of kin, but could not pass out of the tribe into the possession of a member of another tribe.—(See Numbers xxxvi.) Thus every head of a family in the nation was provided with his own inheritance, of which he was made, subject to God's law, the absolute proprietor. It was inalienable. No one could justly compel him to part with it; though, as this chapter shows, every provision was made for poverty, or for such cases as when a person desired to gain his living in some other way—by business in a city for instance—rather than by the cultivation of his land. A man could sell his land, but it was subject to a right of redemption within seven years; and, if he could not redeem it himself, the law provided that his next of kin could for him. But if, through poverty or any other cause, this was not done the purchaser could only hold it until the half century closed; and, when the prolonged note of the jubilee trumpet was sounded, the land again reverted to its proper owner, who was reinstated in his possession once more. The object of this is obvious. It was a simple method of preserving the connection of the people with the land. It preserved also the hereditary possession of the same in the families to which it was at first assigned; and it was designed to prevent just what is one of the greatest evils of the land system of this country, that is, the accumulation of the land in large estates. A man, however much he desired, however wealthy he might become, could not, while this law was enforced, become the perpetual owner of vast estates. There might be a temporary aggregation of land in the lands of a single owner, but it was a limited privilege,—limited by the inalienable right of redemption by the vendor; and by that law which stated that "in the year of jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession." Of course this inflicted no injustice upon the buyer, because he was fully

† The rendering in the Revised Version is better "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity."

cognisant of the law and paid for his purchase "according unto the number of years" there was to run to the year of release, the same law acting the other way if the seller was able to purchase it back before the jubilee came.—(Ver. 14—17, 25—27.) Some people are beginning to open their eyes to the beneficence of this wonderful law. Henry George, of America has frequently pointed it out; and I was reading some remarks the other day from the "Rev." R. Heber Newton, an American preacher, who is styled, or who styles himself, a "Christian Socialist," to the same effect. "The Hebrew polity," says he, ". . . was a genuine communism. This constitution nationalised the land of Canaan; vested the title in the head of the state—Jehovah; apportioned it among the families of the tribes; limited the term of all transfers between the people; vacated all real estate bargains at the end of every fifty years,—restoring then to each family inalienable right to its share of the soil, and thus prevented the accumulation of great estates and any possible monopoly of the first resources of life. It passed all debtors through an act of bankruptcy every seven years, and guarded thus against the enslaving action of debt which has repeated itself so commonly in history. It even pronounced all interest usury, and thus radically stopped the manifold oppressions of unscrupulous capital that every society has experienced. This polity thus sub-soiled Israel with a real communism." I need not stay to point out the great advantages of a law like this; it gave to all a sense of independence. Each one had his possession; there was always that to fall back upon. The "three acres and a cow" dangled before the eyes of the poor agricultural labourers some years ago, but which they have not got yet, will not compare with the Divine system which should have resulted in blessings on every hand. Now that is the way to keep the jubilee year, friends. It would result in vast, and in thousands of cases, permanent good. It would get the people back to the land. It would make the wealthy disgorge their accumulations. It would place the poor in circumstances of comfort once more, and give them a fresh start in life. There is something sensible and advantageous about a custom like that, but we saw nothing like it in England when the bells of the State Church merrily rang forth the fact that the 22nd of June, 1887, had come, neither shall we during this year of the Diamond Jubilee of the Queen. God is not recognised in the manner He was among the Israelites in our land. We have human "lords" of the soil here. They own its broad acres, and claim the absolute right to its possession. They recognise no jubilee law. With many it is grab! grab! grab!—and what you get—keep. The land has been stolen, or conferred on many by others who have stolen it, and then it has been settled or entailed in their families for ever. What a wicked monopoly! What a monstrous usurpation of the rights and privileges of others! What a gross injustice to the masses of the people! The evils of this system are manifold and everywhere manifest; it is one of the recognised evils of the day. The agitation is growing, and will continue to grow, upon the land question. It is not likely to be satisfactorily settled by human legislators, there are too many vested interests in the way. There is another and a Divine scheme for settling it, which will be enforced by-and-bye. The hand of the Most High will interfere once

more in the affairs of mankind on a world-wide scale, as it did once on a smaller scale in connection with the house of Israel. He is preparing a people to possess the land and dwell therein for ever. He has covenanted with Abraham in the ages that are past to give him and his seed the land for an everlasting possession. That seed is the Christ (Gal. iii. 16), and all who are Christ's through faith and baptism (Gal. iii. 27—29). When the time comes for the promise to be fulfilled, He will show to whom the soil belongs. He will tear up and scatter to the winds their parchment titles. He will abolish the present laws of settlement and entail; aye, he will "scatter the proud in the imagination of their hearts, and put down the mighty from their seats, and exalt them of low degree. He will fill the hungry with good things, and the rich will He send empty away. He will help, too, His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy; *as He spake to the fathers* (for these things are embraced in the covenant), to Abraham and his seed for ever."—(Luke i. 51—55.) They chant these verses in the services of the National Church every Sunday, but we hardly know what interpretation the members put upon them. If God were to arise in his majesty and power and scatter the proud, and put down the mighty, and send the ungodly rich empty away, we fear there would be great consternation in the breasts of vast numbers of Church people—and Chapel people—who make no personal application, or future application, of the words.

It has been questioned by some whether the Jewish polity was ever actually operative at any period, or was only a "paper constitution,"—a kind of ideal law held before the nation as a model, to the justice of which they were to strive to attain. To raise a question of this kind is a testimony in its honour, and shows how perfect a law it must be in the consideration of those who raise it; and shows, too, how unlikely it is that it emanated from any human authority, but is what it claims to be—the law of the Lord. It is a fact that there is no distinct historical record of any celebration of a year of jubilee; but the silence of the record is no proof that the law was in abeyance. Without doubt it was intended to be obeyed, and in later times, when there is no doubt of its general neglect, it was a cause of the Divine anger, and one of the reasons of the expulsion of Israel from the land. Isaiah announced the judgments of heaven against those who neglected this law and sought their own aggrandisement, and endeavoured to accumulate large estates in opposition to its provisions. "Woe unto them," says he at the 8th verse of the 5th chapter, "that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed in the midst of the earth." Elijah pronounced judgment upon Ahab and Jezebel because they caused Naboth to be murdered, for the reason that he would not "give the inheritance of his fathers" unto the king. "In the place," said the stern and faithful prophet, "where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. . . . The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel"—(I. Kings 3, 19, 23);—terrible prophecies which were exactly fulfilled. Again the prophet Isaiah, in the 58th chapter of his prophecies, denounces the hypocrisy of the nation, and their neglect of the merciful provisions of His law. You will remember that the jubilee year commenced on the great Day of Atonement, a day in which they

were supposed to be fasting and afflicting their souls. While they were thus penitentially approaching their Maker the joyful sound of the trumpets announced that the time of restitution, and freedom, and release from debt had come. The nation, in the time of Isaiah, hypocritically kept the fasts. They multiplied their sacrifices and brought their vain oblations,—vain because their motives and conduct were wrong. They burnt their incense and kept their feasts and sought the Lord daily, asking of Him the ordinances of justice, and apparently taking delight in approaching the Most High. But they did not “learn to do well; they did not seek justice and relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless or plead for the widow.”—(Isa. i. 10-17.) Hence their prayers were unheeded, and the prophet represents them in this 58th chapter as saying, as we gather from the third verse: “Wherefore have we fasted, and Thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and Thou takest no knowledge?” “Behold,” replies the prophet, “in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness; ye shall not fast as ye do this day to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it *such* a fast that I have chosen?—a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call *this* a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not *this* the fast that I have chosen?—to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free; and that ye break every yoke. Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?—when thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then [when these things are practised] shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, ‘Here I am!’ If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity, and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity and thy darkness be as the noonday; and the Lord shall guide thee continually and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not.”

The nation, however, was unaffected by these gracious promises; they cast Jehovah’s law behind their backs; they rejected His messengers, and treated their messages with contempt. They grew worse and worse, until they equalled in wickedness the nations which preceded them. Justice departed from the rulers, until at last the truth was expressed in the words of the prophet Zephaniah (chap. iii, 3, 4); “Her princes within her are roaring lions, her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow,”—that is, they instantly devour the prey at the first opportunity, not waiting for the morrow, “Her prophets are light and treacherous persons,”—no backbone about them—went with the tide—pleased the majority—didn’t like to offend people—had no real principle actuating their conduct. Rome was

wicked, and they "did as Rome did,"—no dependence could be placed upon them;—"her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law." The consequence of this was that the judgments of heaven were pronounced against them; the Divine thunderbolts were let loose, and the forked lightnings of His anger played upon them, and His vengeance scattered them among the heathen by whom they were surrounded. They were placed in the land covenanted to Abraham, as we have stated, upon certain conditions; the conditions were obedience to Jehovah's law. But they were threatened with most terrible consequences if they despised His statutes and abhorred His judgments, and hearkened not unto the voice of His words.—(Lev. xxvi. 14—46.) All kinds of national calamities were to overtake them, ending with their expulsion from the land which they unworthily occupied; for, said Jehovah in the 33rd verse of Lev. xxvi.: "I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste." That is the secret of why we find Jews everywhere, in every land, the wide world through. They were scattered. First they were taken captive by Assyria, then by Babylon. Afterwards there was a partial restoration; but their national guilt reached the highest point when they rejected their long-promised Messiah—who came, as we have seen, preaching glad tidings to the meek, telling of a glorious jubilee, proclaiming "the acceptable year of the Lord"—and put him to a cruel death. Nearly forty years after that the Roman power came against them to execute the judgment of the Most High against the nation for their crime. They were the avengers of blood, the armies of God—though they knew Him not—sent forth to destroy the murderers of His well-beloved Son. They did so, for there was no city of refuge to flee to. They slaughtered thousands of them; the remainder were carried captive and underwent much suffering, many of them being sold for slaves. Their city and temple were destroyed; their land has remained a desolation, enjoying its sabbaths which were not observed when occupied by its people. The cities have been wasted without an inhabitant. Jerusalem has been trodden down of the Gentiles, successive powers having battled for and occupied the holy ground. It is still in the hands of the cruel and unspeakable Turk, but the day of deliverance draws near.

The people, we have said, have been scattered; they have wandered in every land, and wander still. The Gentiles have served themselves of them. They have plundered, and robbed, and ill-treated, and expatriated them through all the ages since the Romans destroyed their city. A terrible history has been theirs; sad, and cruel, and awful has it been,—a history of horror and of blood. But they survive it all. They are not crushed, nor can they be. They are a mighty power in the world to-day—in politics, in the press, in commerce, on the Exchange—everywhere. They hold the purse-strings of the world. Kings and emperors, or their statesmen, must consult them if they want to go to war. How is this? What power is behind them? Why is their individuality as a race preserved? Why have they survived all their persecutions? Is there a reason? There is; it is a Divine one. The hand of God is behind them; He has a purpose in view. "Though I make a full end of all the nations whither I have

driven thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee.”—(Jer. xlvi. 28.) “He that scattered Israel will gather him and keep him as a shepherd does his flock.”—(Jer. xxxi. 10.) That is the Divine decree, and it is unchangeable. It is more unalterable than any decree ever signed by any king that sat upon the Medo-Persian throne.

The gathering time is coming. They will be collected out of the nations; they will re-occupy their own land. Jerusalem will yet become a praise in the earth, and her people a joy. The waste cities will be rebuilt, and the land will be glorified by the presence of the Great King. God has anointed His Son, and raised Him from the dead for a glorious purpose. He will yet sit upon the throne of David in Jerusalem.—(Luke i. 32, 33.) His power will be established there, and will be felt to earth's utmost bounds; and it will be invincible. Under Him all those glorious predictions of the prophets in reference to the Jewish race will be fulfilled. They will be delivered from all those who have served themselves of them. This restoration of the Jews is only one element in the great scheme of Jehovah's salvation. He is going to “rule the world in righteousness by that Man—Jesus—whom He hath ordained.” He is going to break up all the existing governments of the earth. He is going to disband their armies and humble their pride, and break their power and exalt His own great Name in all the earth; but there will be an awful crash first. The nations are working up to this point. They are refurbishing their weapons; they are getting ready for the “great day of the battle of God Almighty.” Their wickedness and their blasphemy is increasing; they are ripening for the slaughter. Christ will appear by-and-bye to tread the wine-press of Jehovah's wrath. The command will be given: “Thrust in Thy sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe!”—(Rev. xiv. 18—20.) Not as the Lamb, but as the Lion will Christ appear—the Lion of Judah's tribe—to rend and devour the prey; and to Him, surely, are the prophetic words applicable: “I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment; for the day of vengeance is in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come.”—(Isa. lxiii. 1—6.) Yes, it is the jubilee year; the time of restoration! The Jews will be restored to their land, and the darkness which has settled upon them for centuries will pass away. “For a small moment,” says Jehovah (in the 54th chap. of Isaiah, verses 7 and 8), “have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee.” Their present unbelief, and stubbornness, and selfishness will be removed, and a new heart will be given unto them; and no more will they depart from the living God.—(Jer. xxxii. 37—42.)

And when all Jehovah's judgments are poured out upon the Gentile nations, and the rule of His Son has been established in Zion, and “the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Anointed;” when He is the acknowledged king of the whole earth He will speak peace to the nations, and they shall learn war no more. Righteousness will spread over the world, oppression

shall cease ; the poor will be cared for as they are not now ; and the misery, and vice, and squalor, and wretchedness visible on every hand at the present time will be known no more ; the land question and the Eastern question which the European Nations are tinkering at so miserably, and every other question which troubles politicians to-day and baffles their statesmanship will be settled, and all the tribes of the earth will rejoice, for in Abraham and his seed shall "all the families of the earth be blessed."

And in a higher sense still will it then be said : "The year of My redeemed is come." For those who now fellowship the sufferings of Christ, who are "called to His kingdom and glory," who "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," will enter into His joy. To them, indeed, will it be a grand jubilee year that will never end,—a year of release from every burden,—a day of deliverance from sin, and sorrow, and pain, and death. Every tear will be wiped away, every care will be banished, every sorrow will disappear, every sigh will be hushed, and never again will their eyes be dimmed with tears. And God invites you, who listen, to share this glory and this immortality ; to live and reign with Christ in the coming age ; to "inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever." We urge you to accept His mercy, and to seek after the glory to be revealed. Seek it early ; begin to seek it now ; for the day of Christ may soon be here, and the trumpet-blast ere long proclaim that the jubilee year is come.





THE GOSPEL OF GOD'S LOVE TO A PERISHING WORLD;

OR, THINGS NEW AND OLD FROM A WELL-WORN TEXT.

JOHN III. 16.

SYLLABUS:—

An old-fashioned text—a great subject with which it deals—love beyond all knowledge—the mistake of divines—teaching of the Second Article of the Church of England—teaching of the Bible—the contrast between the two—God's love compared with all human love—the love of friendship—Damon and Pythias—a mother's love at Pompeii—Christ's love for his enemies—what God's love led him to do—his only begotten Son—Trinitarianism not true—the sinlessness of Jesus—the unity between Father and Son—the rejection and death of Jesus—how God was affected thereby—human analogy—the object of the gift of Christ—what is it to perish—the human and the divine answer—the divine answer illustrated—the serpent of brass—salvation through Christ—eternal life—what does it mean—how to be obtained—"whosoever"—a great supper—Come.

IT is an old-fashioned and much used text we have selected to preach from to-night, dear friends, and one which has done good service in the pulpit, in religious tracts, and in the scrolls hung up for the perusal of the thoughtless in the waiting rooms of our Railway Stations by well-meaning people, a text from which many a wrong, many an unscriptural inference has been drawn and expounded, and many a time a right noble and glorious truth enforced, and which in itself contains the fulness, the richness, the essence, the height and the depth, of the gospel of the salvation of mankind.

And, friends, what a theme it is with which it deals! God's love!—who can sound its depths or reach its heights? How powerless, how utterly helpless one feels to describe its greatness and power as exhibited to us in the New Testament! How inadequate the most eloquent tongue to portray its extent and greatness! How insufficient the greatest intellect to realise what it means! How language fails to depict, and imagination fails to grasp what the love of the Redeemer of men has designed for those who return the love he has shown for them! We need to know practically what endless life means, we need to experience the glory of the kingdom of heaven, we need to comprehend eternity, we need to understand the loftiness and purity and exceeding breadth of God's love to Christ, before we can fully state or realize what his love to the world at large is, for "Eye hath not seen, neither ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I. Cor. ii. 9) the only way to obtain which is through that one by whom alone we can have access to the Father, for it is emphatically declared that "no man can come to the Father except by him."

The divines of a past age sadly misunderstood the Scriptures when they wrote of the process of redemption. They represented the Almighty Father as an implacable being, filled with wrath towards the human race, and that the Son of God, who, they taught—as they do now—was the “Second Person in the adorable Trinity, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father,”—undertook to come down from heaven, be born as he was born, live as he did live, and die as he did die, in order

TO APPEASE THE WRATH OF HIS FATHER,

“the first person in the Trinity,” in order to reconcile him to the world which was at enmity with him.

This idea is embodied in the following verse and might be abundantly illustrated from the writings of theologians :—

“Sweet were the drops of Jesus’ blood
That calmed his frowning face ;
Which, sprinkled on the burning throne,
Have turned his wrath to grace.”—*Isaac Watts.*

Now apart from the singularity of the belief that one person in the Trinity could differ from another, and undertake a work to reconcile him to the world ; apart from the strangeness of the view that one being should feel a benevolence for the race, which the other did not seem to share, when after all there is declared to be perfect unity in the Godhead, and that—though there are three persons, there is but one God!—this view is in complete opposition to the whole testimony of Scripture upon the subject. Perhaps few modern divines would defend such a view, yet they subscribe to it freely enough, in hundreds of cases probably without a thought, for in many cases the articles of subscription are set at nought and doctrines taught in total opposition to them,—as witness the teaching of the Ritualists in the Church of England at the present time.

However, the view of redemption to which I have just referred is plainly taught in the second Article of the Church of England to which every clergyman has to assent upon taking holy orders. I know of a case in which this Article was brought to the notice of a clergyman not long ago, and he was perfectly astonished, and I believe made a statement to the effect that he did not know that such a sentiment was taught in the Prayer Book. Here are the words of the Article :—“The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took man’s nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance : so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man ; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, *to reconcile his Father to us*, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men.” “*To reconcile his Father to us*,” now that—with other portions of this Article—is decidedly anti-scriptural. Everywhere redemption, everywhere the gift of Jesus, the mission of Jesus, is represented in the Bible as the result of the exceeding love of God towards the human race to draw men unto him. It was not the act of the Son to reconcile the Father to us, but the act of the Father to reconcile us to him. Jesus was really a manifestation of God in human nature whose mission was to reveal

HOW TENDERLY THE HEART OF THE CREATOR

beat towards the fallen and perishing world. How plain the language

is that declares—in numbers of places—this blessed truth. Listen to this;—the Apostle Paul dealing with the very subject. Writing his 2nd epistle to the Corinthians, he states in ch. v., commencing at verse 18 “All things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave unto us (the Apostles) the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation. We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were intreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God. Him who knew no sin he made to be sin (or a sin-offering) on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him.” Could anything possibly be plainer than this language? God himself intervenes through the greatness of his compassion, and gives Christ to die on behalf of the sins of men, and sends the Apostles to the sinners of all nations to announce his goodness, and beseeches them, intreats them—through his ambassadors—to be reconciled to him, and partake of his mercy and goodness. This is the note struck throughout the New Testament. If we refer to the 5th chapter of the epistle to the Romans, and read the 6th, 7th and 8th verses we shall find the same truth enforced. “In due season,” the Apostle writes, “Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But

GOD COMMENDETH HIS OWN LOVE TOWARD US, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” The love of God is here shown to be greater than all human love. Few will dare to die even to save the life of a righteous man, yet, perhaps, for a good man—a benevolent man, one whose life is unselfish and useful, and characterized by thoughtfulness for others and generosity of conduct—some would even dare to lay down their own life, but such cases are very rare: there are not many of them on the pages of history. Such cases have occurred but men seldom reach that height of unselfishness to be willing to do it. We have read of the case of Damon and Pythias. “Damon had been condemned to death by the tyrant Dionysius of Sicily, and obtained leave to go and settle his domestic affairs on promise of returning at a stated hour to the place of execution. Pythias pledged himself to undergo the punishment if Damon should not return in time, and deliver himself into the hands of the tyrant. Damon returned at the appointed moment, just as the sentence was about to be executed on Pythias; and Dionysius was so struck with the fidelity of the two friends, that he remitted their punishment, and entreated them to permit him to share their friendship.”* You cannot find many cases of that sort. On the testimony of Jesus it is the highest expression of love among men. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John xv. 13.) Many a deed of heroism we know has been done on the battlefield under the excitement that there exists, and many a mother has risked her life, and sometimes lost it for her offspring. Few things more pathetic and that more finely illustrate the intensity of a mother’s love have been recorded than what has been made clear through the excavations and discoveries in connection with the long buried city of Pompeii. It was a Pagan

* (*Val. Max.*, 4. 7. Quoted from Barnes’ Notes on Romans v. 7.)

city and has been called "brutal Pompeii," certainly every form of evil prevalent during its prosperity was practised there, yet from its buried past an example of parental affection has been brought to light which is most pitiful and affecting in the extreme. I will quote from the account I read of it and you can judge if it is not so.

A MOTHER'S LOVE AT POMPEII.

"As with spade and pick, the explorers of our day slowly uncovered this once forgotten city, clearing street after street of the hardened ashes, now and then they came to hollow places perpendicular to the pavement. What could they be? They were carefully examined. It was found that they had been formed by the bodies of citizens who had been caught during the fatal fall of ashes, and which had long ago crumbled to a little dry dust.

The work was under thoughtful management. Could not a cast, it was suggested, be obtained of the space which a body once filled. The experiment is tried. Prepared plaster of Paris is poured into the one next discovered, and allowed to harden slowly. The ash crust is then carefully removed. Expectation has drawn a crowd to see the result. Would it be possible that the eye would rest on the representation of a life that went out suddenly eighteen hundred years ago? See! It is the figure of a woman! Be careful! Her arms are outstretched above her head. The hands grasp a child! What can it mean? Ah! what a revelation! On that last day of the world for her, this mother, clasped her babe to her breast, and resolved to save its life by flying from the doomed city. She is caught in the downpour from Vesuvius, and brought to a standstill! Now the ashes reach her waist, and still they fall! She sees that her own time has come, but at that supreme moment she thinks only of her babe. There is at least a chance for it, while yet her arms are free. Kissing it for the last time, she lifts it high above her head. It may be, she hopes, that the shower may shortly cease, and that *from her dead hands someone may receive her living child.*"

Such is the story of this woman's love. The deliverer did not come. Both mother and child were overwhelmed with destruction, and the facts are now made known to the world. Such cases show what human love can dare to do on behalf of friends and those who are dear, but who will die for their enemies, for those who are at enmity with them? It is in this that the love of God is so strikingly shown. "God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." If we open our eyes and behold the state of the unregenerate world at the present time, if we go back to the time of Christ and consider how debased, how brutal, how sensual it was then, how little there is, and was, in human nature to inspire the affection of the Almighty, then this love of his stands out in even bolder relief: not friends, not affectionate children, but sinners, enemies—for such Christ died.

Now let us briefly enquire next

WHAT THE LOVE OF GOD LED HIM TO DO.

Our text says that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." The doctrine of the Trinity does not form a part of our subject to-night, at least we do not intend to do more than briefly point out the truth that is embraced in the text, but we may state that we do not believe that that second Article of the faith of the Church of England is a correct representation of Scripture teaching. You may remember

that it stated that Jesus was "begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father." Now for a person to be begotten of any one implies the antecedent existence of that person of whom he was begotten, that seems a self-evident truth, and ought to need no enforcing. Yet the theologians tell us that in the case of Jesus, while he was begotten of the Father, he was begotten before all worlds, and, as this Article declares, begotten from everlasting, and that he is himself "the very and eternal God." Why it is self-contradictory. It is another way of declaring that he was never begotten at all. We prefer the statement of the Creed called "The Apostle's Creed," the one that goes back nearest to the times of the Apostles, to the unprovable assertions of the Article, and the much later Creeds called the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds. The language is much simpler. "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost (or Holy Spirit), Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried, He descended into hell (Hades, or the grave), The third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead." All this we can fully endorse. It agrees with the Bible. You never read there of Jesus being "begotten before all worlds." The remarkable history of his begettal is given in the 1st ch. of Matthew, and the 1st ch. of Luke. He was begotten of God of the Virgin Mary about 1900 years ago, born in a miraculous manner through the "power of the Highest," and, his origin being divine, his birth being of the Holy Spirit, in contradistinction to the birth of every other son and daughter of Adam, he is spoken of as

"THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD"

—"the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John i. 14.) When we have the full particulars given as to the time and manner of this divine begettal, it seems to us amazing, how the theologians have gone so far astray. This Jesus was sent into the world to be the Saviour of the race, "that the world through him might be saved." It is argued that because he is said to be "sent," and "given" of God, he pre-existed with the Father, before his birth as a child. But this style of argument would prove a great deal too much. The prophets were all sent of God. In a figure of speech the Almighty is represented as "rising up early and sending them." They were messengers of heaven, but had not existed in heaven. It is recorded of the Baptist that "there was a man sent from God whose name was John" (John i. 6,) but none of our friends conclude that he came directly from the skies. In the parable of the wicked husbandmen, the Almighty, represented as "a certain householder," is said to have sent, at various times, his servants to receive the fruits of the vineyard, and when they received such evil treatment at the hands of the husbandmen, it is said of the householder, "But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, 'They will reverence my son.'" The servants were the prophets through whom God spoke in former times, the son was Jesus, through whom in "the last days" of the Jewish commonwealth the Almighty addressed the nation, but neither the servants nor the son were despatched from heaven although

the language of the parable seems to imply that they were sent direct from the presence of God (Matt. xxi. 33-46.) But Jesus, being the Father's only begotten Son occupied a closer, a higher relationship to God than any who had been sent before, and the Father's gift to the world can only be properly appreciated when that relationship, and the love arising out of it is properly considered. The character of Christ was perfect. There was complete unity of purpose between him and God. He did always those things that pleased the Father.

NO SIN HAD COME BETWEEN HIM AND HEAVEN.

Never had the blush of shame tinged his cheeks through the knowledge of personal transgression. Never had it been necessary for him to run and hide himself—like the first Adam—from the Almighty. There was union, there was fellowship, there was love of the highest order existing towards each other. To Jesus was commissioned the greatest work that had ever been committed to man—the revelation of the true God, and of life through him. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John i. 18.)—"In the bosom of the Father," how it conveys to our minds the idea of the strongest possible affection. "The Father loveth the Son," we read in another place, "and hath given all things into his hand" (John iii. 35.) Again we read, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17.) All the Father wished him to do he did, and when it came to the cross,—*the cross*, that cruel death, that malefactor's death,—his expression of resignation was "Not my will but thine be done." Oh! if we can imagine the Deity suffering pain and anguish how he must have suffered when Jesus was rejected, when he was treated with contumely and scorn, when he was beaten and spat upon and mocked, and crucified. It was God who was rejected in Christ. And we can only reason from analogy as to what God's love was in giving him to suffer and to die. When your child suffers, you suffer. What anxious days and nights you have spent when your loved one has been in danger. How your heart has gone out to the sufferer and you have felt that you would fain endure what he is passing through, and perhaps your heart has been riven by the death of some loved one, and the wound has never healed. And think you that God felt not for his beloved Son when, with such anguish and sorrow he passed through the valley of the shadow of death? Oh! he did, he did! And his love to the world, his love to us, can only be measured and appreciated with these thoughts in our hearts, "God so,"—we must emphasize the word "so,"—"God *so* loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." "In *this* manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love,"—true, vast incomprehensible, marvellous love,—"*herein is love*, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John iv. 9, 10.) Well might the Apostle declare that "God is love"—essentially love, and that they who love not their brethren, they who lack this qualification, are lacking in the most vital point, and fail to have the chief characteristic of our Father in heaven.

Let us now consider *the object* for which this reservoir of love was opened, and for which it flowed out towards the human race. That men "might not perish, but have everlasting life."

WHAT IS IT TO PERISH?

Different answers are given to this question. The Bible answer is simple and easy of comprehension, but again theologians have introduced a meaning altogether foreign to the teaching of Christ and to the whole run of Scripture declarations. They tell us that to perish does not mean to perish in the literal sense, but to exist for ever in misery, and pain, and torment! The whole meaning is taken out of the word, and the meaning placed upon it, or read into it is exactly opposite to that which it conveys! This interpretation is of course the result of believing in the immortality of the soul. Man, they say, has a soul that cannot die, that cannot perish; hence, whenever we read such passages as this we must understand them in quite a different sense to that which naturally suggests itself, and teach that they mean that man "might not exist for ever in misery, but have everlasting happiness!" If this idea of perpetual misery in hell, of *never perishing*, was attached to the word and kindred words wherever they occur in the Bible some very singular ideas would be the result.

What then is it to perish? Just what the word literally means. Most certainly it does not mean to last for ever, but the opposite. To pass away in the ordinary course of nature, or by any calamity that might overtake us, and—apart from the intervention of the Most High—to pass away for ever without any possibility of regaining life in the future. "To sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake" (Jer. li. 57.) Such would have been the condition of the whole of the race if God had not loved the world and provided a remedy. If you were to take the trouble to look up the places where this word occurs as applied to man, you would find it has the same meaning that we attach to it when we speak of a number of persons perishing at sea, or in a fire, or in a pit explosion, or in any other way that death is caused. It is used continually in this sense, and when it is declared that "the wicked shall perish" we cannot doubt but that the word is to be understood in the most literal sense. See for instance Psalm xxxvii. 20, "*The wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.*" When—through disobedience and the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, so many of the Israelites were swallowed up of the earth and consumed by fire from the Lord, "the children of Israel spoke unto Moses, saying, Behold, *we die, we perish, we all perish.* Whosoever cometh anything near unto the tabernacle of the Lord shall die: *shall we be consumed with dying?*" (Num. xvii. 12, 13.) We cannot mistake the meaning of the words "die," "perish," and "be consumed with dying" in that passage. When—on another occasion, they got discouraged because of the difficulties of the way, and murmured against Moses and Aaron, you will remember that God sent fiery serpents among them, and many of the people were bitten by them and died. Then the people repented and confessed to Moses that they had sinned, and he prayed for the people to the Lord, who commanded him to

MAKE A SERPENT OF BRASS,

and put it upon a pole, with the promise attached that "everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live" (Num. xxi. 8.) The command was obeyed. The "fiery serpent" was made and erected on a pole where all could see. On every hand were people bitten of the ser-

pents. The poison was rapidly circulating through their veins. A number of them had died. But the command was given to look and live, and those who did so at once felt that a miracle had been wrought, that the effects of the poison had been counteracted, that their health had been restored—their lives saved. Now all this was literal enough. The serpents were real, the bite was fatal, the death was a literal death, and the life continued to them as the result of their faith and obedience was a literal life. Now keeping these facts in mind see the use that Jesus makes of this incident in the two verses immediately preceding our text to-night:—"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should *not perish, but have eternal life*" (John iii. 14, 15.) If the perishing of which Jesus spoke was not a literal perishing like that of the Israelites in the wilderness, but meant something altogether different, something infinitely more awful, a never perishing in hell, he could never have referred to this incident as an illustration of what he came to deliver the race from. But we are a perishing race. "Wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish." Aye, and men who attain to honour and renown abide not, "they are like the beasts that perish" (Ps. xlix. 10, 12.) The whole world is thus passing away, "there is none abiding" (I Chron. xxix. 15.) We perish like the summer flowers and the autumn leaves, and wither like the grass of the field. In the Scriptures these and other fleeting things, are the things with which man is constantly compared. "My days," wrote the Psalmist, "are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass. But thou, O Lord"—

NOTE THE CONTRAST HERE,

—"but thou, O Lord, *shalt endure for ever*; and thy remembrance unto all generations" (Ps. cii. 11, 12.) "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry." This is the divine answer. "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa. xl. 6-8.) This is part of our cry to-night. We are here to echo this divine teaching. We are members of a perishing world. The shadow of death will by and by cross the path of every one of us. The cemetery is an institution we cannot do without. Everywhere it is a necessity. "The cemeteries of London" alone, I read some time ago, "cover 2,000 acres, and the land they occupy represents a capital of £250,000!" Our present life is but a span. We spend our lives like a tale that is told. "Only one person in 10,000 lives to be a centenarian!" In a few brief years at the most all who are assembled here to-night, will be sleeping their quiet sleep, will have passed away into "the land of forgetfulness" (Ps. lxxxviii. 10-12.)

"A span is all that we can boast,
An inch or two of time;
Man is but vanity and dust
In all his flower and prime."

So, for ages, the world has been passing away: all its lust, all its pride, all its vanity, disappearing generation after generation, in the all-devouring grave.

This perishing condition is the result of sin. The world is at enmity with God. Sin very early entered into the world, and death followed quickly upon its heels, and death passed upon all men. It is

universal. There is no means of escape. "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? *Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?* (Ps. lxxxix. 48.) But God has provided a remedy. Looking down from the height of his sanctuary upon the deplorable and dying condition of the race, his design was, and is, to rescue men from sin, and from that universal corruption which results therefrom. The great heart of the infinite God beat with compassion for the human race and he desires to redeem us from the curse. But His object is not merely to rescue us from death, but from sin, the cause of death. The one result will follow the other. No man will be rescued from the tomb who is not first saved from sin. And

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION IS THROUGH CHRIST.

He is "the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world" (John i. 29.) His is "*the only Name* given under heaven whereby we can be saved" (Acts iv. 12.) "No man cometh to the Father *except by him*" (John xiv. 6.) "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, *that whosoever believeth on him* might not perish but have eternal life." He came that we "might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly." "I give unto my sheep," he said, "eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John x. 10, 27, 28.) Eternal life—what does it mean? A something that is the opposite of perishing. A something that does not naturally belong to our nature but is bestowed upon us as a gift, for while "the wages of sin is death, (that is to perish;) the *free gift of God is eternal life* in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23.) The one expression in the text stands in contrast to the other. "Eternal life" in the one clause is the antithesis of "perish" in the other. There can be no doubt of this. It means the life of the age to come! Deliverance from the power of the grave for ever! Freedom from the dominion of sin! A "putting on of immortality!" Being "made equal to the angels" so that we can "die no more, being sons of the resurrection!" (Luke xx. 36.) Being made like unto Christ, who is "fashioned after the power of an indissoluble life!" (Heb. vii. 16.) This is what is meant. This is what is offered you to-night. Who requires it?—every one of us. Who desires it?—can we give the same answer? Who will respond to God's infinite love and compassion? You must believe on his Son. And belief here means hearty acceptance of him and his teaching—both moral and doctrinal. It does not mean that you must know and understand *all* he taught before you can stand in an acceptable attitude towards him. We commence as babes, our knowledge has to increase and expand, we have to "grow in the grace and in the *knowledge* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. iii. 18.) But it means that you must have *more than a mere intellectual knowledge of him*. Belief, in the abstract, is nothing without the renewed life. We are justified by faith it is true, but it must be a faith that works by love. We are justified by works also, and "faith without works is dead, being alone" (James ii. 17.) "*That* faith cannot save anyone" (James ii. 14.) "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. xi. 6.) It is equally impossible to please him without an endeavour is made to live in righteousness before him day by day. "If any man is in Christ," in the true and real sense, "he is a new creature, old things have passed away and all things have become new." And to

those who thus believe in Christ, the Son of the Living God, and are baptized into his all-saving Name for the remission of sins" (Acts ii. 38) is the promise that they shall not perish for ever, but have eternal life.

Perhaps some one present may say "Why introduce the question of baptism in the matter. I do not regard that as necessary. There is

NO MENTION MADE OF BAPTISM

in the passage you have been expounding, and I am quite content to take it as it is. Salvation is by faith—not by works ; by believing and trusting—not by submitting to any ordinance of this kind." Well, now, it is quite true that the word baptism does not occur in the 16th verse of the 3rd chapter of John's gospel, but it may be embraced in it notwithstanding. Can you believe in a person in the true sense if you do not follow his example and believe in his teaching? Can a man truthfully declare himself to be a believer in Darwin if he rejects a large portion of what he taught? To believe in Jesus—in the real scriptural sense—is not merely to assent to the fact of his existence, and to many of the incidents recorded of him, but to realize who he was, the glory of his work, the loftiness of his mission, his relationship to the Father, and his relationship to Abraham and David ; to understand, in some degree, the work he came to accomplish, to recognize him as the long promised Messiah whose yet future work is to establish the kingdom of God upon this earth when he shall appear again to raise the dead and beautify all the meek of the earth with salvation, and reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet, and fill the earth with the glory of the everlasting God. It is to accept his teaching, and cheerfully obey his every command, and follow him wherever he has bid us go. We must accept his teaching as a whole. Some people fix upon those passages which insist upon faith as a necessity of salvation, and speak contemptuously of works, and think you do not understand God's "grace" if you hint at "working out your own salvation with fear and trembling" as we are bidden to do (Phil. ii. 12.) And, again, there are those who go to the other extreme, who fix upon certain passages which exalt works, which speak of the necessity of *doing* the will of God ; and these insist that faith is of little or no avail, and that it matters hardly at all what you believe about Jesus so that you perform those works of mercy and love which we know will have his approval at last. Taking the Bible as a whole, we find that faith and works are necessary. Faith as the basis, and works as the evidence that that faith exists.

If, then, we indeed believe in Jesus in the comprehensive sense—so briefly indicated—we shall believe in the necessity of being baptized, for he commanded it, and not only so, but himself submitted to the ordinance—holy and pure though he was, and free from all personal transgression—answering the objection of John with the words :— "Thus (in this manner) it cometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matt. iii. 15.) Surely, if it was necessary for Jesus—the Son of God—to fulfil all righteousness in that manner, it is very presumptuous for us to declare that it is quite unnecessary for us to follow his example, especially after that example was followed by his plain command, and the commands and example of those Apostles who were his associates, and who were inspired by the Spirit of God.

The duty of baptism is very plainly enforced in the New Testament upon all believers of the truth—and upon those only, for no one else was

ever called upon in Apostolic days to submit to this symbolic and expressive ordinance. Rightly understood,

BAPTISM IS AN EXPRESSION OF FAITH

on our part in the Lord Jesus Christ as the giver of that eternal life with which our text has to do. He is "the Resurrection and the Life,"—i.e. the author of it, to all his true people. Their "life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3,) and this act, this going down into the water, and, in a figure, being buried, and rising again from the dead—what does it mean? Only those who understand the way of life can tell. It is highly significant of their faith. The "orthodox" Churches have abandoned the scriptural mode of baptism because they have abandoned the truth which it represents. Even the Baptists fail to appreciate the truth inculcated, for the same reason. It symbolises the hope of the true believer in the resurrection of the dead, as the means of obtaining immortality, through Jesus Christ. He recognizes his own mortality, that he has no life in himself, no inherent deathlessness, and that everlasting life can only be had through him who brought it to light by the gospel (II Tim. i. 10.) He recognises his own sinfulness and that death has passed upon him, and that he can only be pardoned and delivered therefrom by "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world," and believing in him, and his great sacrifice for sin, he is—like Paul, and the converts at Jerusalem—"baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins" (Acts ii. 38, 41; ix. 18; xxii. 16.) It is the outward and visible sign of union with Christ. It is the scriptural manner of identifying ourselves with him who died that we might live. It is the placing of our hands—as it were—upon the head of the atoning victim, and associating ourselves with his death. It is the prescribed manner for the believer to ally himself to Jesus and take upon himself his blessed and exalted name, and so unite himself with the name of the Lord. "Are ye so ignorant," asks Paul in his letter to the Romans, "that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we might also walk in newness of life. *For if we have become united with him by the likeness of his death, we shall be also by the likeness of his resurrection*" (Rom. vi. 3—5.) But what if we are not? What if we refuse to be thus united to him? Will it make no difference? Shall we—all the same—rise to the glorious life prefigured in this manner? Who dare say we shall?

Baptism is thus a representation of death, burial, and resurrection. The burial of one who is convinced that by sin came death, and that by the righteousness of Christ came the resurrection of the dead and eternal life. In a figurative manner the believer is buried and rises again from the dead; he "puts off the old man and puts on the new," rising to a new life of righteousness and union with God and Christ which is the preliminary to that future resurrection from the dead when sin and death "shall have no more dominion over him." This is the significance of baptism. This is plain New Testament teaching upon the matter which none can refute. This is what all believers of the truth submitted to in Apostolic times. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein" they "were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col. ii. 12.) So Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, connects faith and baptism. "For," says he, "ye are all sons

of God through faith, *in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. . . .* And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise" (Gal. iii. 26, 29.) "Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" of all the glory to be revealed, and of that unfading life which will be theirs who "shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever" (Psalm xxxvii. 29.)

And now, having answered this objection, and pointed out the duty and necessity of baptism to which every true-hearted man and woman who believes the truth will be ready to submit, there is one word more in the passage to which we will draw your attention and then conclude.

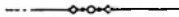
"WHOSOEVER."

There is no restriction. The grace of God is free for all who hear it proclaimed. There is no limitation. "Whosoever will, may come and partake of the water of life freely,"—*freely*. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price!" (Isa. lv. 1.) What can be freer? What can be more gracious? What invitation can be more pressing and hearty? Why not come then and accept the love and the life of God offered through Christ? The feast is provided, the robe of admittance is prepared, the seat is ready, the invitation has reached you. Come! Oh! if there were hard conditions laid down, if there was a price to pay, the majority might well repine and complain, and feel how hopeless the invitation was as far as they were concerned. If a great supper was being prepared in some nobleman's mansion, and a host of poor famished creatures were outside with no chance of getting in—how they would long to enter! If they saw the tempting viands carried in before their eyes, and knew that only those who kept driving up in their carriages were to partake of the good things they saw—how they would desire with them to share the feast! If the policemen ordered them to move on—how murmuringly they would depart to their empty and comfortless homes. God's feast is not like that. The invitation is for you, for me, for all. If—to give a further illustration—a great feast was provided in the east end of London for the poor, but only a limited number could be accommodated, many eager ones and deserving ones might be disappointed. If there was a vast crowd round the doors, and those who prepared the feast came outside and selected sufficient from the crowd to fill the hall, or if those who could first crush in were admitted, and all others sent empty away, what disappointment there would be! God's feast is not like that. You may exclude yourselves by not complying with his conditions, but you may be included in the list of guests if you will. It rests with yourselves. Salvation is a great gift, do not trifle with it. Endless life is a precious boon, do not reject it. Your opportunities are gradually passing away, and soon you will have passed away too, but these words are spoken to you, and the love of God in the gift of his Son has been made known to you to-night, so that whosoever among you believeth on him might not perish, might not pass away into perpetual oblivion, but might have everlasting and glorious life.





THE SOUL : WHAT IS IT ?



IT depends very much, dear friends, upon the source to which we apply for information, as to what answer will be given to the question advertised as the topic for our consideration this evening. Unfortunately, mankind are not all agreed as to the nature, origin and value of the soul. We shall find in our enquiry an astonishing, an almost incomprehensible difference between what the Bible declares it to be, and what men in general teach that it is. When I say men in general, I mean, not only unenlightened heathen persons, those who have never seen the Bible, those who have never heard the truth, those who have no true conception of the being, the nature, or the character of God; but those also who send missionaries to enlighten the extreme darkness of the heathen world, those who have the Bible upon their shelves—where it too often stops—or on their sitting-room tables, where it stands as a kind of ornamental centre piece, with a nice little anti-macassar upon it, and seldom gets removed except for dusting on cleaning days—those who have it in the pulpit, those who profess to be enlightened by it, and to regulate their lives by it, and call themselves Christians—the Methodists, the Congregationalists, the Baptists, the Unitarians, the Plymouth Brethren, the Roman Catholics, and the members of the Established Church of England. I say there will be an astounding difference between what the Bible declares the soul to be and what the majority of the members of all these sects say that it is. This may seem a strange assertion to some who are assembled here to-night, because it may be you have from your earliest infancy been taught to look up to the leaders of these various denominations as heaven-sent messengers, as depositories of truth, as ambassadors of Christ, as those who had a far deeper insight into spiritual truths than was vouchsafed to other men; and you may, therefore, feel ready to interpose with the questions—“Do not these men preach *from* the Bible? Is it not *their* text-book? Are *they* not guided by its declarations? Is not *that* the source of *their* teaching? How then can you assert that there is a vast difference between what

they say upon this question and what the Bible declares?" In reply to these questions, I would say— that such a difference exists I WILL PROVE in the course of my remarks to-night, for the only justification we have to offer for our presence here this evening, and the position we occupy as a body, is the one that they do not proclaim the truth upon this and other subjects very closely related to it; that, though many of them think they are guided by its declarations, and that it is the source of their inspiration, it is an easy task to show that they are out of harmony with the comprehensive teaching of the Scriptures; and, as regards it being their text-book, that is no evidence that they proclaim its verities—a proof of which we have in the fact that the various sects I have named each use it for that purpose, and yet teach the most contradictory doctrines, and are in many instances greatly embittered against each other, while many among them absolutely deny very much of what is taught therein. We must, therefore, invite you to act quite independently of all of them in the investigation of this and other Bible topics; if it be possible—a very hard thing to do—forget what you have been taught, forget what so-called divines preach, come to the Divine Word as to a book you have never seen before, exercise your judgement—if you have any—in reading its pages; be earnest, sincere, humble, yet bold and fearless in your enquiries; seek the truth as men seek for nuggets of gold, or pearls of the ocean; and the truth will doubtless dawn upon your mind, and you will not only see the vanity, the absurdity and hideousness of the doctrines of men, but the beauty, the harmony, the unity, the symmetry, the perfection and the grandeur of the doctrines of the Bible, and the contemplated purpose of the Infinite God.

It will be well, perhaps, at this stage of our remarks, in order to point out effectually the great contrast between divine and human teaching, to refer to the definitions of men in regard to the nature, the capabilities, the value and the durability of the soul of man. This of itself forms a great reservoir, which it would take a long time to exhaust. We shall not, however, attempt to exhaust it, but will simply present to you a summary of their opinions, which are so well known that few perhaps will dispute the correctness of them, and we will appeal to their writings in support of what assertions we make.

One of the most frequent assertions made by the occupants of the pulpit is, that the soul of man is of *priceless value*. There is, perhaps, no one who has been accustomed to attend a place of worship regularly, who cannot call to mind references to the exceeding importance of the being called man, in what is considered the essential element of his being. We have listened to many very extravagant descriptions of his intrinsic value and dignity, albeit the more we know of human nature, the more we see of the meanness, the selfishness and baseness of the many; the more we contemplate the ignorance, the beastliness, the hatred of everything divine, the complete degradation of large masses of humanity, the less are we inclined—apart from any revelation upon the subject—to grant that man is so valuable as he is declared to be. Tell me of the

preciousness of the man "whose god is his belly, whose glory is in what ought to be his shame," of the man who is so brutalised that he is beyond all feelings of love and sympathy ; who revels in drunkenness, who is a terror to his wife and a curse to his children—such a man, or the more respectable one who feeds and fattens upon such as he of priceless value? No! no! It is a profound mistake. Many a horse and ass are more precious and respectable than such as these. If there were—as we are told—a spark of divine essence in all men, a divinely-created soul infused at birth, we should not witness such anomalies in nature ; the divinity would shine through the creature, the internal glory would be manifest ; divine nature could not be brutalised, *immortal beings cannot act like swine*. Yet the preachers reiterate the assertion as to man's worth, and the whole creation of God is thought to be insignificant in value compared with one of these. The Bishop of Bedford, preaching in Lichfield Cathedral some time ago,* spoke of "the *infinite value* of even one soul!" Then from across the Atlantic comes the voice of Talmage, the popular American preacher, who tries to exhaust language in portraying the preciousness of man. "The only way," says he, "to estimate a man is by his soul. We all know that we shall live for ever. Death cannot kill us. Other crafts may be drawn into the whirlpool, or shivered on the rocks, but this life within us will weather all storms and drop no anchor, and ten million years after death will shake out signals on the high seas of eternity. You put the mendicant off your doorstep, and you say he is only a beggar ; but he is worth all the gold of the mountains, worth all the pearls of the sea, worth the solid earth, worth sun and moon and stars, worth the entire material universe. Take all the paper that ever came from the paper mills, and put it side by side and sheet by sheet, and let men with fleetest pens make figures on that paper for ten thousand years, and they will only have begun to express the value of the soul." What fallacies are contained in such an extract as that! What religious fables! What theological quackery! Yet we have all, doubtless, heard the same sentiments over and over again. The divine pen would cross out every sentence in the passage, or else write "Unenlightened pagan foolishness" at the end. It would require a long search on the part of the most ardent believer in these theories to find any warrant for them in the Scriptures, or any single peg upon which they might be hung. Listen :—"Man that is in honour, *and understandeth not*, IS LIKE THE BEASTS THAT PERISH. He shall go to the generation of his fathers (that is, in the grave) ; they shall never see light." You will at your convenience find these expressions in the 19th and 20th verses of the 49th Psalm. Another of the Psalms—the 39th, and the 5th verse—declares that Jehovah has made the "days of man as *an hand-breadth*"—not, as Talmage would say, "as the days of eternity." "Mine age," says David, "is *as nothing* before thee: verily every man *at his best state* is altogether vanity." Because of the brevity of man's life, because of

* October 7, 1882. Reported in *Birmingham Daily Post*, Oct. 9, 1882.

the ephemerality of his existence, God was merciful to the Israelitish nation in the wilderness, and "many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath." For why? "For he remembered that they were *but flesh*; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again" (Ps. lxxviii. 38, 39). Never in the Bible, from beginning to end, do you find language approaching in the slightest degree to that of Talmage and other popular preachers to-day. The comparative worthlessness, and insignificance, and contemptibility of humanity is ever set forth, and man is indeed declared to be but of "few days, and full of vanity," whose "days upon the earth are a shadow" (Job xiv. 1, 2), and who "fadeth and withereth as the grass of the field" (Isa. xl. 6-8). The language of the Almighty himself is perhaps less complimentary to man than that of others, and ought to be rather perplexing to those who talk of the "infinite value of only one soul." In the 40th chapter of Isaiah we have a few specimens of the value of, not only *one* soul, but multitudes of them, whole nations of them, in the sight of God. In the 15th and 17th verses he utters the following sentiments—"Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. . . All nations before him are *as nothing*; and they are counted to him *less than nothing, and vanity*." What think ye of this, ye bishops and divinity doctors, ye who so loudly talk of the priceless-ness of one single man, and so loudly boast of his dignity and importance? "LESS THAN NOTHING, AND VANITY," and that not one only, but the whole of the human race the wide world through! Go back to your Bibles; cast aside your worldly wisdom, which is foolishness with God; empty your mental treasure bags of all they contain; undo all the work of your professors at college; and begin again, learn the alphabet of the Bible, that man is but a dust-formed being, with no more immortality about him than the dog which crosses your path in the street, but that in a little while the grave—hungry to devour him—will one day hide his whole person from the view of his fellow-men; and learn also the true value of the natural man from Jehovah himself, who further declares, in the same chapter to which we have just referred, that "the inhabitants of the earth are *as grasshoppers*," and who states of the highest functionaries therein—the princes and judges of the nations—that "he shall blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble" (verses 22-24),

This supposed value of man is based, as we have already seen, on another idea, itself a mere supposition, itself originally a mere philosophical speculation, and *really* a phantasma which deludes mankind with a pleasing expectation, and leads them on to destruction, drawing them away, as it does, from the true and only source from whence immortality can be obtained. The soul of man, we are constantly being informed, is immortal; more stable than the rocks, more enduring than the hills; destined to live on when the material heavens are all burnt to cinders; yea, as deathless as the Creator, and therefore co-eternal with himself. The sermons, the publications, the hymn-books of the sects are filled

with this doctrine, which is the foundation of all popular religion, and considered to be a very vital point of belief; and, doubtless, ministers would have to look round them to know what to preach if this prop were taken from them, for nearly all they teach is based upon this belief, and falls, with most disastrous consequences to modern ecclesiasticism, if it be proved untrue. The popular belief was exactly stated some time ago by Dr. M'Cave, in the Catholic place of worship in this town.* Preaching upon the subject of education, he said—"They could not look the truth in the face, that man has a soul, without realising that religious knowledge was of supreme consequence to him; for, amid all the perishable things which they saw around them, *the soul of man was immortal and indestructible, and was as deathless as God himself.* What was meant when they said that a father and mother had given existence to a child? *It meant that a being had begun to be, for whom extinction was impossible.* That being might be for ever happy, or for ever miserable; and that being, actually sensitive to pain and pleasure, would live on throughout the ages of eternity." It was the intolerant, persecuting, cruel, and blasphemous Church, of which he is an official, which decreed—in the 15th or 16th century, during the pontificate of Leo X.—that all who denied this doctrine should be shunned and punished as heretics; and it was the canon of a former Pope—Clement V.—which declared the soul to be immortal. This is the stream which has borne this doctrine down to our own day—the Roman Catholic Church, "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." Trace the stream back to its origin, and you will find it, not in the Bible, not in the teaching of apostles, or prophets, or Christ—the only foundation we need trouble to build upon,—you will find it in Paganism, obtained from philosophers in the heathen world, as all the doctrines of Rome are; the followers of which philosophers early obtained a footing in the so-called Church of Christ, bringing with them their heathen dogmas, which became incorporated with the truth, and finally took its place, developing that awful and widespread apostacy which the apostles predicted would (after their death) surely occur. The Protestant sects inherit this doctrine from Rome. It comes to them with baby baptism, confirmation, heaven and hell-going at death, the Trinity, and other relics of Paganism handed down through an Apostate Church.

This, friends, is our contention, that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is of heathen origin. It is a most remarkable thing that the definition of what the soul is, as given by Plato and other Pagan writers, exactly fits in with the definitions of modern "divines." They tell you that the soul is an immaterial entity inside a person—"a man within a man," as I once heard an old Scotch minister, who attended one of our meetings, say—so that you have *two men* instead of one, as was retorted at the time. The one is said to be immaterial, deathless, and incorruptible, but it dwells inside a poor, diseased, mortal, corruptible, material frame; the exact place where it is located no one knows, or

* Kidderminster.

what it is like no one knows. No one has ever seen one, or touched one, and we can hardly realise how they can if the soul be *immaterial*; for if the soul be composed of *nothing*, if it be *without substance*, if no matter of any kind enters into its composition, if it be a fleshless, boneless, formless invisibility, that escapes through the ceiling when you die, well, it is a mysterious thing—or rather a mysterious *nothing*—non-existence itself personified. It is true that speculation has always been rife in reference to this subject. It is said by some to be an exact representation and form of the body, that ramifies every portion of the bodily organisation, and is in fact a second self; and Wesley, in his Journals, tells us of a woman who had a frequent visitant from the other world, who came with a strong smell of brimstone from the nether parts of the earth, or the infernal regions, who met this woman by appointment, and had conversations with her; but, as far as I remember, no form was ever seen, and it requires a considerable amount of credulity to believe the story. How Wesley reconciled it with his own view of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus it is difficult to say, or with his own expressed ideas of the powers of the soul in one of his sermons, where he states that “the soul cannot dispense with the service” of the body; “for an embodied spirit cannot form one thought but by the mediation of its bodily organs.”* The ordinary and popular view is, however, that the soul tabernacles in the body as a tenant in a house, that our individual identity does not consist in the material frame, that the body is not the man, that the soul is the real person, and that, when the body dies, when the house decays, the soul—the tenant—will depart to live elsewhere. This view exactly agrees with that of Plato, the heathen philosopher, who lived long before the time of Christ. “For we are,” says he, “indeed a soul—an immortal being enclosed in a perishable citadel, the tabernacle which nature has provided as a protection from harm.”

Having now stated the heathen and so-called Christian views, which we have seen are identical, the way is prepared for an examination of the teaching of the Bible upon the subject. Our contention to-night is that the views we have referred to are without the slightest Scriptural foundation, that men have not drawn those ideas from the Bible, but rather that they have been indoctrinated with them from childhood, and, coming to the Bible filled with the belief of man's importance and deathlessness, have fastened those ideas upon certain passages, from which they have endeavoured to extort the meaning they desire. It is, however, a most singular thing, the importance of which we cannot insist upon too much, that the words so frequently upon the lips of modern preachers, such as “never-dying soul,” “immortal soul,” “deathless soul,” and similar expressions, NEVER ONCE OCCUR IN THE BIBLE. On no single occasion are they employed, which is an extraordinary thing if the modern contention were true. Never do we find prophet or apostle reminding those to whom they preached of the deathlessness of their being; the opposite is the case, and in this fact we are

* Sermon on “Fall of Man,” vol. ix., p. 148.

sure you will find food for reflection. It is not an answer to this statement to say that the immortality of the soul is taken for granted by Bible writers, and that it is such a self-evident truth that there is no necessity to enforce it. If that were the case in ancient times it would be the case still; and how then is it so necessary on the part of preachers to be continually proclaiming this "self-evident" fact at the present time? Surely, if it were true, we should at least occasionally find a statement to that effect. The messengers of God would never surely forget to point out the truth of a doctrine so momentous and so awfully solemn to every child of man! But no! they are silent, they never teach it; they teach instead the very opposite; so clearly, so plainly, that it is a cause of wonderment that such contrary notions exist.

Now, the word "soul" is an English word, the representative, as we shall see, of two Bible words—one Hebrew, the other Greek. It is not sufficient, therefore, to go to an English dictionary for the meaning of the word; if you do so, you will most likely get a definition of its meaning in harmony with current views, for the compilers of these dictionaries simply give you the meaning of the word according to the beliefs of the people for whom they write. The etymology of the word, however, might help us a little. Richardson, in his dictionary, refers to the Saxon etymology given by Ihre, in which the latter conceives there must be some connection between "sícel" (soul), and "sícelf" (self), perhaps from a Gothic root signifying *the breathing person*. Such an idea embodies the truth, and shows that even the English word did not originally possess the significance attaching to it now. But we will go to the original word, to the Hebrew, to a language which was in existence hundreds of years before the English nation existed, or its language was spoken. Do not mistake me here. The speaker is neither a Greek or a Hebrew scholar, but the next best thing to a knowledge of these languages is to go to acknowledged Hebrew and Greek scholars, about whose ability to translate the original tongues there is no dispute, which it is possible for many of us to do.

The only word translated soul in the Old Testament—with two exceptions only (Isa. lvii. 16, *n'shahmah*, generally rendered breath, as in Isa. ii. 22; and Job xxx. 15, *n'deovah*, which means "liberty," or "excellence")—is *nephesh*. This word occurs no less than seven hundred and fifty-two times, and out of that number it is translated soul four hundred and seventy-five. It is a word applied to animals of all kinds, to fowls of the air, and to creeping things, as well as to man. On the testimony of some of the ablest scholars—themselves believers in the immortality of the soul—we assert that it never means, and that it is never used to express the idea of a conscious entity separate from the body. Dr. M'Culloch says, in his work on the "Credibility of the Scriptures"—"There is no word in the Hebrew language that signifies either soul or spirit in the technical sense in which we use the terms, as implying something distinct from the body" (vol. ii., p. 471). Parkhurst, the distinguished Hebrew scholar, says—"As a noun, *nephesh* hath been

supposed to signify the spiritual part of man, or what we commonly call the soul. I must for myself confess that I can find *no passage* where it hath *undoubtedly* this meaning." The "Bible Student's Concordance," by Aaron Pick, Professor of Hebrew and Chaldee, from the University of Prague, gives, as the meaning of the word *nephesh*, "life, animal breath." Dr. Young's Concordance, one of the most recent and most able of any, gives the meaning of the word "breath," "animal soul."

The word is derived from a Hebrew verb, which signifies "to breathe, to respire, to breathe strongly, to pant;" it also signifies "to take breath," as after fatigue. Life, or respiration, is therefore, the radical meaning of the word in Hebrew, as it is also in Greek and Latin. *Nephesh*, however, the noun derived from the verb having these significations, has a considerable number of meanings. There is no one single definition of the word that will suit all cases where it occurs. When I tell you that the translators of our Bible translated this one word *nephesh* by forty-five English words, you will, perhaps, understand this. Not that there is really a necessity for such a number of different renderings; they might be greatly reduced. One writer states that the whole forty-four—excluding the word soul—might be reduced to four, viz.—creature, person, life, and desire. The Lexicon of Gesenius arranges the meaning of the word under six different headings, the sixth of which is included in the first, viz.—*First*, "Breath, Job xli. 21; a living breath, Gen. i. 30." *Second*, "Life, the vital principle in animal bodies (Latin, *anima*), which was supposed to reside in the *breath*, Gen. xxxv. 18, 1 Kings xvii. 21; also for the life (taken away), *i.e.*, for the death of any one, Jonah i. 14, 2 Sam. xiv. 7." *Third*, "A living being, that which has life, Josh. x. 28; every living thing, v. 30, 32, 35, 37; more fully, Gen. i. 20, 24, ii. 7. In the Mosaic laws, used to denote *any one, any person*." Rendered also "a dead body, a corpse, Num. vi. 6, etc." *Fourth*, "The soul, spirit, as seat of the volitions and affections, Deut. xxvi. 16, Cant. i. 7, etc. In other words it signifies the mind, or brain, which undoubtedly is the seat of the feelings, affections, and emotions. It is also used in the sense of 'I myself,' 'thou,' etc. By a peculiar idiom, the Hebrew says my soul hungers, thirsts, fasts, is cold, etc." *Fifth*, "Desire, also the object of desire, the desire of eating, hunger. A hungry man, Prov. xxiii. 2, Isa. lvi. 2. By a metonymy, that which satisfies hunger, Isa. lviii. 10; desire of revenge, murder, etc., Exod. xv. 9 (translated 'lust'), also Ps. lxxviii. 18." *Sixth*, "Scent, fragranciness, odour, derived from signification No. 1., Isa. iii. 20." In this verse the word *nephesh* rendered "tablets," margin, "houses of the soul," should be, according to Gesenius and others, "smelling bottles." "The word," says Barnes, commenting on the passage, "translated *soul*, means also the *breath*; and hence, as one of its meanings, that which is *breathed*, or which is smelled; *scent, fragranciness, odour*. The phrase here means, undoubtedly, *smelling-boxes or bottles*; boxes containing perfumes or fragrant odours. The word tablets has no meaning here." These definitions, from most eminent and world-famed scholars, will be sufficient; they say nothing in favour of the orthodox conception.

It may seem a very strange thing to many how it came to pass that *nephesh* in the Hebrew, or *psuche*, the Greek word for soul—both of which words referred to the breath—acquired so different a meaning, and came afterwards to represent an immortal principle in man. I read some most excellent remarks recently from the pen of the learned Max Müller, who has delved into the origin of language perhaps as much, or more than any other man. The article was one "On the Philosophy of Mythology," and appeared some years ago in the *Contemporary Review*.* I should like to reproduce some portion of the article, as it throws considerable light upon the way such a meaning was acquired. "When man wished," he argued, "for the first time to grasp and express a distinction between the body and something else within him distinct from the body, an easy name that suggested itself was *breath*. The breath seemed something immaterial and almost invisible, and it was clearly connected with the life that pervaded the body, for as soon as the breath ceased, the life of the body became extinct. Hence, the Greek name *psuche*, which originally meant breath, was chosen to express at first the principle of life, as distinguished from the decaying body, afterwards the incorporeal, the immaterial, the undecaying, the immortal part of man—his soul, his mind, his self. All this was very natural: When a person dies, we, too, say that he has given up the ghost; and ghost, too, meant originally, spirit, and spirit meant breath. The Greeks expressed the same idea by saying that the *psuche* (breath) had left the body, had fled through the mouth, or even through a bleeding wound, and had gone into Hades, which meant literally no more than the place of the Invisible. That the breath had become invisible was matter of fact; that it had gone to the house of Hades, was mythology springing spontaneously from the fertile soil of language." . . . "We saw that *psuche*," he says, a little further on, "meaning originally the breathing of the body, was gradually used in the sense of vital breath, and as something independent of the body; and that at last, when it had assumed the meaning of the immortal part of man, it retained that character of something independent of the body, thus giving rise to the conception of a soul, not only as a being without a body, but in its very nature opposed to a body. As soon as that proposition had been established in language and thought, philosophy began its work in order to explain how two such heterogeneous powers could act on each other—how the soul could influence the body, and how the body could determine the soul. Spiritualistic and materialistic systems of philosophy arose, and all this in order to remove a self-created difficulty, in order to join again what language had severed, the living body and the living soul."

This is evidently the manner in which pulpit teaching on this question came into existence, viz., in the heathen world, where all was vague speculation, and the future mere guess work; but these ideas are not

* December, 1871.

found anywhere in the Hebrew Scriptures, to which we now turn for a little while, to see what is the nature of the souls of which we so frequently read. The first time the word *nephesh* is translated soul in the English Bible is in Genesis ii. 7—"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul ;" or a living creature, or a living being or person, or, according to Dr. Kitto, "*a living animal.*" This text is sometimes adduced to prove the immortality of man : it does nothing of the kind. Paul—the best commentator upon the verse—quotes it *to prove the very opposite*, as you will find by referring to the 15th chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, where, speaking of man's perishing, corruptible frame, he says, verse 44—"There is a natural" (or animal, or *soulical* body, for that is the very word used in the original) "there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body, *and so it is written,*"—now, this is his proof text to show that there is a *natural* or *animal* body ; he appeals to the Scripture—"SO IT IS WRITTEN, The first man Adam was made *a living soul* ; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was *not first* which is spiritual, but that which is *natural* ; and *afterwards* that which is spiritual. THE FIRST MAN IS OF THE EARTH, EARTHY : the second man is the Lord from heaven." Such is the teaching of Gen. ii. 7, according to Paul. Strange that people should quote it to prove the natural immortality of mankind with *his* argument staring them in the face ! The fact that Jehovah breathed the breath of life into man proves nothing in favour of the popular view ; the animals possess the same breath of life, as abundant Scripture passages prove. Now, these two words, "living soul," occur but twelve times in the Old Testament, and those who lay so much stress on them should be careful. They do so ignorantly, they are not aware of the fact that in every other instance, *in each of the eleven other cases*, the words are applied to beasts, birds, fishes, and reptiles, all of which—four times in the 1st chapter of Genesis—are called "living souls" by Jehovah himself ! The translators have concealed this fact by rendering the words—correctly enough—"living creature ;" the wonder is why they made an exception in the one particular case where it applies to man. We thus see that the word *nephesh* was applied to man's living organism, created from the dust of the ground ; therefore a soul is a very material being. It is not an indwelling intangibility, but it is, as Paul declares, "*a natural body*"—"of the earth, earthy ;" not "a vital spark of heavenly flame," as the poet declares it to be. When we understand that soul is equivalent to person, a great many other things become comprehensible as well. We can perceive how it is that souls can eat and drink, can be killed, can be tortured, can be laid in iron, can go into captivity, can be burnt up by the flame of fire, can be defiled by touching creeping things forbidden by the Mosaic law, can be deceived, can offer a meat-offering unto the Lord, can be stolen, can be smitten, can be hungry, can die, can enter the grave and can come forth again. All these things are affirmed of the souls of the Bible, for I have verified them recently, and looked at the references where they occur ; but how singular it would sound to say these things

of the immaterial entities, or non-entities, of popular belief! Take, for instance, an oft-quoted passage—"The soul that sinneth *it shall die.*" The meaning is plain—"the *person* that sinneth shall suffer death;" but the moment you introduce the immortal element into it, the moment you think of a church and chapel soul, you introduce confusion, for *they* are declared to be *deathless, undying, eternal*, therefore the passage declares an actual impossibility; and so they have to introduce another meaning to the word die, and say that it means *spiritual death*, and the sinning soul—which can't literally die—shall live in torment for ever! They forget that the death spoken of *is the reward of spiritual death*; it is the soul or person who *has* died, in the spiritual sense, who is to be punished with literal death. The word soul, as used in this passage, denoting the person, very frequently occurs. In thirty places it is translated "person," as in the following: "The king of Sodom said unto Abraham, give me the *persons* (margin, souls), and take the goods to thyself" (Gen. xiv. 21). "Esau took all the *persons* of his house" (Gen. xxxvi. 6). The Israelites were commanded to gather of the manna "according to the number of their *persons*," or souls (Ex. xvi. 16). "Whosoever hath killed any *person*" (Hebrew, soul), we read in Num. xxxi. 19. That was evidently not an orthodox soul or it could not be killed. In the first book of Samuel, chapter 22, verse 22, we read that David said to Abiathar, "I have occasioned *the death* of all the *persons* of thy father's house"—the death of all the souls. So we read, without referring to the passages, "The *persons* were sixteen thousand; of which the Lord's tribute was thirty and two *persons*" (Num. xxxi. 40). "Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent *person*" (Deut. xxvii. 25), "Neither doth God respect any *person*" (2 Sam. xiv. 14). "Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred thirty and two *persons*" (Jer. lii. 29). "If the sword come and take any *person* from them" (Ezek. xxxiii. 6). In all these, and other cases we might quote, it is the Hebrew word *nephesh* which is translated, quite correctly, person. They show us the kind of souls the Bible speaks about—organised, tangible, material, men and women, and not the ghostly beings of pulpit talk. But elsewhere the word is translated souls, as in the following: "And Abram took Sarai his wife; and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance they had gathered, and the *souls* that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth into the land of Canaan" (Gen. xii. 5). So we read also that "All the *souls* that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy *souls*" (Ex. i. 5)—not immaterial souls these. So also it is recorded of Joshua, when he captured certain cities, that "he smote (or put to death) all the *souls* that were therein" (Josh. x. 28, 30, 32); so that "there was not any left *to breathe*" (xi. 11). In the New Testament the same meaning attaches to the words. On the day of Pentecost, through the preaching of the word, "there were added unto the disciples about three thousand *souls*" (Acts. ii. 41). Stephen stated before the Sanhedrim, in his history of the Jewish nation, that Joseph "called his father Jacob to him (in Egypt), and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen *souls*. So Jacob went down into Egypt, *and died*,

he and our fathers" (Acts vii. 14, 15)—that is the seventy-five *souls*. Paul travelled from place to place "confirming *the souls* of the disciples" (Acts xiv. 22); and in the account of Paul's eventful voyage, recorded in Acts xxvii., the writer says, in verse 37, "And we were in all in the ship *two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.*" We use the word in precisely the same sense when we speak of a vessel foundering at sea, and so many *souls* being lost. The Bible writers had no more intention of conveying the meaning of immortal souls than the newspaper writers who describe a wreck.

But you may say that we very frequently have the expressions "my soul," "thy soul," "that soul," "our soul," "his soul," and "own soul." Yes! we have. It was, as no scholar will dispute, the Hebrew mode of saying myself, thyself, themselves, yourselves, himself; for it is translated in these ways over and over again. In some places it would have been very awkward for the translators, believing (as we suppose they did) in the immateriality and immortality of the soul, to render the words "his soul" or "my soul." For instance, we should have to read of Joseph, in Psalm 105, and at verse 18, as the margin of your Bibles will show, thus—"Whose feet they hurt with fetters: *his soul* was laid in iron." Fancy putting chains upon a soul that no one can see or touch! You see they have put "*he* was laid in iron." Of this same Joseph we should elsewhere have to read that Reuben, interposing on his behalf, said to his brethren, "Let us not *kill his soul*" (Gen. xxxvii. 21). In Deuteronomy xix., verse 6, we should have to read, "Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer . . . *and slay his soul.*" It would never do to insert the word immortal here; what a contradiction we should have! Slaying an immortal soul that never, never dies!!! Balaam, too, we should have exclaiming—"Let my immortal soul die the death of the righteous!" for it is the same word there translated "me," as is elsewhere translated "my soul." Whenever we come across such expressions, therefore, as those of David, in Ps. xlix. 15, "But God will redeem *my soul* from the power of the grave;" or Ps. xvi. 10, "For thou wilt not leave *my soul* in hell" (or the grave); or Ps. lix. 3, "For, lo, they lie in wait for *my soul*;" or Ps. xxxv. 13, "I humbled *my soul* with fasting," there is no difficulty in fixing the meaning, the contexts always show that they cannot mean immortal souls, for *they* are not supposed to enter the grave, nor can fasting have any effect upon them; but the words mean me—"God will redeem *me* from the power of the grave;" "They lie in wait for *me*;" "I humbled *myself* with fasting;" and so on, wherever the word occurs.

I wish just to glance at another use made of the same word. I told you that one of the definitions of this word given by Gesenius (and other scholars as well) was "the vital spirit" and "animal life." Soul in a large number of places is the equivalent of life in our version of the Scriptures, both in the Old Testament and in the New. "This night shall thy soul (or life) be required of thee," was said to the rich fool of the parable (Luke xii. 20). In the 16th chapter of Matthew and the

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26th verse, the question is asked—from which many a Methodist sermon has been preached on the value of the soul—“What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Here the word ought to be rendered life, as it is in the Revised Version. The meaning of the passage is very clear. If a man is sordid, grasping, ambitious, and could gratify his desires to the extent of gaining the whole world, of what use would it be to him in the absence of life to enjoy it? If he lost that, he would have no capacity to use it, or take the benefit of it in any way, and there is nothing a man can give in exchange for his life. The cattle on a thousand hills, and the gold of a thousand mines, cannot redeem the life spirit when once it has fled. “The redemption of the soul” (or life), as the Psalmist says (xlix. 8), “is precious;” it is beyond all price, and beyond all human power. Now, look at the verse before that one in the 16th chapter of Matthew—the 25th. We have the word *life* twice over in this verse. You would scarcely believe that this is—in the original—precisely the same word as the one rendered soul twice over in the very next verse! Yet such is the case. The translators were astute enough to see that it would not do to put soul there. Read it with that substitute, and listen how it sounds—“For whosoever will save *his soul* shall *lose it*; and whosoever will *lose his soul* FOR MY SAKE shall *find it*!” It is an astounding proposition to lose an immortal soul for Christ’s sake, is it not? But if we lose *our life* in his service, and for him, we shall find it in the more perfect and glorious existence which it is in his power to bestow at the resurrection; while, to save it now through fear and cowardice, will only be to lose it then. Now, in the Old Testament, the word *nephesh* is translated *life* and *lives* one hundred and twenty times, and is applied indiscriminately to man and beast; while in the New Testament, the Greek word is rendered *life* forty out of one hundred and five times that it occurs. Herod “sought the young child’s *life*” (Matt. ii. 20). “Take no thought for your *life*” (Matt. vi. 25). The man who comes to Christ and does not “hate his own *life* (or soul) cannot be his disciple.” Paul “counted not his *life* (or soul) dear unto him.” It was not to him, therefore, a precious immortal soul. “The Son of man came to give his *life* a ransom for many.” These are a few examples. In the Old Testament, Lot was told to “escape for his *life*.” “David saw that Saul was come out to seek his *life*.” Later on, he said—“Behold, my son (Absalom) seeketh my *life*” (2 Sam. xvi. 11).

In Gen. ix. 4-5, we get a valuable definition concerning the soul or life, and I would have you remember that this is Jehovah’s definition, and, occurring in the early portion of the Divine Word, should govern the meaning of the word elsewhere. We are told here that God said to Noah—“But flesh with the *life* (soul) thereof, which is *the blood thereof*, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood of your *lives* (souls) will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man’s brother will I require the *life* (soul) of man.” Hence, in the giving of the law, we read—“*Life for life*”

(Ex. xxi. 23); in other words, "*soul for soul*." This passage in Genesis defines a most important matter. It tells us plainly the animating principle of all flesh, both of men and animals, is not an important entity within, but the blood—the soul of the flesh is the blood. This is confirmed elsewhere. Turn to Leviticus, the 17th chapter; look at verses 10-12. "I will even set my face against that *soul* that eateth blood (imagine, if you can, an orthodox soul being guilty of such an act!), and will cut him off from among his people. *For the life* (or soul, Heb. *nephesh*) of the flesh is the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls (yourselves): for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul (*i.e.*, the forfeited life, the person dying representatively). Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, no soul of you shall eat blood.' Verse 14—"For it is the *life* (soul, Heb. *nephesh*) of all flesh: the blood of it is for the life thereof: . . . the *life* (Heb. *nephesh*) of all flesh is in the blood thereof: whosoever eateth of it shall be cut off." These are divine declarations, and they harmonise exactly with science. You take away the blood from any animal or person, and they die. The life, and vigour, and healthiness of all men depends on the blood. "Little by little, every part of the body is mouldering away, and as continually being made new by the blood. The blood is the life. When that ceases to flow, it ceases both to nourish and to be nourished. The brain is as dependent for its energies upon the blood, and upon continual combustion and reparation, as any other portion of the frame. Death is the cessation of all functions. It is followed by the speedy dissipation of the combined elements which formed the organism. The ultimate atoms remain in other combinations. The forces are conserved in other forms. But the integer, the animal (the man), which resulted from the former combination, is no more. Science knows nothing of the continuance of any willing, or thinking, or feeling faculty after death, which the animal (or man) may have possessed in life."* Only the Divine Being can reunite these scattered atoms, and produce the identical being again.

I have thus endeavoured, as far as time will permit, to give you the "orthodox" view, and, in contrast therewith, the Bible view of "What is the Soul." I think I have clearly proved that the former view is false; and that, first of all, the radical meaning of the word *nephesh*, is to breathe, or exhale. Secondly, that, in a constructive sense, it means the whole person, the living organism; and it would be easy to show, too, that the word is applied even to the dead bodies of men (Lev. xix. 28; xxi. 1; xxii. 4, 6; Num. v. 2; vi. 11). Thirdly, we have shown that the soul is also continually spoken of as the life, or the vital principle of the animal frame. "The soul of all flesh is in the blood." If you ask me what is the life of the blood, I point you to God. God is life. He is the fountain of all life. In him we "live, and move, and have our being." He breathed into man originally, or

* "Life in Christ," by Ed. White, p. 24.

caused man to breathe, the breath of life. That mysterious principle is in the air. We breath it, it purifies the blood, we live thereby ; cut of from it we die and go to dust. It is God's universal spirit that sustains us ; hence, Job says, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (xxxiii. 4). This breath is in a man's nostrils, as Isaiah declares (ii. 22) ; and if God "set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself *his* spirit and *his* breath, all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust," as Elihu declares (Job xxxiv. 14, 15). Thus "the dust returns to the earth as it was ; and the spirit (the animating principle of all existence) shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccles. xii. 7).

Friends, there is no inherent immortality in our nature ; we have "no life in ourselves," as Jesus said to the Jews. We flourish and fade as the leaves of summer and autumn. We are all passing away. In a little while we shall be gone. The grave will open for us and close over us, and the place which now echoes with our footsteps, and resounds with our voices, will know our presence no more, for death will have closed our eyes, and silenced our voices, and stayed our activities, and paralysed our heart-strings, and stopped the pulse-beat for ever. Did we say for ever ? Is it so ? you ask. Does death end all ? Is there no future existence for men ? Is immortality only a baseless dream ? You that are strangers to our meetings may ask such questions as these. What is the answer ? The Scriptures give an answer, and it is this— "Jesus Christ hath abolished death, and hath brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. i. 10). HE brought it to light, *not* Plato. How did he do it ? Read your Bibles, and you will find an answer to the question. He lived a life of spotless purity, which his relationship to God enabled him to do. This life of righteousness was closed by a sacrificial death. He was rejected by men. He was scorned and derided by his fellows. They pierced his brow with thorns, his hands with nails, and his side with a spear. He hung upon the cross in agony, till his head was bowed in death. His soul, or life, or himself, "was made an offering for sin." "He poured out his soul unto death." It was a sacrificial death. He laid down his life for the sheep. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. liii. 5, 10, 12). They laid him in the grave, but it could not hold him. They rolled a great stone to its mouth, but it was of no avail. They set a seal upon it, but in vain. They set a watch of soldiers, but they became as dead men. His soul was not abandoned to the grave. God would not permit his Holy One to see corruption. "The exceeding greatness of his power," therefore, was exerted in bringing him forth from the grave (Eph. i. 19, 20). The Spirit of God, angelically applied, quickened Jesus. His frame quivered again with a new life. His heart throbbed again, to stop no more. He partook of the life of God. He now has "life in himself." He will die no more. "He liveth by the power of God." "Henceforth death hath no more dominion over him." His

body was made incorruptible and deathless, and *that is the only immortality* the Bible knows anything about. *That* is what he brought to light, and that is how it was done.

It is by a resurrection from the dead, or by a change of the living, mortal being at the coming of Christ (1 Cor. xv. 51-54) and in no other way that a painless, glorious, unending life may be obtained. This is what we would impress upon each one at the present time. This is the great fact of Apostolic teaching. It cannot be doubted : it cannot be denied. No impartial person, though he be a believer in the Platonic doctrine of the immortality of the soul, can critically read the New Testament and not be impressed with this great truth. This has indeed been fully admitted by those who hold that belief. The following remarkable quotations from two eminent men fully confirm these statements. The "Rev." C. H. Spurgeon wrote or gave utterance to these words some time ago, as published in the *Bible Echo*:—"Reflecting the other day upon the sad state of the Churches at the present moment, I was led to look back at apostolic times, and to consider wherein the preaching of the present day differed from the preaching of the apostles. I remarked the vast difference of their style from the set and formal oratory of the present age. But the *main* difference I observed was in the *subjects* of their preaching. *Surprised I was when I discovered that the very staple of the preaching of the apostles was the resurrection from the dead.* The apostles when they preached, always testified concerning the resurrection of Jesus, and the consequent resurrection of the dead. It appears that the alpha and omega of their gospel was the testimony that Jesus died and rose from the dead according to the Scriptures." It is a very remarkable thing that Mr. Spurgeon should have been so long in the ministry before finding out this central and all-important truth! That he should be surprised to find out the very foundation fact upon which the apostles' hopes of eternal life were built after he had been one of the most popular preachers in England for many years! Had he preached the whole truth before he "discovered" what "the staple preaching of the apostles was"? Must there not have been something very vital left out of his proclamation when "the staple" truth was unnoticed and unrecognized? We think so, and so must you. But we will give you another quotation from the pen of J. N. Darby, the founder of the sect known as Plymouth Brethren. In his *Hopes of the Church* he writes, pp. 45, 46, commenting upon Acts xvii. 18-30, "He [Paul] announced in the midst of the learned Gentiles this doctrine [of resurrection], which was the stumbling-block of their carnal wisdom. Socrates and other philosophers believed in the immortality of the soul; but when these men, curious in science, heard of the resurrection of the dead, they mocked. An unbeliever is able to discourse about immortality; but if he hears about the resurrection of the dead, he turns the subject into derision. And why? Because in virtue of the immortality of the soul he may exalt himself, he can elevate his own importance. There is something in the idea which can ally itself to man

such as he is ; but to think of dust raised again ! of a living and glorious being made out of it ! this is a glory which belongs only to God, a work of which God alone is capable ; for if a body reduced to dust can be reconstituted by God into a living and glorified man, nothing is hid from his power. With the immortality of the soul man can still connect the idea of self—of power in the body ; but when *the leading truth is the resurrection of the body, and not the immortality of the soul*, man's impotency becomes glaring." The same writer, a little further on in the same work says (pp. 50, 51), "We would express our conviction, that the idea of *the immortality of the soul** has no source in the gospel ; that it comes on the contrary from the Platonist ; and that it was just when the coming of Christ was denied in the Church, or at least began to be lost sight of, that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul came in to replace that of the *resurrection*. This was about the time of Origen. It is hardly needful to say, that we do not doubt the immortality of the soul ; we mark the fact only that this view has taken the place of the doctrine of the resurrection of the Church as the epoch of its joy and glory." It is a very singular thing that this writer professes his faith in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul after thus most emphatically teaching that its source is not in the gospel, that it is not of divine but heathen origin, and that it was only introduced into the Church when the Bible doctrine of the resurrection and the second coming of Christ was going out !

The Bible truth of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead could not, however, escape his attention as a Bible student, neither can it of any who carefully read their New Testaments. It is the promise upon which rests all hope of future existence. Jesus was raised from the dead, and because he lives the believer hopes to live also (John xiv. 19). He has promised that "the gates of hell (Hades, the grave) shall not prevail against his Church" (Matt. xvi. 18), and the reason is that he holds the keys, and can therefore bring its prisoners forth. This fact he re-iterated to the apostle John for his comfort in the island of Patmos. "Fear not" said he ; "I am the first and the last, and the Living one ; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of hades" (Rev. i. 18). The resurrection of the dead depends upon the fact of the resurrection of Jesus. The one will prove the cause of the other. If Jesus never emerged alive from the tomb of Joseph no human being will ever live again to die no more. The question of Job "If a man die shall he live again" (ch. xiv. 14) would still echo through the earth and no answer would light up the valley of the shadow of death. Paul, who is more to be trusted on this important question than our modern theologians, saw this, and taught this plainly enough. Nothing could be clearer than his reasoning upon the subject in the 15th chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians. In the Church at Corinth

* "As to the expression (2 Tim. i. 10) ; 'brought life and immortality to light,' immortality signifies the incorruptibility of the body, and not the immortality of the soul.'—J. N. D.

there were those who denied the doctrine or fact of resurrection. The apostle reasoned with them. He showed them where their philosophic and sceptical ideas would lead them, and what the result of their assertions would be if they were true. "Now" he said, commencing at verse 12, "if Christ is preached that he hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain, yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we witnessed of God that he raised up the Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable." All these calamities resulted from the denial of this vital doctrine—if that denial could be maintained. First, there was no present living Christ. Secondly, their preaching was vain, or void, or useless. Let those modern deniers of the doctrine think of this, and if they continue to preach still, let them have the honesty to put the Bible on one side and say they have abandoned the ancient gospel hope. Thirdly, the faith based upon this supposed fact was vain also,—would never be realized, and those who professed it were still in their sins, in an unjustified condition. Fourthly, they—the apostles—were false witnesses, because they declared that Jesus had died, and was buried, and that God had raised him from the dead, and that they had seen him, handled him, and conversed with him (in the majority of cases) after his resurrection, and if what some in that church declared was the fact, they, the apostles, stated what was not true, and—without any hope of worldly advantage, with nothing but persecution and daily misery staring them in the face,—went from city to city, and country to country publishing a gross falsehood, and deceiving their fellow-mortals with a hope of immortality that was utterly vain and delusive. Fifthly, those who had died, those who had fallen asleep in Christ had perished. Their eyes would behold the light of the sun no more. They had for ever ceased to be. They had indeed

"Closed their eyes in hope and trust
Of rising glorious from the dust,"

but as their hope was based upon a falsehood, as the one whom they expected would raise them from the dead had no existence himself, and therefore did not possess the keys of hades and of death, they would sleep on undisturbed while the ages rolled their ceaseless round, and no voice would ever disturb the silence of their profound repose. Sixthly, the professing Christians, but more especially the apostles themselves, were of all men most to be pitied. Their state was most deplorable. This will be evident when it is considered what they endured for what they professed and believed. You need only consult the brief history given in the Acts of the Apostles, and such passages as 2 Cor. iv. 7-12;

vi. 4-10 ; xi. 23-33 ; 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16 ; 2 Thess. i. 4-12 ; Heb. x. 32-36 ; James ii. 6, 7 ; 1 Peter i. 6, 7 ; etc., etc., to see that this is true. They carried their lives in their hand, they endured hardships innumerable, all for—nothing ! Simply to die at last and never come to life again ! Well might Paul exclaim further down in the chapter as he grasped the whole situation,—in a passage utterly inexplicable if the modern doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and its bliss and glorification at death be true—“ If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, *what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not ?* ” Can any modern divine who believes in the immortality of the soul, and its departure to heaven at death utter language of this description ? Is it not quite at variance with all his hopes and expectations ? Does he not expect to reap very great advantage immediately death occurs ? And does not that expectation reveal a wonderful divergence from the apostolic hope and teaching ? No resurrection—no advantage, Paul reasoned. Every advantage independent of a resurrection the modern divines teach ! And in their theology that event can very well be dispensed with altogether, for the soul is supposed to realize fulness of joy when it is released from this “ mortal coil ” which is supposed to clog its powers and largely interfere with its capabilities under present circumstances. However, this notion cannot be maintained if we are to admit any divine authority or knowledge on the part of the apostle. With him death was the end of all consciousness and activity until the morning of the resurrection. It was a sleep—and is constantly referred to as such—until He should come who had power to wake the sleepers and clothe them with glory and immortality. And apart from the coming of Him who declared himself to be “ the Resurrection and the Life ” (John xi. 25)—that is the One by whom the resurrection would be brought about, and through whom the life of the future age would be conferred—if he never came, if he did not live to come, then death was an endless sleep, they would all perish like the seed sown in your field that never germinates : death was a finality, and truly, of all men they were the most to be pitied ; and if such were indeed the case, then, the apostle said “ let us eat and drink ; for to-morrow we die,” let us make the most of this present, fleeting, ephemeral existence, let us be as merry as we can under the circumstances, let us not endure such privation and sorrow for a fruitless hope, for soon the chapter of their existence would close with a final fullstop and they would vanish from the scene to be known no more.

Let the modern deniers of this doctrine who are reverent and devout, and who have left within them any regard for the Bible, face this question. They deny the truth for a fable. They forsake fact for fiction. They give up the substance for the shadow. They are following a will-o'-the-wisp. But to you we say, in the language of Paul, “ Be not deceived : evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not ; for some have not the knowledge of God ” (1 Cor. xv. 33, 34).

Jesus lives ! that is the basis of our hope. “ Now is Christ risen

from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that sleep " (1 Cor. xv. 20). He lives—as we have stated—in a nature incorruptible and deathless, and glorious beyond compare. Never more will the grave claim him for its prey, never again will his eyes close as they did once upon the cross, for he liveth "after the power of an endless—an indissoluble—life" (Heb. vii. 16), a life that can never be dissolved. The same nature, perfect and glorious beyond all description, is offered you. It is not for all. It is only for those who know the gospel, and believe it, and obey the truth, for those who "*seek for*" it, as Paul declares (Rom. ii. 7). Will you have it? It is for you to decide. But the time is short. In a little time all your chances will be gone; but if your decision be for Christ, and him alone, the glory before you is unspeakable. He who is the "Resurrection and the Life" will shortly be here; by his power the responsible dead will come forth from their graves, and those who are found worthy will realise in their experience all the gladness, the vigour, the power and the glory of angelic, of divine nature; will understand all the hidden meaning of the words—"This mortal must put on immortality" (1 Cor. xv. 53); and will then be able with undying lips to exclaim—"Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. xv. 54, 54).



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THE IMPOSITION OF THE CLERGY:

A CONSIDERATION OF THEIR PRIESTLY CLAIMS AND
ASSUMPTIONS, AS SET FORTH BY ARCHDEACON LEA IN AN
ADDRESS DELIVERED IN ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH,
KIDDERMINSTER.



“The parson who sets up a claim to authority on the strength of his orders, bears, in the eyes of the educated layman a disagreeable resemblance to a trickster. In the arena of life he is trying to get an advantage outside the rules of the game. Other men in that arena are measuring themselves squarely by their intellectual and moral quality and they resent the dodge by which this black-coated competitor seeks to evade the criterion. George Eliot remarks somewhere that there is no calling like that of a clergyman for securing to a man of mediocre ability a position of influence altogether out of proportion to his faculty. She was describing the order of things fifty years ago. The cleric of our day has gone one better than this. He has made himself a priest. Against the learning or the genius of the layman he sets his power, supernaturally vested in his order, of working miracles. The trick is an old one, and has had amazing vogue in its day. But the educated world at last sees through it, and cannot help despising a little the men who seek for power by such a method.”—Extract from an Article—“Clericalism the Enemy” in the *Christian World*. —

THE Church of England is called the Protestant Church. Once it was connected with and was a part of the Roman Catholic Church. During the time of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, the authority of the Pope in Ecclesiastical matters in England was set aside, and owing to the efforts of the Reformers, many of the doctrines of Rome, were repudiated and protested against as repugnant to Scripture and to common sense. A lecturer in this town, some time ago, whose address we answered at the time,* lecturing on behalf of the Church of England, and supported by the local clergy, told us that—during the period to which we have referred—the Church reformed itself from the errors that had been imbibed. The Church, he said, at the Reformation “washed her face,”—“it had got dirty and was washed.” Now, we entirely agreed with him as to its previous dirty condition, that is, in the doctrinal sense; for, of course, he had, and we have, in view only the foul doctrines which were taught by her as a branch of the Church of Rome; but we did not agree with him that the washing was perfect. It was only half a wash; a large number of Romish and unscriptural doctrines and practices were left behind and exist to-day. Nevertheless, it became a Protestant Church—a Church which protested against the

* See Pamphlet *Who Established the Church of England*.

errors of Rome. A number of her Thirty-nine Articles prove this, to which, as we shall show, a large number of her so-called priests are now false, although professedly bound by them. They condemn "Works of Supererogation," "Purgatory," "Speaking (in the Church) in Foreign Tongues," the so-called Sacraments of Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction; Transubstantiation; the withholding of the wine from the people in the Lord's Supper; the sacrifice of the Mass, and other things practised and believed by the Church of Rome, of which the Church of England was once a part. These doctrines are distinctly singled out and condemned, and every clergyman in the Church of England is formally compelled to condemn these doctrines, and yet it is a fact that in that Church there are some thousands of men so regardless of the vows they have taken, and of the articles to which they have set their seal, and which are the supposed basis of their ministry, that they teach the exact opposite to these articles, and proclaim as Bible verities those falsehoods against which they ought to protest. Such broken vows, such dishonest action, passes the comprehension of ordinary, straightforward men, yet so it is. If these teachers were honest, they would abandon a Church whose articles condemn their belief: But no, they cling to their positions, they hold on tenaciously to their livings:—the cash, at least is essential, though the articles go to the wind. I think the power and influence of this Romanizing party in the Church is but little known. They are called the High Church Party, and they are zealous, earnest, and very numerous. Their numbers are rapidly increasing, and they have much wealth on their side. They are ceaselessly active in their inculcation of Romish doctrine and their efforts to unprotestantize the Church. Their work is very effectual among the women. They have their sisterhoods and guilds of various kinds, and large numbers of females are under their control. It is pitiable to observe the abjectness that is manifested by weak-minded people towards the clergy. But this deference is sought after and inculcated by those to whom it is shown. They love the praise of men. There are large numbers of people who think very much of being noticed by the clergyman, and who scarcely dare question anything he advances, while the ignorance of the Bible is so great on every hand that the generality of the people are unable to test what he says from their knowledge of the Truth.

These Romanizing clergy are prepared at college for the work of bringing back England to Papal darkness. It is an undoubted fact that the Church—once, to some extent, reclaimed from Romish error—is returning, "like the dog to his vomit, or like the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire." I was recently reading a little book, entitled "The Cambridge Chamber of Darkness." It is written by a gentleman who is the author of many publications on Bible subjects. After referring to the abominations which Ezekiel saw in the vision, narrated in the 8th chapter of his prophecies, he writes thus:—"I would now ask you to go with me, not to Jerusalem, but to Cambridge, one of the great seats of learning in England. One word of explanation. I had been with a friend to visit a sick person. The mother of this invalid had a room in the court or yard, which she desired to let to my friend. He

asked me to look at it with him. Now, I want you to go in with me, and I will help you to look at it for yourself. At least I will describe exactly what I saw. We will follow the owner of this room. It is dark : she takes a candle in her hand up the dark passage. She has the keys ; but before we go in I must tell you, so as to prepare you a little, that this room in the dark passage is let at present to some members of the University, and the owner is very wishful for them to give it up. After some difficulty the door in the wall is opened. We have only one candle. Dear me, how dim and strange this place looks ! What can that be opposite the entrance ? Why look ; it is actually a large image of a dead Christ lying down ! And that ? An image of a woman leaning or weeping over the awful-looking dead body of Christ ! And that ? What can that large triangle of wood be, with candles stuck on it, burnt nearly down to the sockets ? I should have been puzzled if I had not seen this same purgatorial triangle in the temples of idolatry on the Continent. There you may see a distressed widow or orphan come and buy a candle, place it on the triangle, and then kneel before some image in prayer for a supposed soul in purgatory whilst the candle burns. And this is done by millions in what is called Christendom ! Do you see that penitential chair before the awful image ? Just look at those sticks fastened to the back of the chair, to support, I suppose, the hands uplifted in idol worship ! And did you ever see such horrid-looking cloaks, black and ugly ? Well, you would almost think the order of Beelzebub must worship here. Hush ! Some of the most gentlemanly members of the University meet here. You notice that large cross behind the prostrate body ? And these articles, what are they ? Incense vessels, and other utensils of idolatry. Now step through this hole in the wall, and see other abominations. A strange feeling creeps over you. The light is very dim. You see that image of an angel, meekly asking you to dip your finger in the holy water ? No, by the way, it is all dried up. Now look around. Yes, that is the image of the Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven, and the little child. And there the altar, with its great flaring cross ; there the desks ; here lie vestments and books. . . . But this place looks so dismal ; where are the windows ? Oh, this is like the old worship of Tammuz ! The dark chamber of idolatry. Now look, those windows are carefully boarded up. Not a ray of God's light must enter this chamber of spiritual abominations. What ! Not a chink between the boards ? The members of the confraternity have carefully, most carefully, papered over those boards, and where the light of day should be, there stands their altar. Oh, England ! England ! these be the men preparing to be thy parish Antichrists !"

Now, this society, described by this gentleman, thus meeting at Cambridge University, is called the "Holy Confraternity," and at the time his little pamphlet was written, some years ago, consisted "of more than sixteen thousand five hundred" persons, "of whom two thousand six hundred were clergymen," a list of many of whose names and addresses were published in a pamphlet at the office of *The Rock* newspaper, London, called "The Ritualistic Conspiracy." It is admitted by Roman Catholics that the Ritualists are doing their work for them, and that they will yet do it more effectually, and if you could see the books

published by the members of this Holy Confraternity, you would not be surprised at the Romish expectation. These books are not easy to get hold of, as they only circulate them amongst the members. One of them is actually the well-known Roman Catholic book, "The Garden of the Soul." Another is "The Manual of the Holy Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ." Another is "The Day Office of the Church, According to the Calendar of the Church of England." The greatest spiritual abominations are taught in these books. Idolatry of the worst kind is inculcated. Transubstantiation is taught. The bread and the wine is changed into the real body and blood of Christ! He is actually present and adored! He is spoken of as the *victim* offered on the altar. "O, Sacred Victim, offered in satisfaction for the sins of the world." "Extreme unction," another Romish doctrine, is taught, "which wipes away the remains of sins," only, rather contradictorily, they teach that after the rite of extreme unction has been performed, the finishing touch has to be carried out in purgatory. Of course, too, there must be priestly confession and priestly absolution, and there are prayers for the departed faithful, and prayers for the miserable souls in purgatory, and prayers for the Pope, and there are prayers to the saints, invoking their intercession, of a most blasphemous nature. Here is one of the prayers on page 117 of the "Day Office of the Church," for December 6: "O God, who by numberless miracles hast honoured Blessed Nicholas, Thy bishop, grant, we beseech Thee, *that by his merits and intercession* we may be delivered from the flames of hell, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen." What a slight upon Christ, the only Mediator between God and man acknowledged in the New Testament. Then there is an address to some one named Lucy, who is declared to have "overcome the enemy *with Thine own blood.*" Here, too, is a most singular Collect:—"O God, who didst give the law of Moses on the top of Mt. Sinai, and by Thy holy angels didst wonderfully convey the body of blessed Katharine, Thy virgin and martyr, to the same place, grant, we beseech Thee, that for her sake, and at her intercessions, we may be enabled to reach that Mount, *which is Christ.*" What a marvellous ignorance of the Scriptures such a collect manifests! Apart from the superstition about Katharine, whoever she was; apart from the blasphemy of invoking her intercession, what a wilful perversion of the Scriptures it seems! The idea of saying that Mt. Sinai is Christ, or in any way represents Him! Mount Sinai is set forth by Paul, in the 4th chapter of Galatians, as the symbol of bondage and of the curse. It represented the law, which could not give life, but cursed all who were under its yoke, and here we are taught, on page 236 of this High Church Book, to pray to God that St. Katharine may, by her intercessions, lead us to the place representing that bondage from which Christ came to deliver those who believe in Him! Is it possible for so-called Christian teachers to show their folly and reveal their ignorance more than this? And how blind must be the dupes imposed upon by this spiritual nonsense! It is a case of gross darkness on both sides, and "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." One would think we were reading instructions to a Pagan priest when we come across the following passage: "In censing the altar there are twenty-five

swings." Directions for Officiant—"Bow to the crucifix. Salute same with three double swings. Turn towards epistle side, salute back of altar slab, three swings, one swing lower corner of epistle side, one swing upper corner, proceed towards centre of altar, salute fore part, three swings. Repeat on gospel side and return toward epistle corner, salute fore part of altar, six swings, salute, three swings." Ah, you will search the New Testament in vain for instructions of that kind. They are foreign to its letter and its spirit. We require no images to bow to, and no temple to worship in, and no costly and elaborate paraphernalia; we require no crosses, nor candles, nor swinging incense, nor surpliced choirs, nor splendidly robed priests; we require to have a mental grasp of what God has revealed; to worship Him in spirit and in truth; to believe, and love, and obey. Doing this we can dispense with all the gaudy frippery and foolery of Ritualism; nay, we must do if we would be saved, for to practice these things reveals the fact that those who do so misapprehend the requirements of the truth, and are false teachers of their fellow men.

Now, these things are openly and secretly taught in the Church of England. Men are getting bold in their proclamation. Purgatory is openly and unblushingly taught.* It is only a short time ago that a public service was held in St. Barnabas's Church, Pimlico, to pray for the repose of the soul of the "Rev." W. J. E. Bennett, the late vicar of Frome, and the former minister of this London church. The preacher was a "Rev." H. M. Villiers, and in his remarks he said that "Mr. Bennett would, by his power of intercession for those left behind him, do more than when on earth!" The Rector of Coppenhall (Crewe) was written to some time ago and asked to contradict a statement to the effect that he had affixed to the notice board in his church the request—"Of thy mercy pray for the repose of the soul of the 'Rev.' J. B. Wheeler" (one of his predecessors). In reply to his correspondent he wrote:—"Dear Sir,—The statement to which you refer was substantially correct. I boldly teach the duty of praying for the departed, and publicly ask for the suffrages of the faithful on their behalf. I utterly deny that my practice is 'Roman,' unless, indeed, we are prepared to make the Roman Catholics a present of the fathers of the undivided Church. The Church of England has suffered many things through the mutilation or suppression of the truth, but she can never receive 'damage' by the preaching of the whole counsel of God. I am, dear sir, yours very truly in the faith of Him who is Lord both of the dead and the living, William Cawley Reid, Coppenhall Rectory, Crewe."† What a misapplication of Scripture this last sentence is, to be sure. Christ is, indeed, Lord both of the dead and the living. Paul says he died and lived again that he might be; but then, the one class *is* dead. There are two classes, living and dead. With this gentleman they are *not* dead. They are living somewhere else, and it would seem as though their circumstances had changed for the worse, for it is necessary to pray for the

* An article appeared in the *St. Mary's Parish Magazine* (Kidderminster) in the October issue for 1897 advocating Prayers for the Dead, and we have not heard of any protest being made by any one on the subject.

† *Birmingham Daily Post*, December 8th, 1885.

repose of their disturbed souls in the purgatorial state. Paul didn't mean the same as Mr. Cawley Reid when he wrote that passage. Christ lived and died and rose again for the purpose of immortalizing mortal men. If they die believing in him, he is still their Lord. They sleep till he wakes them. Their destinies are in his hands. He is the resurrection and the life. He holds the keys of death and the grave, and in due time his power will be exerted to bring the sleepers forth from the dust of the earth and clothe them with immortality, at which time also he will change the nature of those who are alive looking for and awaiting his appearing. Thus he is the Lord both of the living and the dead, two states, not, in truth, recognized by those who believe that they are "not dead, but gone before." It is not necessary that I should point out that the gentleman who thus so boldly teaches the purgatorial doctrine, assented, when becoming a clergyman of the Church, to—among others—the twenty-second article of the Church of England, which states that "The *Romish* doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping, and adoration, as well of images as of reliques, and also invocation of saints, is a foul thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God." Yes! he assented to that. What complete dishonesty to teach the opposite! Where are the consciences of such men? If their convictions alter, why don't they leave the Church, and not have the effrontery to pledge themselves to one thing and falsely teach something else?

Need I refer to the way the clergy impose upon people by claiming power to forgive sins and by urging the members of their flock to attend the confessional? This is done more than you may think. You may remember what a stir there was a few years ago over the publication of a book entitled "The Priest in Absolution;" a book which was privately printed by, and was at the disposal of an association of clergymen called the Society of the Holy Cross, for private and limited circulation among the clergy. It was not sold to anyone, not even to any clergyman. He must send a "reference to some well-known *priest* of his acquaintance" before he could get it, and it was to be a sort of guide to them in the "discharge of their duties as confessors!" This book was an abomination. The late Archbishop of Canterbury, himself, said that "no modest person could read the book without regret," and that it was "a disgrace to the community that such a work should be circulated under the authority of clergymen of the Established Church." He also stated in the House of Lords, his conviction that "it was the duty of any father of a family to remonstrate with the clergyman who had put such questions as the book suggested to any member of his family, and warn him never to approach his house again." This book asserted that "The priest is judge in the place of God." "That is, he assumed to himself perfect infallibility of decision in respect of the persons who came to him to receive absolution, and thereby to be relieved from all responsibility on account of their sins."* It taught that the Virgin Mary was immaculate, or sinless, and that she interceded with God for those who asked for her intercession. It taught the doctrine of transubstantiation. It

* The Earl of Redesdale.

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taught, in its "Address to the Children," that "It is through the priest, and the priest only, that the child must acknowledge his sins if he desires that God should forgive him." "Do you know why?" it asks. "Because," it replies, "because God, when He was on earth, gave to His priests, and those alone, the Divine power of forgiving men their sins; it was to the priests only that Jesus said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost' 'Those who will not confess will not be cured' [where did Christ ever say such a thing?] Sin is a terrible sickness and casts souls into hell." Now, I have already shown that these High Church, or "Catholic" notions, these abominable, unscriptural fallacies, are very largely taught and believed in in the Church of England. It is true the Evangelical party as stoutly deny these dogmas, but that only shows that the Church is a house divided against itself, containing men who almost hate each other, who teach as fundamental truths, the most opposite dogmas; who anathematise each other and so disprove the oft-made claim that it is the one true Church, the veritable kingdom of God upon the earth.

I wish to ask now where do the sympathies of the Church clergy in Kidderminster lie? Is it with the Evangelical party, who renounce these Popish dogmas and contend against them? Not one bit. They have not an ounce of sympathy for those who protest against the errors of the Ritualists. You never find a solitary Kidderminster clergyman on a platform at a meeting called by the Church Association. It is possible they do not go to such extremes as some of those to whom I have referred, but their leanings are that way, and the same High Church doctrine regarding Apostolic succession, special powers of the clergy, regeneration of infants by sprinkling, appeal to tradition, and other things tending in the direction of Popery, are freely made and set forth. It is the beginning, yea, more than the beginning. It is bound to creep on and on. Men are so fond of power, they love to be looked up to. To be thought to possess Divine powers, and to be the dispenser of Divine grace is flattering to the pride of man. They have ceased to protest against these fables, and from time to time we have felt it to be our duty to protest against them and their heresies. A few years ago, when Mr. Claughton came into the "family living," we protested against the claims made by Canon Melville. It was said then that "from the days of the Apostles till now, the holy faith had been set forth by a consecrated ministry, bound together, as one, since Apostolic times by special gifts and graces which were bestowed upon them in the laying on of hands." We challenged the statement at the time. We wished to know what the special gifts and graces were which the clergy possessed *after* the bishop's hands had been laid upon their heads, and whether they possessed anything they did not possess before. Is there any difference? Have they become the recipients of miraculous power? Can they heal the sick, give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, straightness of limb to the cripple, or can they raise the dead? Verily not. They are as helpless as you and I, upon whose heads no prelate's hands have ever been laid. Do they receive the gift of tongues? Verily, no. They are admittedly often not very well able to speak in the language in which they were born. One told me some time ago that he was "too

nervous to preach," and I need only quote Archdeacon Lea in support of what I state. People complained—this is what he said the other night in St. George's Church—people "complained that their sermons were dull; that the same subjects were often repeated; that the voice of the clergyman was feeble, and the matter poor." Well, he is, of course, an authority. *We* do not question *this* remark. "All that," he said, "might be the case," "the gift of eloquence was a rare gift," and so it is. But eloquence is not so much required as knowledge. A man certainly can't preach, if he has no speaking ability, and there can be no doubt a great many men who go through the services of the Church with sing-song voices have altogether mistaken their calling. God never called them to the work, and it's a great deal worse than absurd to say He did. Paul was not eloquent, but he had knowledge. He could reason out of the Scriptures, and convince the minds of those who listened, so that they were brought to believe the truths he set forth. If the bishop's hands are so efficacious, it is a pity the preachers do not cease to be so dull and the matter so poor as the Archdeacon admits may be the case. These gifts and graces do not make the priests infallible either. This is singular, too. But Archdeacon Lea furnishes the proof. He made the same claims—as I shall proceed to notice—at the induction of Mr. Church as Canon Melville made at the induction of Mr. Claughton. They are thoroughly unscriptural. They are an imposition. The people who believe them are weak-minded and credulous, and imposed upon. You cannot find any testimony to substantiate these claims. They claim to possess, in a special manner, the Holy Spirit. Listen: "Those who were ordained by the bishop were thereby, and from that day, taken out from among the laity as God's people; they are set apart, for the rest of their lives, as Christ's ambassadors; as stewards of the manifold grace of God, to minister to the people in holy things. . . . By virtue of their ordination, they receive *from the Holy Ghost* the gifts of the ministry—they were made the appointed channels of the grace of God, so that whether they preached in the congregation, or prayed beside the sick, or gave absolution, they were the dispensers of God's mysteries. *Their words, deeds, acts, were not their own, but the Holy Ghost's.*" Now, that is a pretty strong claim, and that is what Archdeacon Lea says. There is not an atom of proof for it. It is a distinct claim for infallibility; because the Spirit of God cannot err, cannot make a mistake, cannot do wrong. And they are controlled by the Spirit to such an extent that "their words, deeds, acts, are not their own, but the Holy Spirit's!" Do you believe it? I don't. It's an imposition. Whether this gentleman believes it or not, it is not true. If anyone objects to our speaking so emphatically, we may say that we proceed on the principle of the old proverb, "Call a spade a spade," and we assert that the mortal man who claims Divine power in this manner; who claims in every word, and act, and deed to be controlled by the Divine Spirit; who claims the power to absolve men from sin, to become a channel of Divine grace and a steward of the mysteries of God; who asserts that babies are regenerated when he drops a few spots of water from the tips of his fingers upon their foreheads; who professes (as some to whom we have referred do) to turn a bit of bread and a drop of wine,

week after week, into the actual body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to pray non-existent souls out of a non-existent purgatory, we say that such mortal men are impostors, deceived, it may be, themselves, but certainly deceiving others. And these priestly claims and assumptions—which have their natural home at Rome—have been the cause of more war and bloodshed, murder and crime, and lust and villany during the past twelve centuries than has sprung from any other source.

Notwithstanding this claim of Divine control, the preacher afterwards admitted that “in the present day there were often laymen in the congregations not only infinitely more learned on general subjects, but sometimes better theologians than the priest, and to tell such men that they were to accept the mere dictum of the priest on doubtful or scientific principles would be absurd. The points on which they did claim respect and attention were those upon which the apostle bade the congregation obey the priests, their ministerial acts, and words which they spoke on the authority of Holy Scripture and the Church.” Here you see Divine control of the Holy Spirit is narrowed down to things taught by the Bible and tradition. And “the Church” has varied in its teaching in every age and generation on many topics. I may go into a church at Kidderminster and hear the voice of the Church say one thing, and I may go no farther than to Wolverley and hear the voice of the Church say another, and which of these two ordained ministers—“priests” I ought to say—speaks the words of infallibility, for they have both been ordained by the Bishop, and consequently, according to the preacher, “by virtue of their ordination, received”—not from man, but “from the Holy Ghost—the gifts of the ministry;” so that “their words, deeds and acts, were not their own, but the Holy Ghost’s.” When we consider the chaotic state of the Church of England, its opposing voices, its distracted teaching, its unbelief and its credulity, its worldliness and its pride, what foolish talk this seems! If the Holy Spirit were indeed controlling its ministry according to this claim, we should have unity in its teaching, harmony instead of discord among its preachers, vigour instead of flabbiness in its pulpits, earnestness instead of the dull sermons of which the preacher speaks, and the word of eternal life instead of the “poor matter” of which he says complaint is made. But the Holy Spirit is not there. Eighteen centuries and more ago that Divine Spirit condemned the very things these propagate, and foretold the great departure from the simplicity of the truth which we witness in every State-connected Church throughout the world. It is an empty claim; so is that of apostolic succession insisted upon by the archdeacon. We wonder at it being made. One would think it was too late in the day; that at the end of the nineteenth century men had grown more wise; but every now and then ecclesiastics make the claim as fresh as ever. “Again and again,” says one able writer, “the sacerdotal order have found it necessary to remind the people that they hold their office by virtue of a supernatural appointment. Otherwise some would be likely to conclude that the Prime Minister had had something to do with it; or that it was due to the fortunate circumstance that there was enough money in the family to arrange the necessary preliminaries. In the

absence of anything like religious zeal or devotion to the interests of pure Christianity, or aptness to teach, men would be in danger of adopting the inference that these persons were altogether like themselves—just as worldly, just as mercenary, just as intent upon making the best and the most of the present life, and with every bit as keen an eye towards temporal advantage. They require therefore to take shelter beneath the plea that they are by no means ordinary mortals, but that to them has been Divinely committed the exclusive right to handle 'the vessels of the Lord.' But if we were to pursue our enquiries into the foundation of all such current assumptions, we should not find much Divinity there. And if these pretensions do not rest upon a supernatural basis, they are certainly fraudulent and delusive, and as such can no longer command our respect. We have no objection to the genuine thing. . . . A priest exercising the functions of his office by a prescriptive authority, whose sacred credentials were beyond all dispute, would be a sight that would gladden our eyes. We should then have nothing to do but follow and obey. The trouble of having to think for ourselves about such matters would be spared us, and we could hand over our individual responsibility to those who had been appointed of heaven to see after our proper instruction in all that appertains to our duty. But as the case stands, we are apt to be bewildered amid a variety of rival claims upon our allegiance. If we follow Rome, we place ourselves in antagonism to Canterbury; and if we allow the Divine right of a dissenter from both to dictate to us in spiritual things, we have still to decide which branch of the Nonconforming community may lawfully arrogate to itself this awful power. Under these circumstances what can we do but simply reject all such pretensions *in toto*, and take matters into our own hands for better or worse? By this plan we shall lose nothing in the way of authoritative and infallible guidance, and shall escape much confusion and perplexity and useless expenditure of money and thought."*

This claim of spiritual superiority and of direct apostolical succession is, as we have seen, been made as freshly as ever by Archdeacon Lea. Of course the line of succession has never been broken! These gentlemen nearly always use the same words when speaking on this highly interesting subject. "The primitive rule of episcopal ordination and apostolic descent," said he, "had never been broken in their Church. It was by virtue of that lawful authority which their own Bishop had received from Christ, through the Apostles, and the unbroken line of their successors, that he ordained ministers to serve God in the congregation, and it was by virtue of that commission that the clergy of the Church exercised their ministry in their respective parishes." I would not be proud of my pedigree if I were a clergyman in the Church of England. Through strange and wicked hands have the gifts and graces of the Church descended upon the men of to-day. Of course I do not for a moment believe this assumption about the unbroken line. It is impossible of proof, and it is intrinsically absurd. I speak however of their known pedigree. It is a matter of history how wicked and how ignorant have been the ecclesiastical authorities of the past ages through whom these

* Mr. Robert Ashcroft.

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holy orders and spiritual gifts have descended. They have to wind their way through a long, dark, and slimy passage before they get to the light of Apostolic days. But they claim to do it—that is, some of them. Others—and among them the very bishops themselves, and among the bishops the most talented—deny their power to do it. Dr. Hook, speaking very emphatically, says: "There is not a bishop, priest, or deacon among us who cannot, if he please, trace his own spiritual descent from St. Peter or St. Paul." Against that assertion I quote Dr. Whateley, not many years ago Archbishop of Dublin, one of the greatest thinkers and truest logicians of the age: "There is not," he says, "a minister in all Christendom who is able to trace up, with any approach to certainty, his own spiritual pedigree." Stronger language still I might quote from Bishop Headley and Bishop Stillingfleet, two men of great intellectual power, in condemnation of this huge claim by such lesser lights as Dr. Pusey and Archdeacon Lea. But I forbear.

There were those in the time of Nehemiah who returned from the captivity in Babylon; who—careful as were the Jews, and especially the Levites—regarding their genealogies, were unable to trace their pedigree; and Nehemiah would not allow them to officiate or partake of the holy things till it was possible to infallibly decide upon their case; but notwithstanding the thousands of possibilities of failure in the case of the modern priests, they are very confident in their assertions that their pedigree is correct. We are able, however, to test their claims by the word of truth. If it were possible for them in the clearest way to trace back some kind of succession to apostolic days—I mean in the mere form of laying on of hands—it would not help their claim in the least. The powers given to the apostles were not continued. Those who had the Holy Spirit in those days were able to prove it by the mighty deeds they did; but those who profess to have it in a special manner now are powerless in this respect. There is not the slightest analogy, as asserted by the archdeacon, between the Levitical priesthood and the New Testament ministry. That was confined to one family or tribe. All the descendants of Levi were specially set apart for the Divine service, how then could the preacher say that there was "an analogous appointment of God under the New Dispensation?" There is no analogy whatever. If all the lineal descendants of the Apostles had been set apart by God for the future ministry of His Church, and all others excluded, then the preacher might have so spoken; but it was not so, there is no such command, and the preaching of the Gospel was not confined to the Apostles; for we find in the 8th chap. of the Acts and the 1st and 4th verses, that, owing to a great persecution at Jerusalem, the members of the Church there "were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria," the Apostles only remaining at Jerusalem; the result was that the truth spread, for we read that "they that were scattered abroad"—these private members of the Church—"went everywhere preaching the Word." No man has a prescriptive right to preach. "Let him that heareth say, come." It is the duty of all who have the ability, to "hold forth the word of life." It is confined to no special class of men. The true Apostolic succession is based upon character, and knowledge of the truth. I wish that to be impressed upon your

minds. The true Apostolic succession is based upon a knowledge of and obedience to the truth. Therefore, remember this, if you find men preaching doctrines opposed to the Apostles, or not living in accordance with the precepts they lay down, they are no successors of theirs—they are bastards, not legitimate children. Test the clergy by this rule, and they won't stand the test. Weigh them in the balance of truth, and you will find them wanting. Do they preach the glad tidings of the kingdom of God? For the most part—No. Do they unfold to their hearers the covenants of promise made with the fathers of Israel, which were confirmed by the ministry and death of Christ, whose blood is “the blood of the everlasting covenant?” Ask them about these covenants, and see how blank their countenances become. Do they preach eternal life alone through Jesus by a resurrection from the dead? Not one in a hundred. Do they follow the divine teachers in setting forth that the righteous will inherit the earth and dwell therein for ever, and that a man must know and believe these things, and *then* be baptised into the Name of Jesus for the remission of sins? It is the same answer—they do not. What do they teach? Why they teach the heathen dogma of the immortality of the soul; that the soul goes away at death to Purgatory, or Hades, or heaven, or hell—for they do not agree on this matter. They teach that man has eternal existence apart from Christ, and that the reward is not here but up above. They sprinkle babies and say they are regenerated, and they have sponsors to renounce the devil and all his works for the children and they have a rite of confirmation which is an unscriptural farce. They teach the doctrine of the Trinity in the place of the sublime truth when, very often, they have not done it for themselves; there is One Eternal God, and that He is one. They have their feast days and fast days and holy days, their confession and absolution, and transubstantiation, and bowing to the east, and their crosses and candles, and white robes and black robes and other adornments,* and all these things are unscriptural, and stamp their claim to be successors of the Apostles as utterly false. They are mixed up thoroughly in worldly matters. They have their bazaars at which gambling is carried on, and they patronise Punch and Judy, and theatrical entertainments, and comic performances, and they act as judges at sports, and they seek the favour of the world which is enmity with God, all of which things are condemned by the Apostles; and so we say again they cannot be their successors. If you know any among them that “love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men Rabbi,

* We are reminded of the following scathing passage on the Clergy of to-day from the pen of the sage of Chelsea:—“Legions of them, in their black and other gowns, I still meet in every country, masquerading in strange costume of body, and still stranger of soul; mumming, primming, grimacing—poor devils; shamming, and endeavouring not to sham: that is the sad fact. Brave men many of them, after their sort, and in a position which we may admit to be wonderful and dreadful! On the outside of their heads some singular headgear, tulip mitre, felt coal-scuttle, purple hat; and in the inside—I must say, such a theory of God Almighty's universe as I, for my share, am right thankful to have no concern with at all. I think, on the whole, as broken-winged, self-strangled, monstrous a mass of incoherent incredibilities as ever dwelt in the human brain before.”—THOMAS CARLYLE, in *Latter-day Pamphlets*.

Rabbi," depend upon it that *they* are not in the true line of Apostolic succession. If you know any that are particular about holy days, and that forbid to marry, as do the priests of Rome, and that command men to fast, to "abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth;" that covet gold and silver and apparel; men that look after the fat livings, that fleece the sheep instead of feeding them, as Israel's shepherds did, do not call *them* successors of the Apostles, because Paul called them "grievous wolves," and said in his letter to Timothy and elsewhere that the Spirit spoke expressly—that in the latter times some should depart from the faith teaching and practising these very things (I Tim. iv. 1-5.) I know that these High Church clergy will tell you that character and false doctrine does not affect the validity of their ministry, shocking as such a statement is. Archdeacon Mason in his "Defence of the Church of England Ministry," teaches that neither "degradation," nor "heresy," nor "schism," nor "the most extreme wickedness," nor "anything else," can divest a Bishop of the power of giving true orders; and the Puseyites taught that "the Sacraments, not preaching, are the source of Divine grace," and that the efficacy of these is wholly "independent of the personal character of the administrator,"* it is quite enough if he has been episcopally ordained,—forced no doubt into this position by a consideration of the character of those monsters in the past, who have officiated at the altar, whom every faithful historian condemns.

This teaching does not fit in with Paul's. "A bishop," said he, "must be blameless, the husband of one wife"—you see *he* did not forbid to marry—"vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without (I Tim. iii. 1-7.) That is Paul's prescription for bishop making. They were to be careful whom they placed to be overseers in the church. They were to "lay hands suddenly upon no man," but to be assured fully that his life was in the right, and his doctrine sound. Do you think the Prime Minister for the day seeks for all these requirements when he makes a bishop? Or does he reward faithful political friends and adherents? Or is he ever influenced by influential men—Lords and Earls and Dukes, as to whom he shall appoint? A queer way of making successors of the Apostles, isn't it? Quite a political matter! Altogether an affair of the state! A bit of worldly business! and we wonder how men can have the effrontery to associate it in any way with things divine. Is the apostolic rule observed in providing a pastor for a flock? How does it fit in with the purchase of livings as a monetary speculation? How does it agree with the presentation of a living by a rich donor to some one he or she may be

* Tracts, Preface, 1834, No. xi.

interested in who may not have the slightest mental or moral or spiritual qualification for the position? How does his advice get followed in the ordinary creation of men for the ministry? A youth goes to college in the ordinary manner. He learns his lessons according to his ability. He is clever or dull, as the case may be. He engages in all the games of the college—cricket, football, swimming, racing, boxing etc., until the time comes for him to go out into the world. He is asked to decide what he shall do for a living, whether he shall go into the army and kill people, or to the law and fleece them, or whether he shall enter the church and be appointed to a "cure of souls." If he is bold and clever he will perhaps choose the former professions, if he is dull, or not so adventurous, he will decide for the ministry. The bishop's hands are placed upon his head, and, without one bit of divine truth, it may be, in his mind, he is in the line of the succession, he is elevated into that sacred class called apostolic successors, he has become the recipient of "special gifts and graces," he possesses the Holy Spirit, he is made a priest of the Most High God, a father confessor, having power to pardon and absolve his fellow mortals from their sins! Albeit, he may be as worldly as other men. He may not be able to unfold the truth. He may be fond of sporting, and, as we read of one in yesterday's issue of the *Shuttle*, may pay some Duke £600 for three months shooting on his estate; but whatever he may do he is a priest, and as Dr. McCave* once said to me nothing can ever alter that fact, whatever he may do he remains a divine priest still! Oh! where is the intelligence of those who believe such wicked nonsense as this? How perverted the minds from the simplicity of Christ, of those who set forth and defend these anti-scriptural fables. "Unto the wicked, God saith, what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth?" (Psalm L. 16.) The Apostle John declares that "he who transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God;" but that he "who abideth in the doctrine of Christ, hath both the Father and the Son" (II John 9.) That was the test of public teaching with him. The priests who had divine appointments under the law were condemned and cursed, if they were unfaithful, and shall those go scot free who have no divine appointment at all?

There is another point I wish to notice before I close. It would take another lecture to deal with it properly, so I will only briefly notice it, and that is that the Church of England Ministry does not correspond with the New Testament, and therefore, cannot be the true Apostolic succession. You have nothing there at all approximating in the slightest degree to what we now behold. Paul, who gives advice about the appointment of those to continue the work of the truth, knew nothing of the things called "Deacons' Orders" and "Priests' Orders" as they exist in the Church of England. He never writes anything about Archbishops, and certainly never contemplated any genuine successor of his receiving £15,000 a year salary, having two magnificent palaces at his disposal, and legislating as a Peer of the Realm in all political matters.

* The Roman Catholic Priest in Kidderminster.

"Archbishops," says one writer, "Diocesan Bishops, and a Clergy, as contra-distinguished from Bishops, a Clergy comprising Priests, Deacons, Archdeacons, Deans, Rural Deans, Prebends, Canons, Curates, Vicars, Rectors, some working, others idle, the latter ladened with wealth, the former pining with poverty, in all cases the recompense being in the inverse order of the toil,—these were perfections to which the rude Ecclesiastical Polity of the Apostolic age had not attained." "The Apostles appointed Pastors or Bishops or Elders or Presbyters to attend to the affairs of the church, and these terms appear to have been convertible. All were Bishops ; none less, none more."

In the 20th chapter of the Acts, and at verse 17, we read that Paul sent from Miletus to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church to meet him, there must therefore have been more than one in this church. In the 28th verse he calls the same men "bishops" or "overseers." "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flocks, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers" or bishops. It is the same word as that translated bishop elsewhere. A bishop according to the New Testament is an overseer, one who has the oversight of the church. A bishop according to the Church of England is one who has the oversight of the clergy, and there is no more proof for such an order of men than there is for a Pope. If you have pastors of pastors, you may just as reasonably have a chief pastor over them. The only "chief shepherd" the apostles acknowledged, however, was Jesus the good shepherd, who laid down his life for the sheep. They claimed no supremacy themselves. They exhorted, they did not command like the Popes of Rome. "The elders which are among you I exhort," said Peter, "who am also an elder." . . . "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind ; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Peter v. 1-4.) This is all reversed now. They are lords over the flock now. The Rt. Reverend the Lord Bishop of so-and-so ! Right Reverend Father in God ! and such titles they assume ; and as for the "filthy lucre," well, if it were not for that, a great many flocks would very soon be without a shepherd, and the bishops' hoods and gowns and breeches might be put up for sale. As to the rise of the Episcopacy, we may say something about it another time.

The Deacons of the New Testament were simply the servants of the churches, as were also the "deaconesses." They were appointed to look after the temporal matters of the members, as the 6th chapter of Acts clearly shows. And the Priests—Ah ! where do you read anything about an order of priests in the New Testament ? This is one of the most hideous features of the Apostacy. How Archdeacon Lea kept referring to "the priest." Those who believe in human priests in connection with the work of the Apostles are branded with the brand of the Apostacy. The mark of the beast is upon them. They want a sacrifice if they have a priest, and they have invented one. They have the sacrifice of the mass. They profess to turn the bread and the wine into the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ, and offer him upon the altar. Oh ! it's the greatest insult they can offer to Christ. It's the

greatest imposition in the world. It's the most monstrous deceit ever practised by mortal man. It's the greatest perversion of divine truth ever made. We have one glorious exalted high priest and only one,—the Lord Jesus Christ.

“ We other priests deny,
And laws and offerings too,
None but the priest on high,
The mighty work can do.
To Him then all our praise be given,
Who pleads his household's cause in heaven.”

“ He ever liveth to make intercession for us.” Is't not that enough? We want not the intercessions of St. Katherine, or St. Mary, or St. Ambrose, or St. Nicholas, or St. Lucy, or any other dead saint,—Christ is enough. He lives at the Father's right hand. When His intercessions fail we may turn—shall I say to the saints or to the hateful priesthood of Rome?—it would be in vain, but the “one Mediator between God and men” will not fail; God has constituted him our high priest, so that through him we may “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. iv. 16.) The sacrifices of Rome and of the Ritualists are a mockery and a snare. The one sacrifice is enough. Christ “needeth not daily” as did the priests under the law, “to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.” “This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” (Heb. vii. 27; ix.-x.) He was once offered to bear away the sins of many. That's enough. One sacrifice, once offered. Take away your human priests and their lying legends, and cling to Christ. Oh! if I could only awaken some one to see the danger of these things, and to seek for truth, I should be satisfied. Turn, friends, from these dangerous fables to Him who is “the way and the truth and the life” (John xiv. 6,) he is your only refuge from the storm, the only hope for dying men. The clergy who teach the views we have examined to-night only darken counsel with words without knowledge; turn from them to Christ, for “no man cometh to the Father but by him”—**BUT BY HIM.**



THE HISTORY OF DEATH.

I COR. xv. 21-28.

SYLLABUS :

DEATH in the world ; how it came—how it is to be removed.—The order and process and means of its removal.—Resurrection the means, on certain conditions.—What the conditions are.—The order—Christ the first fruits from the dead ;—afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.—The millennial reign of Christ.—The subjugation of all enemies.—Death itself finally destroyed.—A ransomed world.—Christ subject to the Father.—An "orthodox" difficulty cleared up by the truth.—God all in all.

I SUPPOSE, dear friends, that there is no more comprehensive passage to be found in the whole Bible than the few verses which are to occupy our attention this evening. It would be almost impossible to compress into smaller limits—in any intelligible manner—the many important doctrinal truths Paul has crowded into the eight brief verses to which we have referred. It is an epitome of the whole scheme of Jehovah's salvation. It bridges over the vast chasm of sin, the archway embracing all things from its entrance into the world to its abolition, and the abolition of everything pertaining to it from the universe. It is a simple, concise, beautiful statement of man's necessity and the provision made for it ; of man's fall and man's redemption ; of a world lost and a world redeemed ; giving the details of the order and the process of its accomplishment ; details in which no trace is apparent of those dogmas which form the backbone of the teaching and preaching of the multitudinous sects by which we are surrounded. Death ; resurrection ; the kingdom of God ; and the final extirpation of all evil are the topics dealt with, topics which at all times entered so largely into the public ministry of the apostles of Christ, and which must occupy a corresponding

amount of attention from all those who would be followers of them in the true sense of the word.

Death is the first subject in this comprehensive epitome of the truth which claims our attention. "By man came death." "In Adam all die." No one, I suppose, will question the solemn and sorrowful fact that death is in the world. There may be those, yea, there are those who can be numbered by the thousand, who believe things which to a large extent nullify and soften down that fact, but the fact itself they cannot deny. It is too palpable. It is too universal. It is everywhere. In the north, or the south, or the east, or the west, there is absolutely no escape from its power. No climate can preserve its inhabitants from the grave. If it could, how thickly populated would it speedily become! Away to the east where the sun rises, scattering away the darkness of night, or to the west, where it dips below the horizon; in the northern regions where snow and ice are perpetually known; or in the south where the intense heat of the sun can scarcely be endured; in the choicest parts of the earth, in the southern parts of France, or on the sunny plains of Italy; or in the most barren that can be found, on the burning sands of the deserts of Arabia or Ethiopia, there is no exemption from the all-prevailing foe. And it is unrelenting and impartial. The holiest and closest ties of love and friendship are severed, the strongest bonds of affection broken, and the hearts whose sympathies have long been entwined around each other, and whose love has been stronger than death, are separated by the inevitable law which sooner or later lays each one low. All ages, all ranks, all conditions of men stand alike in the presence of death. The man upon whose head the suns of threescore years and ten have shone, whose locks are grey, whose strength is feeble, whose limbs are infirm, whose back is bent; and the little prattler on its mother's knee, whose curly locks are its mother's pride, and whose childish prattle delights its parent's heart; and again the strong and vigorous man whose brawny arm toils the whole week round for the bread that perisheth, and whose strength seems unfailing, as though it would stand the wear and tear of years and years to come, each are alike mowed down by the scythe of the destroyer, and the graveyards get filled, and filled again, and new faces spring up to occupy the homes, and do the work, and fill the places of those who are passing away. Oh! it is a sad, sad thing, is death! It is the great enemy

of all existence. It is the skeleton in every cupboard. It is the worm that eats away the life of every tree. It is the boundary line of all human existence. The destroyer of human hopes. The blighter to human prospects. The extinguisher of all pride. The full stop of every life. You shudder at it! You don't like to think about the coldness, and darkness, and silence of the grave. Perhaps not. It is not pleasant. But remember it is inevitable. Is it not wise therefore to bestow more than a passing thought upon it *with a view, if possible, to escape it?* Surely it is. Consider a moment. Have *you* a sovereign balm for every disease? Have *you* discovered an elixir of life? Have *you* received a guarantee that the great enemy will pass by you? Have you bribed the destroyer in his onward march so that you will be passed by, while all around you the victims fall? Ah, no! Money—eventually—is powerless here. If it were not so the wealth of the world would soon be in the hands of the medical men. They reap a splendid harvest as it is out of the necessities and sorrows and ignorances of humanity, they would reap abundantly more if they could keep their patients for ever alive. But they are powerless to keep people for very long out of the coffin, and they can bring none back again upon whose heart the gripping hand of death is laid. An old epitaph says—and it speaks truly—

“The world is a market full of streets,
 And death is the merchant whom every one meets,
 If life were a thing that money might buy,
 The poor could not live, and the rich would not die.”

But all are on one level here. “They that trust in their wealth,” we read at the 6th verse of the xlix. Psalm, “and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: . . . that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.” No, no! “The redemption of the soul (or life) is precious,” more precious than the cattle upon a thousand hills, more precious than the gold in every land, or the pearls in every sea. Again: you may be wise, you may study the laws of nature, you may understand the mechanism of the human frame, you may have a perfect comprehension of the laws of digestion, and of the circulation of the blood, and of the supply of waste to the tissues, and of the way to keep up the vitality

of the system, and it is well to understand these things, but if you think your knowledge will cheat the enemy it is a profound mistake. What says the Psalmist in the same Psalm which we have just quoted, (xlix.) at verse 10, "He sceth that *wise men* die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish. Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names" (like vain people do in our own day—the same pride and folly still exists) "nevertheless man being in honour *abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish.*" "One event," said Solomon, "happeneth to them all," that is the wise and the fool, "for their is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool forever; seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how *dieth* the wise man? *As the fool.*" (Eccles. ii. 14-16.) This "one event" of death will happen to you sooner or later. The buoyancy of youth will depart, the elasticity of the animal frame will give place to the infirmity and decrepitude of age. The almond tree will blossom, in other words the white hairs will gather on your head, care and time will make furrows upon your brow, life will become more and more a labour, the fire of existence will burn lower and lower, until the last spark will go out, and your now active frame will lie motionless and still, and men will carry you out from your abode, because you are no longer fit to remain in it, and the grave will close its mouth over you, and in the language of Job—chapter x. verses 21 and 22—you will go "whence you will not" (without divine aid) "return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death; a land of darkness, as darkness itself: and of the shadow of death, where there is no order and where the light is as darkness." This, friends, is what faces all of us. We are *not* immortal. We are *not* imperishable. We are *not* like God, incorruptible. We are all frail, mortal, dying creatures. "The voice" you will remember said to the prophet, as recorded in Isaiah xl. and at verse 6—"The voice said, cry. And he said, What shall I cry?" Aye, what? Now listen to the divine answer, so humiliating to human pride, and so destructive to human theology—"All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

Death then is in the world. How came it here? Why are all mankind subject to vanity? How is it that we bloom and die so soon? Well, Paul gives us the answer in more places than one. Take the chapter we read at the earlier portion of our meeting, the 5th chapter of Romans; we read there at various places (12th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 19th) the cause why death exists. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." "Through the offence of one many be dead." "The judgment was by one to condemnation." *By one man's offence death reigned by one.* "By the offence of one judgment came upon all men." "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." These are the clear explicit statements of Paul in that chapter. In the 15th chapter of Corinthians, we have similar testimony: at the 21st and 22nd verses we read, "By man came death;" "In Adam all die." The references take us back a long way in human history; to its fountain head, to its very commencement, to those events occupying the first few chapters of the Bible, where we have the account of the creation of man; created, you will remember, from the dust of the ground, organised by the power of Jehovah, who breathed into him, or caused the newly created man himself to breathe the breath of life, so that he became a living creature. The man so formed was without a character. He came "very good" from the hands of his Creator, but he had developed no goodness himself. This can only be done under trial. It was therefore necessary for him to be tried. He was not a mere machine. He was not an automaton. A man that could only go one way would not reflect credit upon Jehovah. He was capable of good and evil. He could fall as well as rise. It is when righteousness is manifested under adverse circumstances that it is approved by Jehovah. Therefore, men are tried now. Therefore, Adam was tried. His love and obedience was put to the test. "Order," it has been said, "is heaven's first law." We think it should rather be said that obedience was, and is. It is everything to God that his commands should be obeyed. For lack of this in an apparently little matter Nadab and Abihu were struck dead. For lack of this Saul lost his kingdom. For lack of this the disobedient prophet was slain by the lion. For lack of this Uzzah was struck dead for touching the ark. For lack of this modern religious professors cannot inherit the kingdom of God. And for lack of this Adam introduced death into the world. "By one man's

disobedience many were made sinners." Adam was tested in a simple manner to see if he would obey God or not. He had the privilege of partaking of the fruit of all the trees in the garden with the exception of one; the penalty of partaking of that one being death. The tempter came in the form of a serpent endowed with the power of speech. The temptation succeeded. Eve partook and then gave to her husband. *God's law was broken.* "Sin is the transgression of the law." Adam sinned. "By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin." That was the result. "In the day that thou eatest thereof dying thou shalt die." (Gen. ii. 17.) He was driven forth from the garden "*lest he should put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life and eat and live for ever.*" God would not allow him to live for ever. They tell you at church and chapel that man does! That he can't die! That his days are as the days of eternity! It isn't true. It is the serpent's lie. It is the opposite of the word of God. He was condemned to ceaseless toil. He was condemned to die: to return to that dust from whence he was taken, and that's where he goes. He dissolves in the grave, for "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." There is nothing about an immortal soul in the whole narrative nor in any other part of the Bible. That is a philosophical speculation, a poetical dream, a mocking phantasm: in some cases a pleasing delusion, in others a terrible nightmare, in all a theological deceit.

The existence of death may, therefore, be traced to sin; aye, and every form of suffering that blights the creation of God. Trace it to its origin and sin is the undoubted cause. Adam's progeny inherit Adam's nature. We are all in the natural state "in Adam;" sharers of his nature, doomed to pass away in the natural order of things into the grave. Shall we stay there for ever? What an important question that is. Is there any one that can open the grave and bid the sleepers rise? Is there one who possesses power to make a dead man live, and live so that he will die no more? Well, the scriptures answer these questions, and answers them too in a most satisfactory manner. They tell us of one who has conquered death, who in his own person "hath,"—as we read in Paul's 2nd epistle to Timothy, 1st ch. and 10th verse—"abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel;" of one who can say, as we read in Rev. i. 18 "I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of the grave and of death:"

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of one upon whom God has conferred "power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him." (John xvii. 2.) The Scriptures tell us too of the ultimate purpose of God in reference to the inhabitants of the world upon which we live, which is to abolish death from the universe, to evolve from its mortal inhabitants a race of beings who shall emerge from the death state now everywhere prevailing into the angelic or divine nature, and finally inhabit this globe—when every care has been for ever banished, and every tear for ever dried, and every evil for ever rooted up—throughout the illimitable ages of eternity. This grand and glorious purpose of Jehovah is slowly being worked out through the ages: slowly, that is from the human standpoint, for to man whose days are so few, a century is a long period of time, but not slow to Jehovah whose years fail not, for "a thousand years are but as one day" to him (2 Pet. iii. 8); and with him there is no necessity to hurry in order to complete his plans. Death will be banished in due time, but there is a divinely arranged order, and process, and means of its removal, and it is for mortal man to recognise this fact, and, if he would become a partaker of the gift of endless being, submit to the arrangement, and obey every condition the bestower of the gift has in his infinite wisdom made. Now, the process of its removal is two-fold in its nature, that is, moral or spiritual, and physical. The physical is brought about by the power of God operating upon the mortal nature—dead or alive—and changing it to the divine, but it is always preceded by a moral process wrought in the individual by the power of Jehovah's truth. This was so in the case of Christ—as it will be also in the case of all his brethren. Jesus was a Son of Adam as well as a Son of God. As the latter, he was, no doubt, more favourably situated than any other member of the race. His was a higher type of character than that of any other member of the human family. We must not forget that he was a manifestation of God: that the divine attributes shone forth in him; that he was continually in fellowship with the Father; that his spirit was ever with him, strengthening him and fortifying him to overcome the world. But this must not hide the other fact from our view. We must learn to blend the truths of the Bible. We must rightly divide the word of truth. We must, therefore, recognise that he was a son of Adam,—a member of our own race; that he "took hold of the seed of Abraham;" was a

sharer of our flesh-and-blood nature, and that "It behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren." As a son of Adam he inherited a death-stricken nature; he was "made in the likeness of sinful flesh," subject to pain and sorrow and temptation like all his brethren; yet amidst all the sorrows that pressed upon his heart, all the perplexities that troubled his mind, all the wants to which his nature was subject, all the irritating circumstances by which he was surrounded, all the temptations by which he was tried, he sinned not: "no guile was found in his mouth;" "in him was no sin." "He was tempted in all points like as we are," but he stood the test; he overcame the world; he came off more than conqueror; but he was made perfect through suffering. God required him to lay down his life as a sacrifice for sin and he did so. Ah! but it was hard to do. If it were possible, he besought the Lord, that that bitter cup might be spared his taste, "nevertheless," he added, "not my will, but thine be done." He foresaw the pain, and the anguish, and the mockery, and the indignation, and the cruel, cursed cross; but he endured it, bravely, submissively endured it, for "He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 8). For this reason "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name." He brought him back from the land of darkness. His eyes were again enlightened with the light of life. The grave could not resist Almighty power. It yielded up its dead. The prisoner of hope came forth, and led captivity captive. He conquered the grave. His head will never more be laid low, nor his eyes become sightless with death. "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God" (Rom. vi. 9, 10). Having fulfilled completely God's holy law he was a perfect pattern of righteousness, and he was constituted by God the righteousness of all those who come to God by him. "He died for their sins, and rose again for their justification." There is no resurrection, no eternal life apart from him. "I," said he, "am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John xiv. 6). "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead" (1 Cor. xv. 21). The same truth we have repeatedly enforced in Rom. v.: commencing at the 17th verse we read—"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of

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grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous: . . . that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Then to refer back again to the 15th of Corinthians, the 22nd verse, we read—"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Now, there we have a most important doctrinal statement. We are all, as I have shown, "in Adam" by nature, we are not all "in Christ." Some people greatly misunderstand this passage, for they teach that resurrection will operate as far as death has operated, and that every individual who ever breathed the breath of life will come forth at the resurrection, by the power of Christ; while Universalists assert that this passage teaches, that every one who ever lived will finally attain to eternal life through Christ. Both these are false views of the truth. The resurrection—especially the resurrection which Paul has in view here, for in this argument he only has in view those who actually attain to eternal life—is a very limited matter, according to the Scriptures. Every one will not be raised from the dead. Multitudes, yea untold millions will sleep a perpetual sleep, and no voice will ever disturb their profound repose. They have lived in utter ignorance of the purposes of Jehovah; they have not come within the scope of his redeeming plan; they have never heard his truth, and they are, therefore, not accounted responsible; they go back to dust, they "be as though they had not been" (Obad. 16, &c.), and death will be their shepherd for ever. A man or a woman must be "in Christ," in the highest sense of the meaning of those words, if they are to be "made alive" forever. You have read this expression, perhaps, elsewhere. If not I will refer you to a few places. The 16th of Romans—look at the 8th and following verses—"Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles approved in Christ." Next verse.—"Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord." To go back again in the chapter, we have a most significant expression at verse 7—"Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among

the apostles, WHO ALSO WERE IN CHRIST BEFORE ME." There was a time, you see, when Paul was OUTSIDE CHRIST; not covered by his name, not a member of his body. There are many other passages of a like nature, but these are sufficient for our purpose now. They show you that the words "in Christ" mean something that does not apply all round, and that it is only those to whom they can be applied in the true sense that will be "made after the power of an endless life." We have to contemplate two individuals, the one a figure of the other—Adam the first, and Adam the second. The one, the head of the natural race; the other, the head of the spiritual. We are all connected with the one and cannot help the matter, and are as a consequence under the death penalty; it requires a transforming and transferring process to change this natural relationship and introduce us into Christ, and thus entitle us to deliverance from the death which we inherit from our relationship to Adam. This deliverance will be accomplished on the same principles as those which operated in the case of Christ—that is, conformation to the will of God. He has chosen to save men by the preaching of the gospel. There is no salvation apart from a knowledge of and belief of the same. It is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," AND NOT TO ANY ONE ELSE (Rom. i. 16). That gospel relates to the kingdom of God, the particulars of which we cannot just now go into. You will find, however, upon examination that it is a gospel not often proclaimed by the clergy, who, in many cases are ignorant of, and in others deny its glorious announcements. Deliverance from death, however, is predicated upon acquaintance with the truth concerning Jehovah's kingdom, and upon a knowledge of certain other truths which have relation to the name or person of the Lord Jesus Christ. When this knowledge is acquired, and the person acquiring it heartily appreciates the same, it remains for him to testify his faith by works. It is necessary for him to obey God, by submitting to the ordinance of baptism. He is *outside Christ* as Paul once was, and he cannot attain to that position signified by the words "in Christ," except by being immersed into his name. It is the boundary line which separates us from the world. By that act the immersed believer takes upon himself the name of Christ. He cuts himself off from all evil. He—in a figure—buries his old nature, and rises a new man in Christ Jesus. "Old things have passed away, and all things become new." He thus recognises the fact of his

absolute dependence upon the "Lord of life" for the gift of immortality. He expresses his faith by that act—for it is an act of faith—in the means by which immortality will be conferred—that is, by a resurrection from the dead, for baptism is a representation of death and burial, and resurrection from the dead, when scripturally administered. "*Buried with Christ in baptism,*" Paul says in his letter to the Colossians, at the 12th verse of the 2nd chapter "*wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*" You may kick at this simple rite, friends, as much as you like; you may object to it till the day you die; but there it is, with all the authority attaching to the commands and practices of inspiring men, with all the authority attaching to the command and the example of the Son of God, and you neglect or reject it at your peril. "He that believeth *and is baptised* shall be saved." *No one else.* Remember that. Remember the importance attaching to every command of God. Remember what disobedience has done already in the world. Remember Nadab and Abihu, and Saul and Uzzah, and the slain prophet to whom we have before referred. "Remember Lot's wife;" and if you know the truth, and love the truth, don't dally with it, but obey it, for nothing can compare with it in importance, and the time to obey will soon be gone for ever; and, if you remain "in Adam," though you may be raised for judgment and condemnation and the second death, you will not be "made alive" after the pattern of Christ. There are other conditions beside these. There are other commands beside the one to be baptized. They are binding upon us. They are given to be observed. It is not fashionable to observe them; but followers of Christ ought not to be absorbed in studying the fashion of the present age in these things, neither in dress, nor anything else. The commands of God are at a discount in the world to-day. People hate them; refuse to obey them; laugh at Jehovah's counsel, and will have none of his reproof. You must be unfashionable, friends, if you would please God. You must dare to be singular in the present age—"you will be damned if you are not." And, in so doing, "Marvel not if the world hate you." The world loves its own, and the followers of Christ are not of the world. They have renounced it and all its pride, and vanity, and pleasure, and lust, and it is all passing away. If they have not done so, they will pass away with it. The time is coming for some one else to laugh beside the merry

makers of this present age. The saints will laugh in due time, and Jehovah also will laugh at the calamity of those who spurn his counsels, "and mock when their fear cometh." We are, therefore, to be separate from sinners as Christ was: to "avoid all appearance of evil;" to keep ourselves unspotted from the world; "hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." Think of this, ye tobacco-smokers and wine-bibbers; think of this, ye friends of the publicans and sinners of this present age; think of this, ye worldly-minded godless people, ye ball-room frequenters and theatre-goers, ye feeders upon "trifles light as air;" think of this, ye frivolous tittle-tattlers, ye incarnations of pride and folly, ye money-worshippers, ye enemies of all righteousness; think, too, of the words of Christ, of what he will say to all such in the day of his coming, "I never knew you, depart from me all ye workers of iniquity."

These, then, are the conditions upon which Christ will favourably exert that power bestowed upon Him by the Father and bring us forth from the grave, belief of the truth and obedience to the same under every condition of life.

Now, as there is a moral or spiritual process and means of working out our salvation, so there is also a process and order in the salvation itself. The thing is not accomplished momentarily. *Jesus was redeemed first.* That may sound strange in your ears, yet it is true. God was his Redeemer. *He* brought Him from the dead. The Scriptures repeatedly say so. He would not permit His Holy One to see corruption. Therefore "the God of peace," as we read in the 13th chapter of Hebrews and at the 20th verse, "brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." Jesus was the first of Adam's race to put on immortality. He "was the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." (Col. i. 18.) "He is the first-born of every creature" (Col. i. 15), not in the natural sense but the spiritual; "the beginning of the creation of God," as we read elsewhere (Rev. iii. 14), that is the new creation. Adam was the beginning of the old creation, Christ of the new. He is the Head of a new race of beings, destined to inhabit the globe when all the old Adamites or earth borns are passed away. Hence, in Corinthians, Paul says He was the first fruits. "In Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits." You understand the figure no doubt. It carries us back to

commands and practises under the law. The Israelites were required to offer the first of their fruit, and the first sheaf of ripe grain to the Lord, which was waved before him by the priest, as an expression of the sense of gratitude experienced by the husbandman, and as a recognition of the fact that God had a right to all that he had. But the first-fruits was only a very small portion of the whole, which was to follow, and which was the earnest or pledge of that. It did not differ in nature or quality. So Christ is the first fruits of the harvest of the dead; the first to be immortalized; presented in the heavenly temple before the eternal Father by himself, the great high priest of the household of faith; and just as the first sheaf of wheat was connected with the crop, so is he connected with all that shall hereafter rise. He is a part of the mighty harvest of the resurrection, a pledge that the rest will follow in the proper time. That time is spoken of by the Apostle, "Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

Here is another doctrine that the Churches have well-nigh lost sight of—the *second coming of Christ*. He is away now, but he is coming again. Of this fact we are repeatedly assured. The Apostles say so. The Angels said so. The Lord himself said so. And everything depends upon it. There is no salvation apart from the return of Christ. He is gone "into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. (Luke xix. 12.) "If I go and prepare a place for you," he said, "I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John xiv. 3.) "This same Jesus," said the angels to the astonished disciples, as they stood steadfastly gazing into heaven from the summit of the Mount of Olives, when their Master had ascended from their midst; "this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts i. 9-11.) If you read through your New Testaments you will find that the second coming of Christ occupies a commanding position in the teaching of the Apostles, it was the back-bone of their teaching, it was the one desire of their hearts. When he comes the dead will be raised, they will appear before him for judgment, they will be rewarded according to their works; the wicked will be punished and destroyed; the righteous will "enter into life," they will be endowed with matchless powers, they will be made like Christ; "mortality will be swallowed up of life." "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written :

Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Cor. xv. 54.) Then will the righteous exult in their glory, and exclaim, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. xv. 55.)

Now, it is a fable generally believed in that when Christ comes there will be a complete collapse of the whole mundane order of things; that, in fact, the universe is to pass away in a general and awful conflagration; that the stars will fall and the heavens become black as sackcloth of hair; and the whole visible universe melt with fervent heat and disappear, while the righteous will mount aloft with Christ in the heavens, and the wicked be plunged in the depths of eternal despair. How completely out of joint all things have become in the "orthodox" mind! There will be no falling stars, and no blackened heavens, and no burning worlds when the Lord Jesus returns from heaven. He comes to *restore* all things, not to *destroy*; to *renovate*, not to make *desolate*; to fill the world with *blessing*, not with *blasting*. This aspect of his mission is fitly expressed by Peter as we have it recorded in the 3rd chapter of the Acts, at the 20th and 21st verses—"He (that is God) shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." This is a great programme to carry out, a mighty work to accomplish; for many things are involved. Jesus is the predicted monarch of mankind, the future King of the entire earth, the divinely appointed deliverer of men from all the woes under which they groan, and all the monstrous injustices from which they suffer. He comes to rule with a rod of iron; to remedy earth's evils; to abolish earth's curses; to put aside earth's despots; to crush the head of every earth-born tyrant; to bless the poor and needy; to establish justice and equity in the earth; to give light in the darkness; and to give peace in the place of war. He comes to rule by divine right for he is the Son of Abraham, the Son of David, and the Son of God. God has constituted him the "heir of the world," and will give to him "the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." There will be no franchise bills required in the age of which we speak to qualify thousands of ignorant men who cannot read their alphabets to choose who shall make their laws. Christ will reign subject to no vote of the multitude. And those will reign with him whom he has "made alive" at his coming. They will be "kings and priests unto God." They will

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"reign upon the earth." (Rev. v. 10.) . They will enlighten the nations and bless them with their beneficent rule, and no evil will be permitted to lift up its head in society and remain uncrushed as it does to-day. The object of the rulers will not be self-aggrandisement, but the glory of God. They are being prepared for this future position now, and during the ages which have passed ; in due time they will "possess the kingdom under the whole heaven," as the Prophet Daniel declares (chap. vii. 18, 27).

We said that Jesus was the Son of Abraham ; as such he is the seed of the promise to whom the land of Canaan was specially promised as an everlasting possession. (Gal. iii. 16-18.) We said too that he was the Son of David, with whom God made a covenant that his throne should be established for ever before him. (2 Sam. vii. 16 ; xxiii. 1-5.) Christ is the heir to that throne, which at present lies in the dust. The last shred of authority possessed by the Jews was wrested from them eighteen centuries ago by the Roman power, and they have been politically dead ever since. They crucified their glorious King, but he liveth still, and will re-appear, and "raise up the tabernacle of David that has fallen, and close up the breaches thereof ; and raise up its ruins, and build it as in the days of old" (Amos ix. 11) ; for, as you may remember the angel said to his mother "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David : and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever : and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke i. 32, 33.) The restoration of David's throne means also the restoration of David's people. The Jews will be regathered to their own land. The downtreading will cease. The bitter persecutions will have an end. Israel will be at the head of the affairs of the earth, the most favoured nation under the sun. Jerusalem will be the metropolis of the world and the wealth of the Gentiles will abundantly flow into it, and all mankind will be subject to those laws which will issue forth from Zion. Abundant proof can be adduced on behalf of these statements from the Scriptures, the proof is voluminous ; we forbear—because of the time—to quote the many passages to which we might refer. These things are all actually comprehended in the passage from the pen of Paul to the Corinthians. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father ; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." This indeed is a

great work to accomplish in a world at enmity with God. What room there is for a righteous King endowed with divine wisdom and omnipotent power to effect reforms in the world. Everywhere there is opposition to divine law, and everywhere there is abuse of power, misgovernment, oppression, unequal laws, hoarded up wealth, and a thousand evils of which we are all more or less cognisant. The mighty Son of God will abolish them all! He will commence by abolishing those who foster them but too frequently for their own selfish purposes. He will put down all rule and all authority and power. The dominions of men will pass away. The Napoleons, and Bismarcks, and Alexanders, and Cæsars will cease to deluge the earth with human blood. For Christ—when the terrible judgments necessitated by the facts of the case when he shall return, of which the Bible says so much, shall be passed—will speak peace to the nations, wars will cease to the end of the earth, national jealousies and rivalries will be no more, there will be no further bloodshed to rectify the frontiers of the nations, for there will be but one King, and one rule, and all will be subject to him. This state of things in which righteousness will everywhere be the prevailing characteristic will last one thousand years: this is especially taught in the 20th chapter of Revelations, where we are informed that such “as were beleaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands” came to life again “and lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” “Blessed and holy is he,” the 6th verse says, “that hath a part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” Such language is very explicit, could not in fact be more so: men must be very perverse or very prejudiced to spiritualize it or attempt to explain its meaning away.

It is during this thousand years that all things are brought into subjection to God. It bridges over the gulf between the mortal and the immortal. It is a transition period. The world's inhabitants are part mortal and part immortal. The rulers—the Lord Jesus and his ransomed brethren are all deathless—equal in nature to the angels; the nations of the earth over whom they exercise authority are mortal; but the object of Jehovah is to banish all evil, all pain, all curse, all death from the earth. *And he will do it.* “The last

enemy that shall be destroyed" (says Paul) "is death." Is it not, I ask you, a glorious revelation which tells us of a time when death shall cease to ravage among the populations of the earth, when every inhabitant of the world shall be the possessor of endless life; when the funeral procession shall no more wind its way to the cemetery, and the habiliments of mourning shall be laid aside, and the tolling bell shall be no more heard; when the words uttered by the great voice of the angel which John heard in Patmos shall be realized—"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (Rev. xxi. 3, 4.) This state of perfect felicity will be ushered in at the end of the millennial reign of Christ. At that period—it is revealed—that circumstances will arise—a final manifestation of the evil of which human nature is capable—which will call forth a signal manifestation of the wrath and righteous judgment of God. This manifestation of evil takes the form of a rebellion against that divine rule which for so long has blessed the inhabitants of the earth with righteousness, plenty, and peace. The rebellion is permitted to grow. It assumes huge dimensions. The deceived hosts march against Jerusalem, they "compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city;" their thoughts doubtless will be very high and lifted up at this time, but "he that sitteth in the heavens will laugh, the Lord will have them in derision." Vain is the arm of mortality against the might of Jehovah. The elements are in the hollow of his hand. By a simple exertion of his power the assembled hosts are dissolved, as easily as the one hundred and eighty-five thousand warriors of the Assyrian king were slain in the darkness of a single night by an angel of the Lord. "Fire comes down out of heaven from God," we are told, and the mortal multitude are devoured. So will all the enemies of Jehovah finally perish from the earth. These events usher in the final judgment. The dead, small and great, who have lived and died during the thousand years of Christ's reign have to appear for judgment. As at the commencement of the millennium, so at the close. The worthy ones are immortalized. Their vile or corruptible bodies are changed: made like unto the glorious body of Christ. They will die no more.

There will be a mighty host of these : sufficient to inhabit the earth for ever. The wicked will be no more. They will perish. "The enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs : they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away." (Ps. xxxvii. 20.) "This is the second death." (Rev. xx. 14.) All evil is thus removed. The inhabitants of the earth are all deathless beings. The world is ransomed. Christ sees now in its completion, the result of the travail of his soul, and is abundantly satisfied. His sacrificial, and priestly, and mediatorial work is accomplished. All are reconciled to God. There is, therefore, no further necessity for a priestly reign. A change, consequently, takes place in the order of things. Christ delivers up the kingdom to God, even the Father. Christ has been the medium of reconciling all things to God, but the power is of the eternal Father. *He* is the fountain head of redemption. Christ is the medium by which it is accomplished. "For *he*" God, says Paul, "*hath put all things under his feet.*" But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that *he* (God) *is excepted, which did put all things under him.* And when all things shall be subdued unto him, *then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*" (1 Cor. xv. 27, 28.) Christ therefore, at this time, surrenders his authority to the Father, and takes a more subordinate place than hitherto. But here we are met with an "orthodox" or Trinitarian difficulty. We are told by the great churches of this and other lands that there are three divine persons, each equal in power and glory with the other, each possessing the same attributes, co-equal and co-eternal, and yet—there are not three but one! Each is said to be God, each is said to be uncreate, each is said to be incomprehensible, and each is said to be eternal; and yet there are not three Gods, or three uncreated beings, or three eternals, or three incomprehensibles, but only one of each! The clergy may well tell inquirers that it is a mystery, too profound for human reason to grapple with. It is a fable. It is a heathen doctrine dressed up with a few Bible phrases. It is incomprehensible nonsense. The Bible knows nothing of it. It teaches the sublime doctrine of one eternal God, and that God is one, not three. "To us," says the Apostle, "there is but ONE GOD, THE FATHER, of whom are all things." (1 Cor. viii. 6.) "There is ONE GOD and one mediator *between* God and man, *the man Christ Jesus.*" (1 Tim. ii. 5.) Jesus is the Son of God; born by the power of the Holy Spirit which proceeds from the Father,

and at all times recognised his dependence upon God for all things. His mighty works were wrought by the Spirit of God dwelling in him and given to him without measure. His words of wisdom he expressly declared were *not his, but the words of Him that sent him.* (John xii. 49.) Of his "own self he could do nothing." The Trinitarian conception introduces confusion everywhere in the Bible, and it is very observable in this passage in Paul's epistle to the Corinthians. It is *God* that puts all things under the feet of Christ. It would be inappropriate to write thus *if Christ were God.* And how singular it seems to read of Christ becoming *subject* to God, *if he is equal in power and glory and authority with him,* IF HE IS GOD HIMSELF. It is like saying he will become *subject to himself!* But if we recognise the truth of the Bible there is no difficulty. "*My Father is greater than I.*" "All things are yours," Paul writes to this same company of believers, "and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. iii. 21-23). "The head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God." Therefore there is no difficulty, and when the whole work of redemption is complete, Jesus resigns the sceptre to his Father's hands, and "*God is all in all.*" That is the consummation of the whole work of redemption carried on slowly since sin entered into the world. GOD IS ALL IN ALL. "I have sworn by myself," he declared through Isaiah (chap. xlv. 23), "the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Hab. ii. 14.) And here we have it fulfilled. The earth's population all righteous. Every heart throbbing in union with God's. Every tongue echoing forth his praise. O, they tell you at other places of worship of a perpetual hell where the damned lift up their eyes in eternal anguish, and curse and blaspheme their maker, and weep and wail and gnash their teeth throughout the ages of eternity! They tell you that evil will forever exist, that sin is co-eternal with the throne of God, that pain and agony and remorse exist throughout the limitless years of the ages to come! I tell you it is not true. It is a libel upon the mercy, and love, and justice of the eternal God. His purpose is to abolish sin and all its consequences from the universe, and not perpetuate it forever. The truth is obscured from those who set forth these monstrous ideas. Christ will come; and Christ will be enthroned;

and Christ will conquer and reign and put all enemies under his feet; and death will be destroyed, and a world will be ransomed, and Jehovah will be supreme—ALL IN ALL,—what a glorious prospect! Does it attract you? Will you share the blessedness? A place in the Kingdom! A life that can never end! A glory that can never cease! Perfection of nature and perfection of character, and association with the noblest of earth, aye, and the angels of heaven, throughout the illimitable future! “And the spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Rev. xxii. 17.)



WHO ESTABLISHED THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND?

A REVIEW OF A LECTURE DELIVERED IN THE TOWN HALL, KIDDERMINSTER, BY W. H. MASON, Esq., BARRISTER-AT-LAW.



“The Church of England is the daughter of the Church of Rome. She is so, perhaps, more directly than any other Church in Europe. England was the special conquest of the Roman Church, the first land which looked up with reverence to the Roman Pontiff, while it owed not even a nominal allegiance to the Roman Cæsar.”—

PROFESSOR FREEMAN. (*Encyclop. Brit.*, Art., “England.”)

IT is not quite a fortnight since the learned gentleman whose name you have heard lectured in the Town Hall upon the question, “Who established the Church of England?” It was my privilege to attend the lecture, which was delivered under the auspices of the local clergy, and in defence of the Church Establishment which it is their interest to maintain. The lecture was characterized by a large amount of assumption throughout, and it appears as though the lecturer presumed very much upon the ignorance of his hearers in regard to the history of that Church on behalf of which he stood there to plead. It would be impossible in the course of one lecture to deal comprehensively with all the fallacies advanced in the course of a long address, a very brief report of which appears in the local papers; but it will be our endeavour to-night to examine some of his facts, and among them the assumption with which the lecturer started, but for which he did not adduce one atom of proof, scarcely referring to the Scriptures throughout his address, viz., that “it was a part or branch in this land of the Society founded by Christ himself!” The lecturer laid particular stress upon the fact that the Established Church was “the Church.” I am not here to blame him for doing so if such is his belief. If it is his sincere conviction that that very worldly institution, that State-connected organisation is the veritable Church, or a part of it, established by the Lord Jesus, it is his duty to say so, and to defend it, and to try to prove it, and I would be the last to condemn him for so doing; but the right to examine his statements, and question his facts, and probe his assumptions is ours, and, thank God, we have liberty to do so. There was a time when we dare not have met as we do to-night for such a purpose, when his Church would have persecuted us to the death for doing so, for daring to question that it alone was the depository of divine truth. “The Church of England was not (said Mr. Mason) called the

Church, because, as it was erroneously believed, it was established by law, because in Scotland the same communion was called *the Church*, although another form was established; and so in America, the same body was called *the Church* although no form of Church government existed. The Church in Ireland had been disestablished, and yet it still retained the name of *the Church*; and if ever the day should come, which God forbid, when the Church was disestablished, it would not cease to be *the Church* of the country." Now all that is not worth much to start with. Who calls it "*the Church*?" Simply its adherents. The lecturer and his friends. He spoke as though it were an universally admitted fact. But half the nation would not admit the claim. Do the Wesleyans, and Independents, and Baptists and other dissenting bodies speak of it as "*the Church*?" Do they not rather look upon their own communities as approximating far more to the New Testament standard? Yea, their very dissent from the Establishment is a proof that they conscientiously believe her teachings on some points at least to be at variance with the Bible, and consequently that she is not what she claims to be, while the persecutions they have received from the hands of her officials in the past prove very clearly how little—at times—she has been able to lay claim to the Spirit of him whose offspring she professes to be. Do the immense majority of dissenters in Wales acknowledge the Establishment to be "*the Church*?" Do they not look upon its present position as a most unjust one, and is the time not quite ripe in the Principality and elsewhere to reduce it to the level of the other sects? Do the Presbyterians of Scotland, and the great majority of the Irish nation pronounce it "*the Church*?" Of course we know they do not. The Roman Catholics speak of their own in the same manner, as "*the only true Church*," so that when Mr. Mason speaks of his community being called "*the Church*," we must remember that it is he only and his friends who understand it so to be. What he said of his Church, each of the other sects to which he referred may say of their own. "There were," said he, "over 200 different religious bodies in this country, and amid all this babel and discord they were able in all parts of the world to point to the Church of England and her branches as *the Church of God*." There is not perhaps greater discord between the lot than there is in the Establishment itself. This we may refer to further on, but surely it is babel within the Church as well as outside. There is no unity, but the greatest diversity. This is even spoken of at times as one of the advantages of the Establishment—its comprehensiveness, its many beliefs, its *lack of unity*. The greatest possible antagonism exists as we know between its members, and yet the lecturer—amidst all the discord outside—can point to this peaceful and happy and united community as the one true Church of God!

The lecturer assured the audience that the Church did "not consist of buildings, nor in the Prayer-book, nor did it depend upon the dress, social position, birth and education of the Clergy." One would almost be led to think so if we were not assured to the contrary. Many Church people know much more of the Prayer-book than of the Bible. There is much talk, too, about the dress of the Clergy. "The Clergy and their Clothes" was the title of a leading article I saw in the *Liver-*

*pool Mercury** a long while ago, the article itself being of a somewhat amusing character. "On the testimony (it commenced) of no less a personage than Dean Stanley, the house of Convocation of the province of Canterbury, which has just risen, has spent no fewer than seven years on 'a question which is nothing more than one as to the clothes a clergyman should wear.' The ecclesiastical name for the 'question' is 'The better regulation of the ceremonial of the Church of England,' and it appears to have fluttered the reverend and right reverend counsellors far more than the use of the Athanasian Creed, or charity in the matter of the burial service. Indeed, if things go on in this way much longer, one of the bishops must be consecrated and set apart as head milliner, having previously received the necessary amount of lessons from Monsignor Capel as to the colour of ribbons and the cut of capes. . . . Seven years is a considerable part of human life; and surely at a time like this, so justly characterized by Dean Stanley as 'a period when the interests of religion require so much attention, and so many important reforms are before the world,' the united learning and common sense of both Houses of Convocation might have settled the matter in two or three sittings. Of course, dress is dear to the hearts of boy-curates, fresh from Oxford and blossoming into father confessors of the most approved ritualistic type. Red coats are said to do a great deal with the ladies in the case of officers in the army, and perhaps this is one reason why the lads in question, officers of the State ecclesiastical army, are so anxious to be provided with a uniform that will catch if not kill."

We cannot wonder at this sarcasm. It is deserved. Some of the clergy appear to think more of the shape of their collars and hats and ecclesiastical clothes than of those grand truths contained in the Scriptures. To claim to be successors of the Apostles or in any way connected with them while they trouble their minds about these puerilities and others we might name is a libel upon the men of God who lived in the past. *They* were willing to "wander about in sheepskins and goatskins," for the sake of truth, to be "destitute, afflicted, tormented," to endure "cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment" for the sake of truth and for God. A noble band were they! The men who can be so concerned about the burning of candles in broad daylight, and the shape of their surplices and other garments, who can preach about Church towers, and Church bells, and Church crosses, and Church decorations, and Church music, and Church politics, who, to use the words of one writer, "dedicate their lives to the fringes of religion, who are only profound when the gait of a Greek Archbishop, the shaking of an incense burner, or the Catholic colour of a vestment is at issue"—these men, I say, are not worthy to unloose the shoe's latchet of God's heroes of the past; they are ignorant of "the glorious gospel of the blessed God," they know not and do not proclaim his salvation, they have the form but not the power of the truth, the shadow but not the substance, and when they are weighed in the balances of truth, their claim to be *the* Church is found to be altogether lighter than vanity.

* July 21st, 1879.

Now there are two ways of looking at and answering the question "Who established the Church in and of England?" It may be viewed as a religious society, and the enquiry may be directed as to how it was first planted and by whom; or it may be viewed from another standpoint, a political one, and we might enquire how it became connected with the State, how it acquired its present ascendancy, why all the advantages of State patronage are hers? When we use the word "advantages," we do not wish to be misunderstood. We mean only in a worldly sense, not a spiritual. The idea of connection with the State is most foreign to the teaching of the New Testament. It would be utterly impossible to identify the Church of England—with its compulsory tithes, its union with the world, which it defends and strives to prolong, its Legislating Bishops, its clergy with their high-sounding and blasphemous titles, and its Romish doctrines, with the Church of the New Testament. There are no spiritual advantages. There is no spiritual freedom. A clergyman cannot do as he likes in the Church. He is bound by Acts of Parliament, which he defies at his peril. He is an instrument of the State. He cannot preach in a Nonconformist pulpit if he has the desire without breaking the law; or even, if I mistake not, in the parish of another clergyman without consent. He is tied up with red tape. He is not a free man. He dare not do as he sometimes would. Paul and the Apostles sought not the alliance of the State in their day. They would not have accepted the friendship of the heathen. They would not have permitted their consciences to be regulated by Act of Parliament. They announced the fact that "the friendship of the world was enmity with God," and that "whosoever would be a friend of the world, was the enemy of God"—statements which are sufficient to seal the doom of this great ecclesiastical system which is hand and glove with the world, and whose bishops are actually recognised as a part of the Legislature of the nation.

The Apostles preached the gospel in order that a people might be "taken out of the Gentiles for the name" of Jehovah in the age to come. The word "church" in the New Testament is rendered from a word which means really "called out ones." "Church" does not truly convey the idea of the original *ekklesiai*, but "is a corruption of *kuriake*, which signifies 'pertaining to a lord.' The Anglo-Saxons took the first and last syllables of the Greek word, as *Kur-Ke*, which they spelled *Circe*; but which is more obviously shown in the Scotch *Kirke*; both of which are equivalent to the modern English *Chur-ch*. *Ekklesiai*, however, which is rendered 'churches' in our version of the Scriptures is a word compounding of *ek*, 'out of,' and *klesis*, 'a call, or invitation,' hence an *ekklesis* is 'an invitation to come out,' and the assembly of people convened in consequence of their acceptance of the invitation is an ecclesia"* or a number of called out ones.

They are called out from the world for a particular purpose, viz., to be associated with Christ hereafter in the rulership of the nations when the Kingdom of God is established upon the earth; but this description would not apply to the members of the Church of England,

for really the world is the Church, all can claim membership, it depends upon no personal acceptance of truth, the most godless and profane—in whose minds there is a total absence of divine truth and no desire to possess it—are part of the Church. This is clear from Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity." The law knows no other answer to the question "What constitutes membership of the Church of England?" than the one he gives, "that there is not any man a member of the Commonwealth which is not also of the Church of England."* The *Times* has put the case in this way—"The fact is, that all Englishmen are, by law, members of the Church. It is about as difficult for any Englishman to separate himself from the Church of England as it is for the Church of England to separate itself from him. Indeed, practically, there is no such act, form, or way of separation."† Its position then brings it no spiritual advantage. It fetters its action. It cripples its life. It paralyzes its arm. It represses its energy. Its evils are manifold. It "pauperises the many at the cost of the few, it tends to create a dominant priesthood," and it obscures the truth that shines from the sacred word. The gospel needs no support from princes and earthly potentates. It needs no pampering by the State. It needs not to be nursed in the arms of luxury and wealth. It needs not the prestige of worldly power, nor the endowments of wealthy men of the world. It can get on best without them. It prospered most when all heathendom tried to exterminate it. Let the winds blow and the storms beat about its head, it will survive, it will grow, God will take care of his own truth, though all the monarchs of the world hang together to exterminate it from the earth. Noble words were the words of Milton: "Though all the winds of doctrine," said he, "were let loose and play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously, by licensing and prohibiting, to mis-doubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter? Her confuting is the best and surest suppressing. For who knows not that Truth is strong next to the Almighty? She needs no policies, nor stratagems, nor licensings, to make her victorious: those are the shifts and defences that Error raises against her power. Give her but room, and do not bind her when she sleeps, for then she speaks not true, as the old Proteus did, who spake oracles only when he was caught and bound; but then rather she turns herself into all shapes, except her own, and perhaps tunes her voice according to the time, as Micaiah did Ahab, until she be adjured into her own likeness." There is an old saying that "a fool can give a wise man good advice." One writer tells us that Henry VIII. proved this when he received the title of "Defender of the Faith." "O good Harry," said his court fool to him, "let thou and I defend one another, and let the Faith alone to defend itself."‡

One object which Mr. Mason appeared to have in view throughout his lecture was to prove the continuity of the Church of England from the first introduction of Christianity, about the year 200 to the present time. It was one and the same Church throughout according to his

* "Ecclesiastical Polity," book viii., sect. 2

† *Times*, October 9th, 1876.

‡ Southey's Book of the Church.

argument. But he failed to sustain it. Even had the pure truth been introduced in those early days, which is most questionable for reasons we shall adduce, it does not follow that the Established Church is the same as that planted then. Its identity cannot be proved. There was a break in the lecturer's own argument. He said that "when the Jutes, Saxons, and Angles swept through the country" religion was swept away, "*the people lapsed again into heathenism.*" What became of the Church then? According to the lecturer's argument it was gone. It disappeared. How was it re-established? Who brought it back again? Where did it come from? The lecturer answered the question. From Rome. How was this? Why the Pope of Rome—for by this time "the Church" was greatly corrupted,† and Popes had appeared upon the scene—The Pope of Rome—Gregory the Great as he is called—the one who was so struck with the fair faces and handsome forms and flaxen hair of the boy slaves, and who upon learning that their nation were called Angles, said "It is well, angels they are in countenance, and ought to be co-heirs of angels in heaven"—this Pope sent Augustine—*Saint Augustine* as he is called—"a Roman monk, at the head of forty missionaries, from his own monastery at Rome, to make his way to Britain." He came in the year 597 to convert the people, "and afterwards," said Mr. Mason, "was the first bishop of Canterbury, and from him had descended in an unbroken line, through early times to modern times, through all the changes, revolution and reform, the long line of Archbishops of the Church." Here then was the origin of the religious institution—Rome. It came from thence with its corrupt doctrines, so far as they were developed at that time, and it embraced what were developed afterwards. It was undoubtedly a branch of the Roman Catholic Church. Mr. Mason tried very hard, but very unsuccessfully, to wriggle out of that great fact of history. He spoke of the independence of the English Church, although he admitted that the Church of England had "been in communion with Rome," and he did not object to the same communion existing again if the Romish Church would abandon some of the errors that had lately been tacked on to her faith. There may have been, and doubtless were acts of independence on the part of some English monarchs who were not prepared to bow to all the grinding tyranny of the Roman Pontiffs; but this was the case in

† It is fully admitted that all the errors held by Rome at the present time had not then been authoritatively promulgated. Neither had the presumptuous claims of succeeding Popes then been made, acknowledged, or scarcely conceived. This identical Bishop of Rome—Gregory I.—himself most forcibly disclaimed the title of "Universal Bishop," so tenaciously insisted upon at the present time. He denounced it as a "profane title." He was, on one occasion, addressed by the Bishop of Alexandria in this capacity, but he made reply, "I do not esteem that an honour by which I know my brethren lose their honour: my honour is that of the Universal Church; I know what I am, and what you are; in position you are my brethren; in manners you are my fathers; I did not therefore command, but desired only to dictate what seemed to be expedient." On another occasion he wrote to one the very significant words—words which condemn those who have since his time occupied the Papal chair—"I confidently say that whoever calls himself universal priest, or desires in his election to be called so, *is the forerunner of Anti-Christ.*" It would be well if those Catholics who are so fond of appealing to authority would consider these words of Gregory the Great.

other lands beside England where the Popish Church held supreme sway. Individual acts of independence do not absolve the Church from the charge that she was a part of that great ecclesiastical community symbolised in the Apocalypse by a lewd, drunken, filthy woman, "sitting upon many waters," interpreted to mean "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" "with whom the Kings of the earth have committed fornication"—i.e. been in fellowship—had wicked connection and communion with her, and through the "wine of whose fornication"—that is her corrupt and bemuddling doctrines—"all the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunken" (Rev. xvii. 1, 2, 15.)

It was most astounding to hear Mr. Mason declare that "at the time of the Reformation no change of faith took place. It was simply the Church reforming herself from the corruptions which had crept in. While, on the other hand, the Church of Rome had added to her doctrines those of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, and quite recently, the infallibility of the Pope. The Roman Church at the time of the Reformation was not the Catholic Church in any modern sense of that term, and *the Church of England had never been Roman Catholic in the true sense of the term.* If the Church of England was not Roman Catholic at the Reformation, much more was it not in the time of Gregory the Great. "Why much more" if it was not at all at the time of the Reformation? But facts are against the defender of the Church. In the course of the evening it was said that "if anything could be proved by figures, certainly anything could be proved by facts," or words to that effect, but I think the statement that "the Church of England (or in England) had never been Roman Catholic" is one altogether incapable of proof. To go back only to the Reformation period, who was it that conferred the title of Defender of the Faith upon Henry VIII.? Was it not the Pope who did so, and complimented the King because he wrote a book against Luther? Was it not in the reign of this monarch that the breach was made with Rome resulting from the quarrel between Henry VIII. and the Pope on the subject of the King's divorce and his marriage with Anne Boleyn? This is a well-known fact, and admitted by Church authorities. The Church of England owes its origin to this period, and to the efforts of Reformers at this time. Bishop Short, in his "History of the Church of England"* says "The existence of the Church of England as a distinct body, and her final separation from Rome, may be dated from the period of the divorce." Mr. Lecky, an able writer, speaks of the English Church as having been "created in the first instance by a Court intrigue," and of the Roman Catholic Church as "the Church which it had superseded."† The Report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Courts issued some time ago maintains the same view. It speaks of "its organic connection with foreign Churches," and says that "the Church of England was not, even in Anglo-Saxon times, merely the religious organisation of the nation, but a portion of a much greater organisation; the exact limits of its relation to foreign churches were possibly disputable, but

* P. 86. Sixth Edition.

† "History of Rationalism." Vol. II., p. 193.

the fact of its incorporation was admitted on all sides.* Dr. Stubbs, the Bishop of Chester who drew up this portion of the report, has in his "Constitutional History" contradicted by anticipation still more clearly the view set forth by Mr. Mason the other night, and set forth the fact that the English Church was a part of the Roman Catholic Church. These are his words:—"In the general legislation of the Church, the English Church and nation had alike but a small share: the promulgation of the successive portions of the Decretals (the letters written by the Popes for the determining of matters of controversy, and having the authority of law) was a Papal act to which Christendom at large gave a silent acquiescence; the Crown asserted and maintained the right to forbid the introduction of Papal bulls without a royal license, both in general and particular cases: and the English prelates had their places, and the ambassadors accredited by the King and the estates had their right to be heard in the general councils of the Church. But except in the rare case of collision with national law, the general legislation of Christendom, whether by Pope or council, was accepted as a matter of course.† Hence it is plain from the Church's own historians that it was part of the Roman Catholic Church.

There would be, I think, but little difficulty in proving from other sources, the connection of the Church of England with the Church of Rome. Were not "her primacies instituted by Papal authority, and confirmed and maintained by the same authority?" Are not the communications on record from the Pope to the Primates of the Church? Was not the pallium they wore "a symbol of their union with the Roman See and a token that they held their office and jurisdiction from the Pope?" I have seen a number of quotations from these epistles given in controversy on this question. For instance Pope Boniface V. wrote to Justus:—"Moreover, we send to your fraternity the pallium, granting you also to celebrate the ordination of Bishops when need requires." Pope Honorius wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury in 626:—"We grant to you and to your successors for ever, by the authority of Blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, the primacy of all the Churches of Britain. Therefore, we have ordered all the Churches and regions of England to be subject to your authority." Again in the year 670, when Theodore of Tarsus was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury by Pope Vitalian, the following communication was addressed to him by the Pope:—"We learn your desire of the confirmation of the diocese subject to you, because in all things you desire to shine by our privilege of apostolical authority. Wherefore, by the authority of Blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, we, however unworthy, holding the place of that same Peter, who bears the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, grant to you, Theodore, and to your successors, all that from of old time was allowed for ever to remain unimpaired, in that your Metropolitan See of Canterbury." Other communications of this kind could be given of later periods than the above all clearly showing the union of the English Church

* Pp. 22, 23.

† Stubb's "Constitutional History." Vol. III., p. 348.

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with that of Rome, a fact testified to also by various historians. The "Rev." Dr. Brewer, in his "Guide to English History," page 263, says:—"Henry VIII. denied the Pope's supremacy, which had been acknowledged in England for more than nine hundred years." The "Rev." S. Milner, in his "History of England," page 409, writes:—"Cromwell obtained a place in the Privy Council, and through eight years prompted and directed the Measures which rendered England independent of the See of Rome." Lord Macaulay says:—"It was possible to transfer the name of Head of the Church from Clement to Henry, but it was impossible to transfer to the New Establishment the veneration which the Old Establishment had inspired. Mankind had not broken one yoke in pieces in order to put on another. The supremacy of the Bishop of Rome had for ages been considered as a fundamental principle of Christianity."

But, said Mr. Mason, "At the time of the Reformation no change of faith took place." Is that so? What did he mean by "the Church reforming herself from the corruptions which had crept in?" What did he mean further on in his address when he spoke of the Church "washing her face?" It had got dirty, he said, and was washed. We agree with him as to its dirty condition, and believe that it was only half washed; but does not that washing, and that reforming itself from corruption mean that it altered its belief on many topics? Undoubtedly this was the case. Are not several of the "Thirty-nine Articles" specially condemnatory of Popish errors previously taught and believed by the Church in England? Do they not condemn Works of Supererogation; Purgatory; speaking in a Foreign Tongue; the so-called sacrament of Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony and Extreme Unction; Transubstantiation; the withholding of the Wine from the people in the Lord's Supper; the Sacrifice of the Mass, and other things practised and believed by the Church of Rome? These doctrines and practices were abandoned by the Reformers, they changed their faith, and these Articles were formulated and became the law of the Church under the authority of the King, who declares himself to be "By God's ordinance, according to our just title, Defender of the Faith, and Supreme Governor of the Church, within these our dominions." And yet Mr. Mason says, notwithstanding all this abandonment of false doctrine, this "washing of the face," there was no change of faith! How can we rely upon his other "facts" when he talks thus? Here then is the time when the "Church of England" was brought into existence. The material to work on was there before, but it was brought into a new relationship, owing to the determination of Henry VIII. to divorce his wife and marry another whether the Pope sanctioned it or not. It is no figure of speech to speak of the Church "as by law established." Such is the case. As an establishment it originated in tyranny and lawless passion, and the substitution of a King-Pope for a Priest-Pope. The lecturer in the course of his address tried to soften down the meaning of the words "Supreme head," or "Supreme Governor of the Church" applied to the Kings and Queens of England, by saying that she was supreme governor over Dissenters as well as the Church, as they would find if they got up a quarrel and went to law.

But this seems something like a little dust-throwing. Other sects are free to regulate the internal matters connected with their systems without any appeal to Parliament. They can alter their forms of worship, and adopt what services they like without any appeal to the law, but it is not so in the Church. That is absolutely subject to the State authority. And if through the advance of Constitutional liberty the real power has left the throne and has come to reside in the Government of the Legislature, it does not alter the fact that the kings of the past acted very differently. The Church is now absolutely under the control of Parliament, but it was different in days gone by. Henry VIII. claimed more power than that which now rests with Parliament. "The supremacy he claimed" says Macaulay, "was certainly nothing less than the Power of the Keys:" the King was to be the Pope of his Kingdom, the Vicar of God, the expositor of Catholic verity, the channel of sacramental graces;" and more to the same effect. The clergy submitted. They were the sycophants of monarchy. The great majority changed their allegiance from the Pope to the King, though some refused and went to the stake. It speaks but little for the honesty and consistency and religious principle of those who so readily changed from Pope to King. But they were prepared to swim with the tide. To become Catholic when a Catholic monarch reigned, and Protestant when a Reformer sat upon the throne. They have almost continually supported the throne against the good of the people. The lecturer referred to Stephen Langton in regard to the part he took in defending English liberties, but one swallow does not make a summer, and though he was a staunch adherent to the cause of national liberty, yet we should remember that he was created an archbishop by the Pope in opposition to King John, and when he was forbidden by the King to enter England, and the monks of Canterbury banished, the kingdom was placed under the Papal interdict. The King was excommunicated, and his subjects absolved from their allegiance, and when he submitted to the Pope, as he afterwards did, and complied with the Papal terms, he received the Papal absolution from Langton, a clear proof that Rome was at that time the head of the Church in England.

But it would be impossible to acquit the clergy of subserviency to monarchy whatever may be said of this man of pre-reformation times. What does the great historian, Lord Macaulay, say :* "The Church of England continued to be for more than a hundred and fifty years the servile handmaid of monarchy, the steady enemy of public liberty. The divine right of Kings, and the duty of passively obeying *all* their commands, were her favourite tenets. She held these tenets firmly through times of oppression, persecution, and licentiousness; while law was trampled down; while judgment was perverted; while the people were eaten as though they were bread." The Historian Hume, writing of the Tudor period, says, "So absolute was the authority of the Crown, that the precious spark of liberty had been kindled, and was preserved by the Puritans alone, and to this sect the English owe the whole freedom of their constitution." Mr. Lecky in his "History of Ration-

alism" bears the same testimony to the Puritans, and speaking of the Church of England says, "No other Church so uniformly betrayed and trampled on the liberties of her country. In all those fiery trials through which English liberty has passed since the Reformation, she invariably cast her influence into the scale of tyranny, supported and eulogised every attempt to violate the Constitution, and wrote the fearful sentence of eternal condemnation upon the tombs of the martyrs of freedom."* Imagine this being written of a New Testament Church! Of an unworldly community! Of a people called out from the world! What a misconception of everything divine must prelates have to suppose that—while acting thus—they are part of that undefiled Virgin community espoused by the Apostle Paul to Christ. We might multiply statements of eminent writers which testify to the same facts that we have just referred to. The Church has been opposed to every noble reform, it has ever been on the side of injustice and wrong. Its history has—to use the words of Mr. John Morley, M.P.—"been one long and unvarying course of resolute enmity to justice, enlightenment and freedom."†

I said that it was no figure of speech to speak of the Established Church "as by law established." It is the Church of the State. "Every line of its rubric, every thread of its vestments, every article of its faith, every stone of its buildings, every source of its revenues, every acre of its property is regulated" by Act of Parliament.‡ Its tithes are made compulsory by law. Under the sanction of law, Church rates were collected until a few years ago, and by Act of Parliament that power was abolished. It has no power to legislate itself. Convocation is a farce. A form without the power. The clergy meet and discuss and go home again. Legislation is at the mercy of a Parliament composed of Churchmen, Roman Catholics, Dissenters, Jews and Infidels. Her bishops are appointed by the Prime Minister for the day, often for political reasons and as a reward for party services. Her clergy are placed in their positions often without any regard for personal fitness, but for family and other reasons, while livings are regularly advertised for sale in the papers and put up by auction so that the highest bidder may buy, and are often at the disposal of the most godless men. I could narrate matters that would disgust you also in regard to the institution of men to Church livings—whom the Bishop had no power to put aside—utterly unfit for the position, and yet Mr. Mason—without any proof—taught that this Church of the State is a part of the Society founded by Christ himself! Those who can receive the statement know little indeed of that book in which is contained the revelation of eternal life, and the history of the foundation of the Christian Church.

I need not refer to the many Acts of Parliaments from the time of Henry VIII. to our own which prove that the Church is the creation of the State. By Act of Parliament the King was appointed supreme head of the Church, the services of the Church are all established by law, and the

* "History of Rationalism in Europe." Vol. II., pp. 193-4.

† "The Struggle for National Education," pp. 6, 7.

‡ British Quarterly Review.

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very seats upon which the Bishops sit in the House of Lords are defined by an Act passed in 1539 during the Reign of Henry VIII., the provisions of which still regulate the positions of the Bishops in the Upper Chamber. It was by an Act of Parliament by which it was decided that the Cup should be given to the laity in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. (Act 1. Edward 6, c. 1). The Church was not consulted in this Parliamentary transaction; it was wholly an act of the secular power, or State. The next Act passed was one that ordered that Bishops should be nominated by the King, and that all processes in the Ecclesiastical Courts should run in the King's name.

Edward was a Protestant. He was followed on the throne by Catholic Mary—"Bloody Mary" as she is called. Early in her reign (1554) the two Houses of Parliament addressed the Queen. In this address they confess that, "whereas they had been guilty of a most horrible defection and schism from the Apostolic See, they did now most heartily repent of it; and in sign of their repentance, were ready to repeal all the laws that were made in prejudice of that See." How accommodating they were, were they not?—when their necks were in danger. This same Parliament further prayed the Queen's good offices "with the papal legate to grant them absolution and to receive them again into the bosom of the Church." The Parliament was absolved; the legate "restored them to the communion of the Holy Church," and the laws which had furthered the Reformation were abolished. The Church was now again wholly Popish, and this change was effected by the action of Parliament. Those who did not submit went to the stake. They counted not their lives dear unto them. They played the men. They were martyrs for freedom of conscience, and the martyr roll was greatly lengthened during the reign of this Popish Queen. Hundreds were burnt alive, and the greatest cruelty was manifested by the adherents of the Romish faith. Elizabeth was the next Queen, and she soon manifested the disposition to reverse the ecclesiastical policy of her predecessor. By Proclamation she ordered that the Daily Lessons, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed, should be read in the Churches, until Parliament should determine the religious services of the people. This was another great change and it was wholly made by a Royal Proclamation. The Bishops were opposed to the Queen's reforming movements and refused to assist at her Coronation, only one,—Oglethorpe, of Carlisle—could be persuaded to officiate in the ceremony. Parliament now met and *restored to the Crown its supremacy* in ecclesiastical affairs, and passed an "Act for the Uniformity of Common Prayer and Service in the Church" (1 Eliz. c. 1 and 2). "These two Acts," says Hallam, "are the main links of the Anglican Church with the temporal constitution, and establish the *subordination and dependency* of the former." In this arrangement the Church was not even consulted. When the Act of Supremacy was before the House of Lords *every Bishop voted against it*; while the Act of Uniformity was adopted in opposition to a counter scheme which the clergy had passed in convocation. These facts show that Elizabeth gave the Church no leave or power to frame its own constitution. She and her Parliament made it all, and forced it upon the Church. It is "established by law." If further evidence were

needed we might refer you to the Prayer Book where we read "that such ornaments of the Church, and of the ministers thereof, at all times of their ministration, shall be retained, and be in use, as were in this Church of England, *by the authority of Parliament*, in the second year of the reign of King Edward the Sixth," or to the coronation oath of the Kings and Queens of England in which they swear to maintain "the Protestant Reformed religion *as established by law*."

I wish now more particularly to notice the statement made at the opening of Mr. Mason's lecture that the Church of England "was called *the Church* because it was a part or branch in this land of the society founded by Christ himself." "She was known" he said "by three distinctive marks" by which "she was recognised all over the world," these three marks were "(1) the faith, (2) the sacraments, and (3) the ministry." Now let us, as well as time will permit, examine this claim. How are we to know the faith of the Church of England? Mr. Mason would perhaps say by her Creeds and by her Thirty-nine Articles. But is that a satisfactory answer? How are those Creeds and Articles understood by different members of the Establishment? Is there unity of belief? At the meeting in the Town Hall the hymn was given out by the Vicar and sung by a large portion of the audience in which the words occur referring to the Church,

"One Lord, one Faith, one Birth."

But can any man honestly pretend that there is but "one faith" in the English Establishment? Is there not a multitude of beliefs? Is there not the greatest diversity imaginable? Is there not positive antagonism so that at the vestry meetings sometimes they almost come to blows? Are there not two large associations—The Church Association and the English Church Union—in existence for antagonistic purposes? Do not Churchmen sometimes prosecute Churchmen and are they not sent to prison on account of their faith? Is not the Establishment a house divided against itself? Can it be said in truth that—although they have all subscribed to the same Articles, and accept the same laws—that Evangelicals, Broad-Churchmen, and Ritualists have but "one Faith?" Why a babel of voices is heard inside as well as outside the Church. The Church came from Rome and a very large and active portion of it is engaged in the effort to lead it back to the Mother Church—the "Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth." The Mother Church fully recognises this. The *Tablet*, a Roman Catholic Newspaper, said some time ago, "The Ritualists are doing our work for us, and as time goes on they will do it still more effectually. As men found out that Tractarianism was a half-way house to Rome, so they will find that Ritualism is a stage or two further on."* The Romanisers in the Church are a powerful body, and they teach almost everything that Rome does. Baptismal Regeneration of Infants, Transubstantiation, Purgatory, Prayers for the dead, Confession and Priestly powers. These ideas, these heresies, are altogether repugnant to another large section of the Church, how then can any one speak about its "one faith?" The Act of Uniformity has failed to bring about unity of thought and belief, and

* *Tablet*, January 7, 1881.

Churchmen fiercely fight about their faiths though in the same fold. All sorts of coloured sheep (or goats) are there. And many probably without any faith at all.

But if you take the teaching of the Prayer Book it cannot be found in the Bible. One of the Creeds—the Athanasian—is openly repudiated by many Churchmen. A London Clergyman has only recently stated that he never reads it. He does not believe it. One said to me once very significantly that "He had his own views about it!" As we dealt with the Trinitarian view at length only a fortnight ago, we need not enlarge to-night, but that Creed is without any scripture warrant, and is opposed to its plainest declarations. It is contradictory and absurd. It is, as I showed, a cause of infidelity. It will muddle your brains to try to understand it. It speaks of three who are each—by himself—God, each eternal, each uncreate, each incomprehensible, and yet—there are not three, but only one of each! It tells you that "we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person *by himself* to be God and Lord," that is, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, *all three*, yet the Catholic Religion forbids us to say "There *be three* Gods, or *three* Lords!" The Catholic Religion is evidently in a muddle over the matter. I need not go through the Creed, do so yourselves and see how contradictory it is. The Bible Teaching is plain upon the subject of God—and that is the true source of appeal.* There is but one,—the Holy *One* of Israel. "To us" says Paul "there is but *One God*, the Father out of whom are all things, and one Lord (or Ruler) Jesus Christ, through whom are all things," that is they were brought into existence by the Father with a view to what he would hereafter accomplish by his Son (I Cor. viii. 4-6.) Jesus is the Son of God, begotten by the power of the Father of the Virgin Mary. His miraculous power was derived from the Father. He himself said "I can of mine own self do nothing." "My Father is greater than I." (John v. 30; xiv. 28.) The words of wisdom which he spake were the Father's words taught him by the Spirit of God (John xii. 49, 50.) The Apostolic teaching, and the teaching of Jesus himself upon this important matter of his nature, and of his relationship to the Father, seems to us to be remarkably clear and convincing, and the Revised Version is even more destructive of the Trinitarian view than the Authorised Version of the Scriptures. The subordination of the Son to the Father, whom he acknowledged as his God repeatedly, even after he was glorified (John xx. 17; Rev. iii. 12,) to whom he prayed for help in need, to whom he cried for deliverance from death, upon whom he relied for all his marvellous miraculous power, and of whom he said—in the hour of his darkest sorrow, when the shadow of death was crossing his path and when the film of death was clouding his vision—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46)—this

* "Let not these words be heard between us, 'I say,' or 'you say,' but rather let us hear, 'Thus saith the Lord;'" for there are certain books of the Lord in whose authority both sides acquiesce. There let us seek our Church, there let us judge our cause. Take away, therefore, all those things which each alleges against the other, and which are derived from any other source than the Canonical Books of Holy Scriptures. But perhaps some will ask, 'Why take away such authorities?' Because I would have the Holy Church proved, not by human documents, but by the Word of God.—*Augustine. De Unitate Ecclesie c. iv.*

subordination is clearly and consistently taught throughout the New Testament. And some of the statements are so clear and emphatic, that, to us, it is most singular that his co-equality with the Father should be so strenuously maintained. Look at Peter's teaching on the day of Pentecost regarding Jesus—inspired as he was by the Spirit of God—"Ye men of Israel" he said, "hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, *a man approved of God* among you by miracles and wonders and signs, *which God did by him* in the midst of you as ye yourselves also know" (Acts ii. 22.)—why how simple such a passage is, and how easily understood. He worked by divine power his mighty works. *God did the works through his instrumentality*—he could not have done them unaided. He was "a man approved of God," sinless, pure, perfect and therefore God was with him as with no other being before. So Peter taught also to Cornelius—Acts x. 38—that "*God anointed Jesus of Nazareth* with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil; *for God was with him.*" Evidently if God had *not* been with him, if he had *not* anointed him with his Spirit, he would have been unable to do the works he did, and it is a strange idea to entertain—with such passages in view—that Jesus was himself Almighty God, possessing all power, and yet needing to be anointed by the Spirit of God to do these works, and only able to do them because "God was with him"—the man Christ Jesus. In all things he was completely submissive to the Father's will, even to the death of the cross, and in this way he was made perfect through suffering. Because of his perfect obedience "God hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name" (Phil. ii. 9.) He is never called "God the Son" in the Bible, is never spoken of as "very God." You never read there that "Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost!" "*The head of Christ is God*"—that is what Paul says (I Cor. xi. 3.) There is *one God*, and one mediator between God and man, the man *Christ Jesus*"—that is what he says in another place (I Tim. ii. 5.) The Holy Spirit is the power of the Father by which his will is carried out in all his wide domains. It is not a person distinct from him, but his power present everywhere, proceeding from him in heaven, by which he is cognisant of all things, and by which all the operations of nature are carried on. We are enveloped by this Spirit of God, hence we live and move and have our being in him. "The Spirit of God is in our nostrils" and apart therefrom we die and go to dust (Job xxvii. 3; xxxiv. 14, 15.)

And that leads me to point out another feature in which Church of England ministers differ among themselves and with the book. They teach for the most part that man is an immortal being, that there is—tabernacling in the flesh, the outward shell as it is called—an indwelling, immaterial, immortal spark, in which resides the personality, which at death leaves the body and resides somewhere else—they can't agree where. Now we say they are not agreed among themselves upon this matter, for a considerable number of clergymen of thought and intelligence repudiate this Pagan belief. The majority however cling to it, and broadly speaking it is the foundation stone of sectarian Christianity. Upon it is built a number of other dogmas which—if that be false—fall,

with most disastrous consequences to modern ecclesiasticism. If it be not true that man has an indwelling immortal entity called the soul then the doctrine of the eternal torment of the wicked in hell is a baseless and horrible fable, as gross a libel upon the justice, and mercy, and wisdom, and righteousness of the Almighty as it is possible to conceive. If it be not true, Evil will not of necessity be eternal. Men will not enter into torment when they die, and agonize in hopeless and useless woe throughout the illimitable future. Neither can it be true that they pass through purgatorial fires preparatory to heavenly bliss—a monstrous delusion which has brought any amount of cash to the priests of the Romish Church. Neither can the idea be correct that they consciously dwell in some dreamy intermediate state in a place called Hades,—as taught by so many Churchmen—awaiting the resurrection of their bodies. Neither can the belief in heaven-going at death be true.

All these ideas—involving other doctrines besides,—fall, if the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul be false. And for that belief there is no scriptural evidence. It is never once asserted in the Bible. It is there taught that man is a creature of the dust, animated by the spirit of life common to every living creature upon the earth. At death he returns to the ground. If ever he lives again it must be through a resurrection from the dead. In the death state he knows nothing. He is unconscious. "His thoughts perish." "The dead know not anything." They sleep soundly. No voice falls upon their ears. No praise issues from their lips.* No! Man is absolutely mortal. The mission of Christ was to bring life where there was death. He "brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel" (II Tim. i. 10.) He is the life giver,—"the Prince of Life" (Acts iii. 15.) God has "given him power over all flesh that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him" (John xvii. 2.) This he will confer upon certain conditions upon members of the human race. It will be bestowed at his coming—his second coming—the great hope of New Testament believers, and the burden of Apostolic preaching. When he comes he will raise the responsible dead. He will judge and reward those thus brought to life from the dust. The righteous will "enter into life eternal." They will "put on immortality." They will be "made equal to the angels and die no more." The wicked will be destroyed, blotted out of existence, die "the second death."† Christ will then establish his throne in Jerusalem. He is the heir to the throne of David, and at this time the promise made by the angel to his mother will be fulfilled and "The Lord God will give unto him the throne of his Father David"—which was not a spiritual throne in heaven, but a literal throne on earth,—"and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i. 32, 33.) The Jews will be re-gathered to their own land, according to the numerous prophecies of the Bible. They will become the first and most powerful nation upon the earth. All earthly powers will be subdued to the sceptre of the Son of David and the Son of God. He is "the heir of the world." God will

* Eccles. ix. 5, 6; Ps. cxlvi. 2-4; vi. 5; Isaiah xxxviii. 18, 19; Ps. xliii. 3; lxxvi. 5, 6.

† I Cor. iv. 5; II Tim. iv. 1, 8; Matt. xxv. 46; I Cor. xv. 53; Luke x. 36;

Rev. xx. 13, 14.

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give him "the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession" (Ps. ii. 8.) The saints who are made alive at his appearing will reign with him. They are now called out of the Gentiles for this purpose. They are "joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17.) They will "reign upon the earth kings and priests unto God" (Rev. v. 10.) Christ will be the supreme King. All enemies will be subdued to him. He will put away the sin of the world. He will break the tyrant's power. He will smite the despot upon the throne. He will remove the crown from every earthly potentate's brow. He will disestablish all State Churches in every land and sweep away every vestige of their lying superstitions. He will help the poor and needy. He will judge the nations righteously. He will scatter the proud and haughty in the imaginations of their hearts and exalt them of low degree. The unjust and unrighteous laws of the past will be abrogated, and justice will prevail the wide world through. A pure and incorruptible administration will exist under the whole heaven. This is Bible teaching concerning the kingdom of God. "The kingdoms of this world" will at this time have become "the kingdoms of our Lord and of his anointed;" for "he is king of kings, and Lord of Lords," and every knee must bow to him (Rev. xi. 15; xix. 16.) His reign will finally result in universal righteousness, in the destruction of all evil, in the exaltation of Jehovah's name, in glory to God in the highest, in the peopling of the earth with a redeemed and immortal throng, who will dwell therein for ever, at which time "God will be all in all" (I Cor. xv. 28.)

You will see that I am only in the briefest manner possible summarising these truths. We cannot go into detail. Each theme requires a lecture to elaborate it. But do the clergy preach these truths? Yea they are largely unacquainted with them. *Their faith*—or *faiths*—are spurious, they cannot be found in the Bible. Hence the claim of Mr. Mason that the Church of England is a branch of the Church planted by Christ is without proof. The first of his three distinctive marks fails. The *multitudinous faiths* of the Established Church are not the "one faith" of the Bible, the various hopes entertained by her ministers and members are not the "one hope" of the New Testament believers; the three-fold Deity is not the "one God" we read of in the book, "who is above all, and through all, and in all;" the Christ they proclaim "*begotten before all worlds*" and yet contradictorily said to be "*co-equal and co-eternal with the Father*" who *begat him*—is not the "one Lord" of the gospels, begotten of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Highest, —in other words the spirit of God,—in the time of Herod the Great; the English Church Union and the Church Association, are not the "one body" of Christ who "*keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace*," and the baptism they practise is not the "*one baptism*" practised by the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. iv. 3-6.) No! and we shall find that the second of the three distinctive marks of the Church—given by Mr. Mason to establish it as the Church of Christ—fails deplorably to do so. The "sacraments" and what is taught about them by many prove clearly that the apostacy so clearly foretold by the apostles, and already at work in their own day, surely overtook "the Church." Where do you read of baby baptism in the Bible? There is not a single case of baptism recorded where you can possibly

by any ingenuity screw a baby in. The candidates for baptism were all believers of the truth. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. xi. 6,) and babies are incapable of faith. Where in the book do you read of infant regeneration brought about by sprinkling a few drops of holy water upon the brow? Where there do you read of signing "with the sign of the cross?" Where there do you read of sponsors, of "godfathers and godmothers," who so lightly "renounce the devil and all his works and the pomp and vanity of this wicked world" on behalf of a child in whom, perhaps, they have no interest, and when they have never renounced the devil on their own account! Baby baptism is a farce, a perversion of the truth, an insult to the Deity, a source of incalculable mischief, a cheat, and a lie. Bible baptism is different altogether. It is only for those who understand and believe the truth concerning the kingdom of God, and the things concerning the name of Christ. When men realise their own mortality, that sentence of death is passed upon them, that Christ only can confer upon them immortality, that he has died on their account, and rose from the dead for their justification, and been made unto believers "righteousness, and sanctification, and wisdom and redemption," and that it is only by union with him that they can partake of his life and glory, they are then prepared to "be buried with him by baptism into death," they are willing to bury the old man in a figure by immersion in water, and to rise again from that symbolic death to walk in newness of life typical of that resurrection life to which they are called, of which the ordinance is a beautiful representation. We cannot enlarge upon this doctrine. We repeat that baby sprinkling, or baby immersion, is absolutely unscriptural, there is no record of it in the Bible, nor in the history of the Church for the first two centuries. It crept in with other errors which it would be most interesting to notice if we had time. The other "sacrament" of the Church as it is termed is likewise not scripturally understood by its members. The bread and the wine are the symbols of the body and the blood of Christ. He was the true bread that came down from heaven to give life unto the world (John vi. 51.) This he did by submitting to the death of the cross. His life was yielded up on account of sin. "He poured out his soul unto death." "The soul or life of all flesh is in the blood."* His blood was shed, because without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, and as the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin it required the blood of one who was perfect in character and yet a sharer in the nature of his brethren, to be shed. The covenants of promise made to Abraham had also to be confirmed by the shedding of the blood of Christ before they could be brought into force, hence we read of "the blood of the everlasting covenant," and Christ said "This is my blood of the new (or Abrahamic) covenant shed for many for the remission of sins" (Heb. xiii. 20; Matt. xxvi. 28.) To intelligently partake of the bread and the wine these matters need to be understood. It is simply a memorial service commanded his people until he again returns to the earth. It needs no priest to administer it. By partaking of the bread and the wine we remember our Lord's broken body and shed blood, we recognize that through him alone we can eat

* See Author's Lecture "The Soul; What is it?" Price Twopence.

and live for ever, and we call to mind those great and precious promises made to the fathers, of the everlasting inheritance of the land, which were confirmed by the death of Christ. The Church has made a mystery of this ordinance. Many of the clergy teach the real presence of Christ in it, that is, that after consecration, the bread becomes *the real body* and the wine *the actual blood* of Jesus Christ, of him who has ceased to be mortal, who became a partaker of the divine nature more than eighteen hundred years ago. So that they profess to believe that *they actually reproduce the mortal Jesus who trod the streets of Judea in the days of his flesh!*

It was my intention when preparing this lecture to show how some of these errors crept into the Church in the very early days of Christianity, so that even when it was first introduced into Britain the truth was greatly corrupted by the main body of professors through their desire to propitiate the heathen around them, and make Christianity more palatable to the Pagan mind. The fact is *the Church got Paganised*, whilst some of the early dissenters held the truth, the men who protested against the error and the worldliness and the vain philosophy that abounded in the schools of thought in those days, and which became incorporated with,—and ultimately sapped the life out of—"the Church." The persecuted few had the truth in all probability, but they suffered for their faith and consistency, whilst "the Church" so called developed into a vast, worldly, intolerant, persecuting power, from which evolved at last the Pope of Rome, the universal father, "our Lord God the Pope," whose blasphemous pretensions are well known to students,—to whom even kings must bow, and subjects swear allegiance, the claimant of infallibility, the head of the worst tyranny that ever cursed the earth, the end of which, however, draweth nigh, for Christ will consume it with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy it with the brightness of his coming.*

As regards the third distinctive mark of the Church of England, by which it may be identified with the Church of Christ—according to Mr. Mason—it is, equally with the others, a failure. We know of no priests in the New Testament but one—that is Jesus. They abound in the Church of England. The deacons we read of in the Apostolic writings were elected for what would now be called secular work. The bishops were those who had the oversight of the brethren in various places where ecclesias were formed. The preaching of the word was not confined to any particular order of men. The brethren generally preached the word, that is, those who had ability so to do. They were warned against those who would make merchandise of them—that is just what is done now. It is, with, of course, many noble exceptions, a matter of preaching for pay, and they seldom refuse a call to a higher salary or office. Somehow the spirit seldom, or never calls them to a lower salary, even though it were a "wider sphere of usefulness." You do not read of Archbishops in the New Testament with two palaces to live in and £15,000 a year to boot! You do not read of Canons and Deans and Archdeacons and

* MOSHEIM'S "Ecclesiastical History" gives interesting particulars of the development of Episcopal power.

Prebendaries and the host of other titled clergy, in the epistles of the Apostles. And no one in their days ever listened to such sing-song, whining gentry as those who now chant the services of the Church. I wonder sometimes why they can't speak with a natural voice. If Paul could re-appear upon the scene and walk into one of our large churches or Cathedrals, and behold the candles, and the decorations, and the black and white robed ministers, and listen above all to the things proclaimed from the pulpit, no one would be more surprised than he to be told that these highly paid gentry claimed to be his successors in the ministry. Paul was an honest man working with his own hands for his daily bread, he would not even take what was his due from the ecclesias; what would he think of men who are anxious to hold double offices in the Church for the sake of greater gain! But the people are content to have it so. The multitudes go to hear because it is fashionable. "They (the clergy) are of the world and the world heareth them." They seek its smile, and approbation, they pander to its follies, they join its institutions, they pat it on the back, they attend its jollifications; "they love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets"—like you to touch your hat to them and to pay them homage—"and to be called of men Rabbi, Rabbi," or in our day "Reverend," and, "Right Revd. Fathers in God," and "Drs. of divinity" and so on—as though the truth needed any doctoring! And this is one of the marks of their identity with Christ and the Apostles! Alas that man should think so. It shows how little their minds are impregnated with truth. Let us "go back to the charter," let us seek the truth at the fountain head. Let us go to him who is "the way and the truth and the life," for through him alone can we get light, and by his power alone can we live for ever. "The Church" is not the fountain of life but a polluted stream—polluted with the traditions of ages which have been running into it and destroying the pure, invigorating truth concerning the "water of life." We must get rid of the traditions, we must get beyond the church right back to the Apostolic age. We must go to the writings of Apostolic men and read their words, and the words of Him that sent them, and read them uninfluenced by our training and by the teaching in which we may have been cradled, then we shall see how great is the error around us, how lofty and pure and elevating the truths of the gospel are. Then we shall see that the Apostolic message was and is the death knell of priestcraft and sacrifice, that it knows of but one great priest—Jesus; of one perfect sacrifice, even his; of one way of life, that which he has revealed, of one blessed hope based upon his return in power and great glory to reign; and of one glorious kingdom which will be world-wide in extent, and which will be fraught with universal blessing, and result in glory to God in every land—which he will establish at his coming, and of which he will be the blessed, and powerful, and righteous, and most glorious King.



RUSSIA & BRITAIN IN THE EAST:

THEIR RESPECTIVE AIMS AND POLICY :
HOW THE WHOLE MATTER WILL BE SETTLED BY-AND-BY.

A LECTURE
BY
JOSEPH BLAND

(OF KIDDERMINSTER).

SETTING FORTH
THE HUMAN AND THE DIVINE SIDE
OF THE POLITICAL EVENTS OF THE PRESENT TIME.

*Delivered in Kidderminster, Birmingham, &c., &c.,
and Published by request.*

PRICE TWOPENCE.

South Shields:

R. SMAILES, PRINTER, STATIONER, &c., LAYGATE LANE.

1887.

RUSSIA AND BRITAIN IN THE EAST :

THEIR RESPECTIVE AIMS AND POLICY ;

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THE eyes of most people in England—indeed, we may say, the eyes of most people in the civilised world—have for a long time past been turned towards the East. There is perhaps no quarter of the world which gives politicians and diplomatists so much worry and anxiety as certain territories in that quarter of the world. One event follows in quick succession upon others ; alarming rumours are spread every now and then as to what this nation or the other will do in the case of certain eventualities ; plots are hatched and exploded ; ambassadors are continually scheming as to how best they can serve the powers which they represent, how they can secure the best alliance if certain events happen, or the largest slice of territory under other probable circumstances ; and so the readers of the news are constantly kept on the tip-toe of expectation for something fresh and something remarkable to happen in that quarter of the world to which men look for the rising of the sun. “The East is again in a blaze,” was the commencement of a leader, or a sub-leader, in a Scotch newspaper, which caught my eye some time ago. It has become notorious. The troubles connected with the territory belonging to the Turk—the land of Palestine and the adjacent countries—seem interminable. They are not really so, as perhaps we may see before we close our address to-night, but thus they appear to men. “The everlasting Eastern question” is the way men designate the constantly recurring troubles in this direction. They do, indeed, seem to be endless ; and they

are likely to last for some time to come yet. There is a divine reason why political matters are constantly boiling over in the East. All the politicians in the world are powerless to bring about a settled state of things just there. They try, and they fail. They formulate treaties which are supposed to be just the thing to restrain this or the other power, and prevent a terrible outbreak of war, and a general scramble for territory; and, behold, in a little while their documents are torn up and cast to the winds, and the "restrained" power is free to do almost whatsoever it will.

Now the state of things in the world in general to-day, and in the East in particular, is just what the friends of Christ and the believers in the Bible are expecting, and have been looking for for many a day. This may surprise some who are present whose religious training has been conducted on what are called "strictly orthodox principles." To them the outlook is dark indeed. There is no sign of the universal spread of religion, of the reign of Christ in the hearts of all men, of a millennium of righteousness such as they anticipate, while, alas! the song of the angels telling of "peace on earth and good-will among men" seems to point to a time which becomes more dim and at a greater distance, if it does not entirely fade away from the vision, and in view of all the warlike demonstrations in the world to-day, the words that echoed on the plains of Bethlehem when Christ was born, seem only to mock their ears. Nevertheless, things are just as they should be—according to the Bible. What seems an unaccountable mystery, and a source of great perplexity and trouble to those to whom I have referred, is a cause of great rejoicing and joy to others. Not that the latter rejoice in war or the prevalence of evil, but that, to them, these events are signs which prove the truth of the Bible, and which point to the speedy dawning of a day which will be undimmed by a single cloud; for the very signs which are a cause of so much alarm and solicitude to others, and which seems to them to so long defer the day of righteousness, are an index to those who really understand the

testimonies of Jehovah that that day is near at hand. The "distress and perplexity of nations" does not, therefore, affect them. "The sea and the waves thereof (that is, the political sea) roaring does not alarm them. Though the "hearts" of other men "fail them for fear," and are filled with terrible anxiety as they anticipate those things which are coming on the earth, *their* hearts fail not, for they know them beforehand. "In patience they possess their soul." They know their God and are strong. "When these things begin to come to pass," said Christ, "then *look up*, LOOK UP"—not down—"LOOK UP, and *lift up your head, for your redemption draweth nigh*" (Luke xxi. 25-28). They are children of the day, not of the night, therefore they watch and are sober, unalarmed by that tempest which is about to burst forth with resistless fury upon the sleeping, godless, drunken world, and sweep, as with an awful whirlwind, the wicked from the earth. The prevalence of evil does not therefore shake, but confirms their faith; and the clang of arms, and the march of armed men, and the sound of the cannon, and the mustering of mighty hosts, and the gigantic preparations for war, are exactly the events for which they look, for the Bible predicts them as leading up "to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" of which so many of the Bible writers speak, and as preliminary to the ushering in of that time of universal peace and well-being and righteousness which will follow upon the scattering of all the military power of the nations, and the trampling of their pride and glory in the dust; and which will be inaugurated by the presence of Christ, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," who will take hold of the tangled cobweb of human authority, and, himself sitting upon the throne of the universe, evolve from the chaos order and everlasting good.

The Bible in many places teaches us to look in the direction of the East for premonitory signs of these stupendous events. It is our guide in the midst of darkness; our chart delineating our position. An intelligent reference to it tells us where we are, what time of the night it is, and when the day will begin

to dawn. The Bible is not merely a narrative of events that transpired long, long ago; it deals largely with the future, with the history and destiny of nations now existing, especially of those nations which in the past and in the future have had to do, and still have to do, with God's nation the Jews and their long-neglected land. One part of the Spirit's office was described by Jesus in his promise to the disciples thus—"He shall show you things to come;" and if these words mean anything, they surely mean that the Spirit, by the revelations given, would enable us to know beforehand that certain things were about to transpire upon the earth, a promise which is as applicable to previously-inspired prophecies as to those subsequently added. There is nothing incomprehensible in this fact. If God's existence be recognised, and his interest in the offspring of his hands be believed in, what is there more reasonable than to believe that he will shed some light upon the path of those who strive to do his will. This—according to the belief of those at least who promote these meetings*—he has done. He has revealed things to come. The eyes of Jehovah look into the future. There are no concealed events from him. He looks down the centuries veiled from mortal vision and knows all that will transpire. He scans the unopened pages of human history, and knows how it will all end and whither everything tends. Much of this he has been pleased to reveal, so that those who are wise may understand and recognise the hand of God in transpiring events, and not be agitated or disheartened thereby. "He that believeth shall not make haste." "Whatever may be the windings of the river, we know the ocean into which it will empty itself." There is a great scheme being worked out by the Almighty. Emperors and their advisers cannot go beyond their tether. Kings and Statesmen—outside certain limits—are "but as pieces on the chess-board, playing out the game to its predicted end." "The King's heart," said Solomon, "is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will" (Prov. xxi. 1.) We look, therefore, for the accomplish-

* The Christadelphians.

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ment of certain predicted events. And we have every reason for encouragement. The expectations indulged in by our brethren for many years past are being fulfilled before our eyes. Their interpretation of prophecy has been wonderfully confirmed, and the Divine hand is still working out events which we have long expected, and which from time to time we have set forth. The Turkish Empire has figured, and still figures prominently in the politics of the world. It is intimately connected with our subject this evening. Were it not for certain territory of the Turk we would not be here to lecture to-night about English and Russian aims and policy. It is really the centre of our subject, as we shall see by and by. But for a moment, in the briefest possible way, in order to intelligently grasp the subject, we will look at the present position of Turkey, and see how it corresponds with the predictions of the Bible. We turn to the last book in the New Testament—the much despised book of Revelations: a book of sign or symbol, given by God to Jesus Christ, “to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass” (chap. i. 1.) This book—from the fourth chapter—is a gradual unfolding of European, and some portion of Asiatic, history, from the time it was given until the time of the return of Christ, and even beyond that period, to the end of his thousand years’ reign upon the earth. The framework of the scheme, it has often been pointed out, by which all these events are exhibited, is on the basis of the number seven—the numerical symbol of completeness. “Opening with messages to seven particular churches, as representing all the rest, there is introduced a book or scrol, sealed with seven seals—after the ancient custom—the closed book representing unknown futurity, and the seals its sub-divisions of time. The first seal is broken, and certain things are exhibited that pertain to the first historical period coming after the time when the revelation was given; then the second seal is broken, and the events of the next succeeding period exhibited; then the third seal is broken, and so on to the seventh. The events of the seventh seal com-

prise a new sub-division of the time succeeding to it. Seven angels are introduced with trumpets. A trumpet is an instrument to summon soldiers or servants, and the trumpets are used here to represent the judgments which God should bring on Europe for the corruption of his truth. The judgments came—as we learn from history—one after the other, in the order of the trumpets. The first angel sounds, and certain symbolic occurrences ensue, representing the events that transpired during the period symbolised. Then the second angel sounds, and other things occur, and so on to the seventh. Then a new symbol is introduced for the sub division of the remaining time. Among the events of the seventh trumpet, seven angels receive seven vials, which they empty one after another on certain specified objects and places, producing terrible results, and in some cases wasting away the things which were brought upon the scene in judgment by the trumpets.” In the 16th chap. we have the account of the pouring out of these vials of Jehovah’s wrath. This chapter, we believe, has its fulfilment chiefly during the present century, and it is here that we find something about the Turkish or Eastern question. It is represented—as political powers sometimes are in the Bible—by a river, the name of the chief river, the Euphrates, which runs through Turkish territory. In the 9th chap., under the 5th trumpet, we have represented the advance of the Turks into Europe, under the symbol of a vast army of fiery horsemen, where their mission—which we will not now deal with—is set forth; under the 6th vial, in the 16th chap., we have the representation of their power dried up, an intimation also—in the 12th to the 16th verses—that at this time there would be a war-spirit prevalent, a mustering of hosts for the battle of “that great day of God Almighty”—that day long predicted by the prophets, in which Jehovah’s honour would be vindicated, and his land and people delivered from the oppressor; an intimation, also, that some time during the outpouring of this sixth vial Christ himself would appear, for the 15th verse reads, “Behold, *I come as a thief*. Blessed is

he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." The 12th verse commences thus: "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up." Now, look at the present state of Turkey. The prophecy is well-nigh fulfilled. Its power has been drying up all through the present century. Eighty years ago it was one of the most powerful countries in the world—what is it to-day? A corrupt, rotten, bankrupt State, existing only by the sufferance of other powers, because they cannot agree how to share the plunder; tottering to its fall, the most effete dominion under the sun. A most remarkable series of events have tended to bring about this state of things; but there is the fact, and no one can avert the further wasting away of Turkish power.

The history of the present century is largely made up of the wars and insurrections Turkey has been called upon to face, and the territorial losses she has sustained, and no one can stay it. It is only about thirty years since "the whole of the great powers bound themselves, one and all, by the Treaty of Paris, to refrain from any interference in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire;" but of what use has the treaty been? Has it restrained any one power from serving itself at Turkey's expense as occasion offered? We all know it has not. Almost every power has taken advantage of Turkey's weakness to aggrandise themselves. The late Russian war brought about Bulgarian autonomy, and to a large appropriation of the sick man's territory by the northern power. Roumania and Servia achieved their independence. Since then, Greece has had from Turkey a cession of territory, amounting to upwards of 10,000 square miles: that is, an area larger than the whole of Wales, together with the counties of Lancaster and Cheshire; a portion of land described by Mr. Arthur Arnold, M.P., some time back, as "the most fruitful and beautiful in Europe, uniting with splendour of scenery the nearest approach to perfection of climate." What has happened since this? Why Austria helped herself to a slice of

Turkish territory ; England laid hold of Cyprus ; France took Tunis, over which the Sultan was suzerain ; England has stepped into Egypt, and cannot and will not step out again, and is, moreover, getting embedded in the Soudan ; * and Italy, by the influence of England, has taken Massowah, on the Red Sea Coast—the feeblest remonstrance imaginable only being made by the Porte against the seizure: a remonstrance she is unable to back up by any decided action, because it would not be allowed by other powers. Thus is this European power being dried up. It is evaporating before our eyes. It is enfeebled and emaciated, and soon must give place to more vigorous and healthy nations, who at the present time are hovering like Birds of prey over the dying carcase of the “unspeakable Turk.”

Now the same word of inspiration which predicts the drying up of the Euphratean power, and bids us see in the accomplishment of the prediction a sign of the approach of Christ to accomplish His great and glorious work upon the earth, tells us also of the plans and purposes and positions of both Russia and Britain in the latter day, a time concurrent with the sixth vial period in which the power of Turkey is destroyed. God hath determined “the bound of their habitation” (Acts xvii, 26). Their positions in these far-advanced “times of the Gentiles” have a purpose ; they have to do with the same purpose for which Turkish rule is disappearing, and Palestine is becoming accessible to the Jew, and that long persecuted people are returning to the land of their fathers. The majority of people see nothing in transpiring events, further than how it affects the national politics and position and interests ; but there are events underlying these things of transcendent importance which can only be known by consulting the word of truth, some parts of which are Jehovah’s forecast of future events.

England is in Egypt ; why is she there ? There are two answers to this question. There is the divine reason and the

* This Lecture was first delivered in 1885, the first edition appearing that year.

human. Look at the human side, the national side of the question. Our interests led us there, and our interests will keep us there. Depend upon it that, notwithstanding all the promises and all the efforts of a Liberal Government we shall never lose our hold on Egypt again. Apart from all the money of the bondholders—a very powerful consideration in itself—there are reasons that will operate to keep us there that will prove effectual. Gladstone has, as you know, been striving to get us out ever since we got in, but we only get deeper and deeper into the mud of the Nile. Six months was fixed on one occasion by Lord Hartington as the period which would witness a clear-out of British troops, but the time has long since passed, and I need not comment on the impossibility of such an occurrence now. Why are we there? Well, we have an immense Empire in the East, which it is the determination of all classes of Englishmen to keep. No one would think of sacrificing India. At whatever cost, that will be defended. Besides that, we have other great possessions in the East—*islands, ports, and places of various kinds of the utmost value and necessity to a vast mercantile power like Britain.* There is Aden, south of Arabia, Ceylon, Malacca, Singapore, and Hong-Kong. Besides all these, there are our Southern Colonies—Australia, Van Dieman's Land, New Zealand, and other places. The direct way to these possessions is through the Suez Canal. That canal is of more importance to Britain than to any country in the world. The moment it was opened for traffic this was recognised, though the Statesmen of England had previously frowned upon the undertaking, and would not find the capital. It was accomplished with French gold. Apart from our possessions, we do an immense trade with the East. We send millions of pounds' worth of goods to India, China, and other nations, and we receive millions of pounds' worth from them. The former journey round South Africa was long, tedious, dangerous, and expensive; the possession therefore of the new waterway became a vital matter for the consideration of

British Statesmen, for it would never do for its management to fall into hostile hands. Because of these considerations—the principal one of which, perhaps, was our Indian possessions—the world was one day startled by the announcement that the British Government—at the head of which at the time was the Jewish Statesman, the late Lord Beaconsfield—had purchased the Egyptian Government's shares in the Suez Canal for four millions sterling. What a sensation it caused! How the Act was denounced by Gladstone and the Liberal party! But its wisdom was manifest: it was a statesmanlike act. From a national standpoint, it was the wisest thing that could be done. Few would doubt it now. It was the beginning of events for which Christadelphians had been looking for thirty or forty years. In connection with this matter, "a British political mission was despatched to Egypt to assist in the administration of the country. The knowledge of these facts caused a great sensation everywhere." There was consternation on the Continent. European powers "were unprepared for the boldness and promptitude implied in the secret acquisition of a territorial footing in Egypt at a time when Egypt, as a constituent part of the Turkish Empire, was in danger from the manœuvring of the northern military powers."* Russia was greatly displeased at the act of Britain's Prime Minister, but the thing was done nevertheless. Cyprus also was taken, and an effort, as you know, was made to rectify the frontier of India by a war with the Afghans. Subsequent events you are all familiar with. There was a joint control of Egyptian finances between England and France. Then came the rising of Arabi. The French departed and left the coast clear for England to operate alone. Alexandria was bombarded, Tel-el-Kebir was fought. Britain now rules Egypt. The water-way to India is under her care. Everything has tended to rivet us there since there we went. The present war in the Soudan will clinch the matter, if it does not bring a portion of Ethiopia under British protection

*See "England and Egypt." By R. Roberts.

as well. That is why—from a national standpoint—we are in Egypt. The aim and policy of England is to keep all her Eastern possessions, to enlarge and develop her trade, and to keep all dangerous hands off the vital and most expeditious route by which men and arms and ammunition and goods may be transported to her dependencies on the far-off side of the Suez Canal. Because of this, the lives of British troops have been sacrificed in Egypt; because of this, the sands of Ethiopia have recently been strewn with multitudes of slain; because of this, and because there is a great northern power threatening our Indian Empire, the danger and proximity of which seems to be at last recognised, our arsenals are busy, our dockyards are all alive, war ships are being built, torpedo boats are being constructed, guns are being manufactured, soldiers are being enrolled, the volunteers are coming more prominently before the country, and there is talk already of altering the law so that they may be used for foreign service, and general excitement prevails. That is the national and human side of the question. The divine side—as we shall see more fully before we close—requires England, the great mercantile power of the world, to be connected with Palestine at the time of the end, to be the protector of the returned and returning Jews, who hasten to their beloved land, from which, under Turkish rule, they have for so long a period been excluded; and to which, even at the present time, in accordance with many prophetic announcements, they are returning and founding colonies, and building houses and acquiring land.

Before we turn to that portion of Scripture specially dealing with the question of to-night, we will glance at the aims and policy of Russia from a national standpoint, which is the only standpoint statesmen think about. Russia and England are the commanding powers in the East. They overshadow all others. Their aggressiveness and military prowess is so well known, and makes them feared by the less enlightened people of the earth. The Czar of all the Russias is, indeed, a great

personage. He is an absolute monarch. He is head of the Church as well as the State: a Church, be it remembered, full of the most abominable superstitions and practices, whose doctrines are repugnant to one's common sense, and altogether at variance with divine truth. The Czar's dominions comprise one-seventh of the terrestrial part of the globe, and about one-twenty-sixth part of its entire surface. I need not tell you that Russia is one of the most aggressive nations under the sun. This fact is pretty well known in England. It is kept well before the public by newspapers and politicians; and just as no human power can help Turkey drying up, so no human power can help Russia expanding and absorbing the territory of the expiring Turk. The legions of the Czar are ever extending the limits of his empire. "The total present area" of his possessions it was stated a little while back—"as ascertained from approximate estimates—is about eight and a half million English square miles, with a population of a hundred and a half millions. . . . The available war forces of Russia numbers about three and a half million of men, but on emergency this number would be indefinitely increased" (*Liverpool Evening Echo*). The Emperors of Russia, quite ignorant of the mission marked out for them, seem to be impressed with the idea that a great mission is theirs. They inherit the conception, perhaps, from Peter the Great, who "found Russia a small rivulet, and left it an immense river, that his successors might magnify it into an ocean." He "looked upon that country as called upon to establish her rule over all Europe; and its invasion of the West and East as a decree of divine providence." And his successors appear as though they acted from the same conviction. They have always been distinguished by their lust of conquest. Alison in his *History of Europe* declares that "every Russian is inspired with the conviction that his country is to conquer the world." We read sometimes of "sacred Russia" and of "the divine figure of the North;" and doubtless there are millions who entertain this view of him who claims to be God's vicar, God's representative among the nations. This great northern power has long

entertained designs of the absorption of European and Asiatic territory, and silently but surely it creeps along. The reputed will of Peter the Great said—"Approach as near as possible to Constantinople. He who shall reign there will be the true sovereign of the world;" and whether that document be genuine, or, as some state, a forgery, the Russian people have faithfully endeavoured to carry it out, and are now nearer the accomplishment of their purpose than ever they were before. During the last war they made rapid strides in this direction, besides the advances made in the Sultan's Asiatic provinces, where they are now prepared to make another forward move into Armenia, north of Syria, as soon as opportunity offers;* and we have not the slightest doubt that the Russian flag will ere long float in the breeze in the long coveted city of Constantinople.

This great expansion of Russia was foretold by an exiled Jewish prophet of Jehovah fourteen centuries before the Russian monarchy existed. In the Scriptures it is set forth that she is to assume the headship over a number of other nations of the East and the West; that, in fact, the nations represented by the image Nebuchadnezzar saw will be organised and united under this one vast dominion; that there will be a vast confederacy of Gentile powers against the Jews in Palestine and that nation which will defend them for the sake of her own interests on the mountains of Israel; and that this will be a war of unparalleled magnitude, either in regard to the forces engaged, or the terrific crash with which it will be brought to a close. It will be "a time of trouble such as never was," but a divine power from heaven will smite the accumulated hosts and power symbolised by the image, and utterly destroy it for ever. It is a fact, indeed, that Russia is rapidly acquiring power over those territories that Nebuchadnezzar's image represented, and the rapidity with which territory is added year after year to her

**Turkey is beginning to feel anxious for her Armenian frontier. Large quantities of provisions, cannons, and ammunition have, it is said, been sent to Trebizond and Ghazi. Mukhtar Pacha and Hakki Pacha have left for Erzeroum to inspect the troops and improve the fortifications of the district.*
 —*Daily News*, 21st April, 1885.

dominions is truly marvellous. A large map showing her recent acquisitions would probably astound many who are present to-night. Nearly thirty years ago it was thought that the Crimean war would effectually check the advance of Russia, if not destroy her power. We know what a false conception this was. The leading paper in England, *The Times*, said, "Whatever else the Crimean war failed to do it broke the spell of Russian influence;" but since that war, the same paper has also admitted that "Russia is a greater mystery than ever." Mysteries cease when they are solved; and the Bible solves this mystery by showing the course this nation is destined to run. In the year 1873 it was stated in the House of Commons that "during the previous twenty-five years Russia had acquired six millions of square miles of territory in Central Asia, which alone would form an empire as large as half of Europe;" and it was stated, as a peculiar instance of the whirligig of time, that "the very Russian princes who were compelled to stand at the stirrups of the Mogul Emperor, in the attitude of slaves, were now overrunning the whole lands which these Emperors had ruled." And what has she not done since 1873? Why in 1874, 1876, 1881, and in 1884—in each of those years immense tracts of country were added, and positions taken of the utmost importance to her in her race for the Indian Empire. Sir Richard Temple said the other night that the frontiers of Asiatic Russia had approached 800 miles nearer to India than they were at the time of the Afghan War. Last year (1884), as you know, Merv was taken, a district of some 1,600 square miles, considered by England to be of immense strategical importance, and with regard to which Russia has always declared herself determined to respect English susceptibilities. Over and over again has Russia, through her Foreign Office, and even through the Czar himself, positively declared that the Imperial Government had no intention of occupying Merv, and yet she is now every whit as firmly established there as England is at Bombay. Since then further promises have been broken,—in fact, no promises her Statesmen make are to be depended upon,—thinking that while England's hands were well occu-

ped in Egypt and the Soudan was the time to move forward and, if possible, seize Herat, which is considered the key to India. Her object is, of course, to get within striking distance of India, so that she may foment disaffection and cause trouble, and fight the English there when she has designs in Europe to carry out.* At present she has entered what is said to be Afghan territory, which England is pledged to defend, hence the excitement, and the strained condition of things, and the intrigues with Turkey for an alliance, and the concentration of troops and the general preparation for war, for England is fairly aroused at last to a sense of danger through the nearness of the Russian bear, and seems inclined to put her foot firmly down, and say, "so far shalt thou come, and no farther."

We now turn to the divine record, and will for a little while consult "the sure word of prophecy," to which Peter says, we "do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the dawn and the day-star arise" (2 Peter i. 19). We direct you—not for the first time—to the predictions of the prophet Ezekiel, who, by the river Chebar, far from the land of his fathers, twenty-four centuries ago—long, long years before the commencement of the Russian monarchy—was the first, as far as we know, to write the name of Ross, or Russ, and to record the mission and destiny of its prince, and all his lands, in the latter days. It is by the force of his words that all these things are done, and by the light of the word of the Father of light that we know that Russia will advance till the work of her preparation is finished, and she becomes "a great people and a strong, so that there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, to the years of many generations"

*The following telegram appeared in the *Daily News* of 21st April, 1885:—"VIENNA.—The official *Tagblatt* of Warsaw announces that Russia is making the necessary preparations for taking Herat. 'Our Government,' says the official organ, 'has never declared that it renounced all claims on Herat; but if the chances of war secure it to us we shall know how to make use of this advantage, and holding it as a Damocles sword over India, we shall be able to decide several European questions in our own favour. We can take Herat before the Anglo-Indian Troops have crossed the Afghan frontier. We can easily fortify and hold it. The damage done by our army to India will be far heavier than the losses to our commerce caused by the blockade of our ports.'"

(Joel ii. 2). "Russia cannot stop if she would," the *Times* newspaper said on one occasion after one of her conquests, and that is, indeed, true; she cannot stop, until—though unconscious of her mission—the divine command to the Prince, to the autocrat of all the Russias be completely obeyed. There are two chapters in the prophecies of Ezekiel which deal specially with these events, but I wish you to understand that there are many other portions of the divine word which refer to these latter-day transactions. Daniel writes of the "King of the North," and of his invasion of Jewish territory at a time when their great Prince will appear for their deliverance; and many other prophets speak of the same combination of armies, and of their final destruction by divine power. We shall confine ourselves mainly, however, to the 38th and 39th chapters of Ezekiel, where the mission and the final catastrophe which will overtake the northern colossus is minutely revealed. The prophet tells us at the first verse that "The word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Son of Man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him." The man here called Gog is the head of the vast confederacy of nations alluded to further on, and, therefore, the most important of them all: how shall we identify this individual? There is nothing in the name itself to settle the matter. It occurs once in the Book of Chronicles as the name of an Israelite, and the words Gog and Magog occur in the 20th chapter of Revelations, but there they occur in connection with a confederacy after the millenium, or thousand years' reign of Christ, while in this place they occur in connection with events which transpire previous to the enthronement of Christ in Jerusalem; so that there is no connection whatever between the two events, except it be that the names are used figuratively, as Old Testament names sometimes are. But there are other means of identification. There are in the Hebrew two words, which, in the authorised version of the Scriptures, are rendered "chief prince," *i.e.*, "'chief prince' of Meshech and Tubal." This, however, is a mistranslation.

The correct rendering of the passage is, "Set thy face against Gog the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal," Rosh being a proper name equally with the other two places or districts mentioned. Dr. Friedländer, principal of the Jews' College, in his version, gives this rendering, as does the Revised Bible of Ostewald (French). Indeed, all modern scholars render it thus, and it is a fact that the seventy Jews who translated the Scriptures into Greek for Ptolemy Philadelphus, King of Egypt, regarded it as a proper name, and translated the passage, Prince of Ros, Mosc, and Tobol. As a proper name, it points to the region where, according to Gesenius, a tribe called the Rossi or Roschi lived, whose name survives to-day in the form of Russia and Russians. Ross is the very name always applied to Russia by the Byzantine historians. The late Dean Stanley, in his History of the Eastern Church, speaks of our rendering as an unfortunate translation, and confirms the above view. The celebrated Bochart, about the year 1640, observed, in his elaborate researches into Sacred Geography, that Ros, or Rosh, is the most ancient form under which history makes mention of Russia, and he contended that Ros and Mosc properly denote the nations of Russia and Muscovy. Fuerst, Bishop Louth, and other writers whom we might quote, confirm this view; so that on excellent authority, we discern the modern names of Russia and of Moscow in the ancient names of Ross and Mosc.* It is not difficult to recognise in Tobl, or Thobel, a name which naturally connects itself with them, and which, in conjunction with them, tends in a very remarkable manner to determine and fix the proper object of the prediction. The river Tobol gives name to the city Tobolski, the metropolis of the extensive region of Siberia, lying immediately eastward of the territories of Moscow; and it is a remarkable fact, stated by the "Rev." Mr Swan, who re-

*The Revised Version of the Old Testament renders the passages where it occurs in Ezekiel xxxviii. and xxxix., "The Prince of Rosh, Mesheck, and Tubal," "A correction," says the Scotsman, "which will be approved by those commentators who understand the names as signifying Russia, Moscow, and Tobolsk, and who identify Gog with the Russian Empire."

sided for twelve years in Siberia, and who translated the Bible into the Mongolian language, that there is no such word in that language as Tobolski—the “ski” being a mere Russian addition,—the original name being, as we have it in the Bible, Tobol. I need not remind you that Siberia is part and parcel of the Czar’s vast estate—that name is so well known as the place to which their political prisoners are banished to drag out a weary existence in the mines at which they are compelled to work. Thus it becomes apparent that the three names, Ross, Mosc, and Tobol, united in the prophecy, point out very clearly those widely extended regions which, at the present time, are collectively denominated *The Russian Empire*. There is further confirmation of a most important kind to be found in the list of names given in the 10th chapter of Genesis, and in the history of the settlement of the people there referred to. The names of Magog, Meshech, and Tubal are all there as the sons of Japhet. It is known where they settled, and that they were the progenitors of the races embraced in the prophecy. The descendants of Magog settled themselves to the north and east of the Black Sea. A Bible map will show you this. They inhabited the country now called Circassia, and all about the mouths of the Don and Dnieper. The Crimea is in the land of Magog. “There seems to be a memento (says one writer) even now of the name of Gog in the Caucasus. The Caucasus is a chain of mountains separating Circassia from Georgia, and is included in the south-eastern part of the Russian empire. Now, learned men tell us that Caucasus was originally Gog-Cassam, Cassam meaning, in Arabic, a fort or stronghold; and that they suppose that Mount Caucasus was used as such by some one called Gog, from which it came to be called Gog’s Cassam or fort, and eventually became corrupted to Caucassam and Caucasus. The descendants of the two other brothers, Meshech and Tubal, settled themselves to the south of Mount Caucasus, but afterwards migrated northwards, and their names are preserved to us in Muscovy and Tobolsk. The Muscovites, who form the

bone and sinew of the Russian empire, are simply Meshechites, and Tobolsk is nothing but a corruption of Tubal. Putting all three together, they form as complete and unmistakable a description of the Russian empire as could well be given." The prophecy asserts, also, that this power comes from "the north parts"—that is, north of Palestine, or of Babylon, where the prophet was in exile. Let us look further, now, at what the prophet declares to Gog, Prince of Rosh. Verse 4: "And I will turn thee back, and put hooks in thy jaws." This is remarkable, as the other portion of the prophecy speaks of a forward movement. The words imply that he has come forward; that he has made an aggressive attempt; but is turned back and checked for a time. Here he seems to come out also alone; but subsequently with many nations and people with him. We could say much about this, but will not stay. Russia came single-handed, without a single ally, against Turkey, thirty years ago; but, by the action of England and France and Sardinia with that power, was checked, thwarted, turned back, and prevented accomplishing her object. Her power was arrested and crippled: hooks were put in her jaws, and her forward move was stayed. To a lesser extent the same thing was accomplished in the last Russo-Turkish war. But in the war here referred to in succeeding verses, Russia will advance with mighty hosts of warriors from various nations; for says Jehovah, "I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah, of the north quarters, and all his bands, and many people with thee." For this time the power addressed is to be prepared, and is to be a guard, to exercise a protectorate over all the nations here mentioned. Time would not allow of us tracing out all the particulars connected with the nations here mentioned. The prophecy shows the vast extent of power exercised by Russia

at the time to which the prophecy refers, for these races embrace the Continental nations, who will be either conquered by, or allied to Russia, in this vast and desperate undertaking predicted by the prophet. I may just mention that Persia could scarcely lift up a finger against Russia at the present time, whose territory adjoins hers on three sides now. In a little while there will be an alliance, or a protectorate, and Russia will get what she desires—an outlet into the Persian Gulf. On Friday, March 27, 1885, the *Daily News* announced the visit of a Russian official to Persia for "scientific purposes," which has sometimes been the forerunner of annexation. And on Monday last (April 27th) a *Daily News* telegram stated that a secret alliance actually existed between Russia and Persia, and had done since 1878. Persia will, at any rate, be with Russia in the final struggle.

We look now at verse 8, which fixes the time of this gigantic enterprise, as well as the object and the place. It is in "the latter years," and they come, we are told, "into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste; but it has been brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them." "The mountains of Israel:" that is where the final conflict is to be—a land brought back from the sword. You know, or should know, all about it. Jerusalem and Palestine has been trodden down for ages by Gentile powers. War has desolated those fair provinces time after time for centuries, ever since the Romans captured Jerusalem in the bloody war when the Jewish commonwealth was destroyed. Since that time the Jew has been scattered to the four winds of heaven, a wanderer in every land, an outcast, a by-word, and a proverb among all people, persecuted and trampled upon and barbarously treated in the most terrible manner you can conceive; but it is not to last for ever. The gathering time is coming. They have been scattered among the people, and they are to be "gathered out of many people," and return to their own land, and for a time

dwell safely within its borders. Those who have interest in these things could tell you much about what is going on now. The Jews—stirred up by recent persecutions—are making great efforts to return. They are now founding colonies in the Holy Land, and there are various benevolent societies at work to ameliorate their condition, and assist them to obtain land, dwelling-houses, agricultural implements, and other necessary things. Turkey's power removed a little more, and the thing will wonderfully develop. Wealthy Jews will settle there. Palestine will thrive. It will become a place of commerce and of wealth, and it will excite the cupidity of the Northern power, who, for various political and ecclesiastical reasons, even now desires to obtain it, and who will at this time put forth a supreme effort to seize it as the prophet declares. "Thou shalt ascend," says he at verse 9, "and come like a storm; thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou and all thy bands, and many people with thee. Thus saith the Lord God: "It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought: and thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwall'd"—that is, defenceless—"villages; I will go up to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates. To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land." Such is Russian design. They bitterly hate and persecute the Jews to this hour. *Now* they come in all their hosts to take their land and to take their wealth. But they are arrested by the intervention of another power. They are not, even from the human side of the question, permitted to do what they like. For the next verse in the prophecy tells us that their intentions are challenged, and that "Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof," address the invading power, and say, rightly interpreting her intentions, "Art thou come to

take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods?" The question arises now—Who are these people that will thus confront the enemies of Israel? Sheba and Dedan were grandsons of Cush, and the descendants of Cush, which came from them, remained in Arabia. Cush, or Ethiopia (for Ethiopia is always Cush in the original), is, as we have seen, on the side of Gog. There are more places than one called Cush or Ethiopia in the Bible. One Ethiopia is, I believe, now incorporated in the Persian Empire, another is in the Russian Empire; but some of the descendants of Cush settled in Africa in the portion of territory occupied by the Abyssinians—just the very part a portion of which has recently come under the dominion of the Italians; while the descendants of Phut (or Libya), a brother of Cush, who are to be with Gog, occupy that portion of territory in North Africa called Algiers and Tunis, which has been annexed by France. These developments are most marvellous in view of this prophecy, which represents a vast combination of nations, embracing France and Italy, confronted, it might be said, by one solitary, isolated power; for Sheba and Dedan, whose territory lies in Arabia alongside the Persian Gulf, cannot be reckoned of much account by themselves. Who then is represented by "the merchants of Tarshish and the young lions thereof?" It must be evident, I think, to anyone who will consider a little that this Tarshish power must represent a people great enough to present something like an opposition to this great confederation of armies." "They can surely be nothing less than a first-rate power." "Passing over the word Tarshish for a moment, let us think what the combinations of 'merchants' and 'young lions' would be likely to represent. Clearly, in the first place, a mercantile nation. But merchants are usually adverse to war. Commerce and merchandise are generally on the side of peace. Yet, if 'merchants' represent a mercantile nation, 'lions' surely represent a warlike nation. And, therefore, the combination must describe a nation of merchants, fond of peace but ready for

war, a nation desirous of extending its trade perhaps more than its territory, to acquire wealth rather than military glory, 'a nation of shopkeepers' perhaps, but one that can strike a heavy blow. From the expressions 'young lions,' we should also gather that this nation has young but powerful colonies or offshoots; that it is what we call 'a mother country, with children, strong enough to come to her aid if required.'* As to the name Tarshish, a great deal might be written about it. There was a Tarshish in Spain, and an Indian Tarshish, which, of course, is represented by England, and there was a Tarshish in the West, which has been identified by many with Britain. We cannot go into the evidence to-night. Beside any particular place that might be decided upon, the name "was applied to any great mercantile or maritime people, and to any place of great commercial importance, but especially to the East Indian trade." Looking at all the facts of the case, the prophecy points with great force to Britain. England is the greatest mercantile and maritime nation in the world. England has ships in numbers such as no other people in the world possess. She rules the ocean, as her national song declares. She commands in great measure the East Indian trade. England is a "merchant" in her love for peace, but a "lion" in her strength for war. The lion is her national emblem. "And what country in the world can boast of such young lions?" Look at her colonies, her vast dependencies:—Australia, New Zealand, Canada. Her islands belt the world. And see how the "young lions" have responded lately to that sense of duty to support the "old country" in her troubles in the Soudan. This feeling will grow. It will greatly develop. There is much talk of confederation; confederating or welding together England and all her offshoots. They will be a formidable power. They will confront the hosts of Gog on the mountains of Israel, and defend the Jew. The situation, friends, is ripening before our eyes. England greatly befriends the Jews we know. The ships of Tarshish, the Bible says, are to be employed in the ultimate and complete restoration of the Jews to their land (Isa. lx. 9). Then we have England in Egypt now

*"Rev." S. Minton, from whom several valuable hints have been obtained.

just south of Palestine. A portion of Arabia is in her possession. The late Lord Beaconsfield, who took Cyprus, close by Syria, undertook, under certain conditions, to protect Syria—including Palestine—against Russian aggression. We have Russia approaching nearer and nearer from the north, and in time this will doubtless result in England, for her own interests' sake, tightening her hold of Syria, and protecting the Jewish colonists, who will form a barrier against aggression from the north. Thus, as it were, from purely natural and national causes, the divine scheme is working out before our eyes. How will it all end? What is to be the upshot of the whole matter? The Scriptures are not silent upon this point. The evidence is copious, is most abundant. Russia will succeed to a certain point. Zechariah, speaking of this time, when Jehovah "will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle," says that "the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go forth into captivity;" but that then a marvellous and divine interference in human affairs will take place, for that "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle" (Zech. xiv. 2). Ezekiel's testimony is the same. Read the two chapters through at your leisure. The hosts of Gog are to be decimated. There will be "a great shaking in the land of Israel." "It shall come to pass at the same time, when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. . . . And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God; every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezekiel xxxviii. 18-23). My friends, the millions of men throughout the world are not being armed for nothing. There is a war pending on such a gigantic scale as the world has never witnessed before. God is

about to humble the pride of the nations, and lay all their glory in the dust. The times of the Gentiles are nearly run out, and they will close with unparalleled calamity. All Jehovah's indignation and fierce anger will be poured out upon the assembled kingdoms, for he has stated that "all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of his jealousy" (Zeph. iii. 8). And he says, "I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment, for the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come" (Isaiah lxiii. 1-6). No longer will the Jew be trampled under the foot of men. Christ is their king. He it is who, as the manifestation of God, vindicates Jehovah's honour, and brings the strength of the nations to the earth. He it is who comes to deliver his people from the assembled hosts of their foes. He it is who comes to reign upon the earth, the immortal king of universal man. He it is who comes to sweep away as with a whirlwind the men who delight in war, the tyrants and oppressors of the earth, the crown-wearers who for ages have, in opposition to every divine principle, terrorised over the people under their control, and treated with haughty indifference the wants and woes and sorrows and rights of men. Christ will root them out of the earth, which is just what they all deserve. And in their stead he will reign "from the river to the ends of the earth." There will be a pure and incorruptible administration of human affairs right round the world, for the saints will reign with him "kings and priests upon the earth" (Rev. v. 10). To this high and noble and glorious destiny men are now called by the preaching of the gospel. They are not called to sing sentimental hymns throughout eternity in some far-off realm beyond the stars, as they falsely tell you at chapel and at church, but they are called to exercise "power over the nations, and to rule them with a rod of iron," as Christ himself declared (Rev. ii. 26, 27). This they will do when he shall appear, and the military power of the nations is broken, and all human authority subverted, and his rule triumphantly established; and it will ultimate in the perpetual wellbeing of all mankind, and the everlasting glory of the eternal God.

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THE ABOLITION OF WAR.

THE present time is not altogether an inappropriate one to address you upon the subject of the Abolition of War. A great deal has been written and spoken upon the question of war lately, and of the advisability and wisdom of substituting arbitration in its place. England has been to the front in this matter. We do, as a nation, perhaps, talk more about arbitration and the exceeding hatefulness of war than any other nation; and we also, somewhat inconsistently, somehow manage to get more wars upon our hands—not very large ones of late it is true, but still important wars—than any other nation. We have only to remind you of the recent wars in Burmah, the Soudan, Egypt, Zululand, and Abyssinia to prove this statement. Very recently* a memorial has been presented to the President of the American Republic by twelve members of the British House of Commons, representing the British Peace and Arbitration Committee, in favour of the settlement of all International disputes by Arbitration, instead of war. This memorial was signed by no less than two hundred and thirty-three members of the House of Commons, and of course is thus representative of a very wide-spread feeling in favour of peace. "The time," said Sir Lyon Playfair, when presenting the petition, "is favourable for the consideration of the question, because the whole world is startled at the new aspect of war, which the progress of science is making a huge engine for the brutal butchery of men and the wanton waste of property. Its increasing cost threatens the basis of national credit and even national

* October 31st, 1887.

solvency." The desire of those promoting the petition was, more especially, to bring about the establishment of a Court of International Arbitration between England and America, and thus set an example to the world at large. "The movement," said the *Daily News*, "is not open to the objection that it is a fanatical assertion of millennial principles before society is ripe for the millennium," thus recognising that other European nations are by no means ripe for such proposals. Newspaper writers often sneer at the millennium, not understanding how it is to be ushered in, entertaining only vague and unscriptural notions concerning it, and not believing even those. Here is a similar sneer from a Birmingham paper in its comments upon the presentation of this petition:—"The time may be, doubtless is, very far off when men shall study the art of war no more. The probability is that as long as human nature remains in its present mould, wars and rumours of wars will continue. In their endeavours to anticipate the millennium, the British Peace and Arbitration Committee may therefore be said to have set themselves an impossible task. But at the same time it need not be a fruitless one. Such a representation as they made yesterday to the President of the Great American Republic, can only have one tendency, and that is to draw the two great English-speaking peoples out of the petty jealousies of international rivalry into the broader and sympathetic field of their kinship" (*Birmingham Daily Mail*, Nov. 2nd, 1887).

You see newspaper writers are by no means sanguine about the success of any peace proposals. The idea of universal peace suggested to their minds by the word millennium, is simply preposterous! They are fanatics who entertain any such ideas. The idea of hanging the trumpet in the hall and studying war no more is absurd; quite a far-off thing; probably a condition of things that will never be realized. "We must be practical, gentlemen, practical; not theorists, not dreamers, not fanatics. We must not live in the clouds, or imagine that the utterances of the old Hebrew prophets are

ever likely to come to pass; we must be practical." That is what their talk amounts to. And, humanly speaking, it seems to be based upon fact and reason. We seem to be getting farther and farther away from peace. To those who hope for universal peace to be brought about by human instrumentality the outlook is dark indeed. Everywhere there is a warlike look and a warlike tendency. Sir Lyon Playfair himself, in his address to the American President, said that "In ten years the cost of European armaments has increased at least 25 per cent., while it amounts to 3 per cent. of the whole earnings of Europe." That is not very encouraging to work upon as a basis for the hope of peace. Then if we consider the enormous standing armies of the civilized nations of the world, hope seems to fade away. These, as taken from official sources during the present year* represent on a peace footing 3,194,176 men, and on a war footing no less than 12,488,276 men, and be it remembered, this second and larger number represents trained soldiers only, and does not take account of those reserves which could be provided by a *levée en masse*. Think of the tension often existing where these vast armies are congregated. A warlike spirit is cultivated. Men like to practise at their trade. Soldiers are generally eager for war. They seldom have any scruples about the morality or righteousness of the cause. What they want is the excitement, and the opportunity for distinction and promotion, or plunder, and so they become a constant source of anxiety and disquietude and alarm. Professedly organised to preserve the peace, they prove the greatest existing cause of war.

Lord Salisbury appears to think otherwise. He said on Wednesday night at the Lord Mayor's banquet, "Speaking of the general prospects of the world in respect of peace,"—"I am aware that a certain uneasiness exists, and yet I know nothing within the compass of diplomatic knowledge that

* Since these figures were given, a large increase has taken place in the German army.

should give to that uneasiness a ground. As long as great nations maintain enormous and increasing armies, and spend still greater sums every year in sharpening the weapons which, if the necessity should arise, they may use against each other; as long as that competition of armaments continues, it is idle to hope that perfect tranquility can bless the world. But that very state of things has its compensation. The tremendous power which modern science has given to the weapons of destruction, the tremendous force which lies in the hollow of the hand of a few powerful men, must give them pause. They feel that the power of devastation which lies at the mercy of one word from them is so tremendous, the responsibility which it imposes is so large, that I am not sure that the securities of peace are not more sensibly increased than they would be if we reverted to the old times when the weapons of war were so weak and war was a pastime which could be so easily and so cheaply undertaken."

Commenting upon this speech, one London daily paper remarked very sarcastically, "Last year, Lord Salisbury reminds us, he said to the late Lord Mayor of London, that he—the then Lord Mayor—would close his office in a period of profound peace. And now, declares Lord Salisbury, lo and behold! we are in a period of profound peace. The Saturnian age has come back, and we can do anything we like with the gates of the temple of Janus. The question of the Afghan frontier has been settled; we have arranged with France about the Pacific Islands, and where could there be any other source of trouble? Nowhere, of course. Nothing is happening of any moment, or likely to happen, all over the continent of Europe. The princes and statesmen of that Continent who are alive now will, of course, be alive always. There are no ill-kept down jealousies there; no burning rivalries; no systems breaking up. Men everywhere are not at this very moment holding their breath with alarm. By the way, yes. Lord Salisbury admits that there are some alarms abroad. But for the life of him he cannot understand what they are all

about. Even the 'bloated armaments' of Europe, much as Lord Salisbury dislikes them, do not disturb his composure. He falls back on that comforting assurance which has been cheering the hopeful since ever war began, that the more cruel and more costly the weapons of destruction, the more men we can kill, and the more money we have to spend in war, the greater the chances of peace. It is good news, then, about this greatly improved weapon which the German government have just got hold of. We hear of some delightful messengers of peace in the form of freshly-invented torpedoes. Therefore things are looking very well indeed." Such is the comment, and we fear there is justice in it. Large armaments are the provocation to, and not the preventative of war.

Besides, it is to the advantage of many that war should *not* cease. It is the source of wealth to many. It is the breath of their life, so to speak. It is the means of promotion to wealth, and title, and fame, to not a few. It is the ladder by which the ambitious projects of others are secured. Men have always aspired to fame upon the battle field ever since Nimrod "began to be a mighty one in the earth" (Gen. x. 8). The Alexanders, and Cæsars, and Napoleons could always find something to do in their line of business. It might have been more profitable for them to have considered their latter end, than to have been so eager to bring about the end of others. When we consider the end of many of these great warriors of the past, how they have been poisoned, and assassinated or banished, how vain does human greatness seem! We think of the words addressed to the proud Babylonian Monarch, "Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee" (Isa. xiv. 11); and of the words addressed to the warriors of various nations in the 32nd chapter of Ezekiel: "There is Asshur and all her company; there is Elam and all her multitude; there is Meshech, Tubal, and all her multitude; his graves are round about him: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword, though they caused

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their terror in the land of the living." Ah! they caused their terror in the land of the living, but their time comes, and they go down to the sides of the pit, and the world rejoices at their demise, and their glory descendeth not after them, but their beauty or strength consumes away—the grave being an habitation to every one of them.

Sometimes wars are arranged by two or three diplomatists, who are often the incarnations of all evil. They divide the territory of this or that state—which it may be is not able to successfully defend itself—while they sit at some round table or other, and then acting upon the principle that might is right, they seize that which is not their own; their nation is aggrandized, their territory is extended, and the army and the nation simply has to register their will.

A war spirit among the people of the earth too—although war is so completely antagonistic to their best interests—is so quickly raised, and so easily fanned into a flame. I was reading not very long ago in one of the daily papers an article to the effect that the "Jingo" spirit so rampant a few years ago was now dead, and that the English people were in a more sensible frame of mind. How soon could all this be altered. Let the English flag be insulted; let the Russian, or any other nation deliberately act in a manner calculated to wound British pride, and there would be a resurrection of the "Jingo" spirit in a day. We should have the men and the money and the ships immediately. The young lions would begin to roar. The John Bull spirit would be up immediately. That spirit which is synonymous with the old man, which also is synonymous with the devil. It is so with other nations. A frontier incident, a national insult, and one or two large nations are in a blaze of anger and excitement. Human nature is very inflammable material—especially some. Away goes all thoughts of arbitration and peace, and nothing is thought of but revenge. Nations cannot be insulted with impunity! They must be indemnified, or seek to indemnify themselves: the result is war. All the evil passions of human nature are

let loose; there is a carnival of death; the angel of death is abroad, and flaps his wings, and gloats over the fields of blood, and blesses the contending forces. It is hateful. It is awful to contemplate. Who can stay it? Oh! I have the sincerest sympathy with the men who are so profoundly desirous of putting an end to war. They are actuated—many of them—by humane and benevolent impulses, by some of the best impulses of which human nature is capable. Many, of course, are influenced merely by commercial interests, by more selfish reasons, but large numbers feel what an awful calamity it is for nation to strike against nation as they ever have done in the past, and as they seem still likely to do in the future. An awful thing indeed is war. We have to think not only of the glory of victory, but of the disaster of defeat. We have to think not only of the soldiers returning triumphant from the war to the sound of martial music, but of those also lying upon the battle field, disfigured and dead. We have to think of mutilated corpses, of dismembered bodies, of heads and arms and legs blown away, of the wounded lying groaning in their agonies, trampled upon by horses and men in the rush of battle, and lying for hours in their agony without water, or food, or help; exposed to rain, or snow, or heat, or cold. We have to think of brutal passion, and ungoverned lust, and ravished women, and ransacked houses, and a hundred deeds of darkness and shame. We have to think of forsaken towns and villages, of a scattered and flying population, of suspended business, and ruined families, of paralyzed commerce, and of widespread desolation and alarm. This, friends, is war. And then there is, besides the waste of human life, and the awful misery produced, the terrible waste of national resources. Why, the great war which ended with the battle of Waterloo, cost this country no less than £600,000,000! Well might humane and religious people desire to put an end to a state of things resulting in such human misery and pain and loss. We sympathize with the feeling that prompts their action; but at the same time we believe, for some reasons already given, and for others we shall give, that those efforts are vain.

Universal peace will never be brought about by human instrumentality. It may commend itself to the wise, but they are almost powerless to stem its torrent. What the Birmingham paper I quoted from, said, was quite true: "The probability is that as long as human nature remains in its present mould, wars and rumours of wars will continue." The mould will have to be altered to produce other results. There will have to be vast political and national and dynastic changes before the song of peace takes the place of the cry of war. War, we believe most certainly, is to be abolished; but not by the efforts of any Peace Society extant at the present time, nor by any earthly Potentate. Neither will it be abolished in the way generally supposed by those who look forward to a time of universal peace. The popular idea of the millennium—if we can use the word "popular" in this connection at all, for very few people trouble anything about the millennium, their false theological notions blind their minds to a perception of the truth concerning it, and it is perhaps mostly referred to in sarcasm—but the current idea is, among such as do profess a belief in it, that it will be brought about by a gradual process. There is to be a great spread of religion. The whole world is to be converted to Christ. The earth's population is to be so enlightened, and such a blessed state of things is going to result from the labours of the sects—those sects which are so opposed to each other—that at last peace and righteousness will cover the entire earth; and when this has been the state of society everywhere, for a long period—singular to relate—after this state of perfection is reached, then Christ will return from heaven, raise and judge the dead, and burn up the world; taking away the righteous to heaven, and plunging the wicked into darkness and eternal despair! That is a very sad ending for the world when it reaches perfection, after waiting so long a time for it!

But now we may ask, how long a time are we to wait for a millennium of this kind to be ushered in? Truly a long, very long, period. Many thousands, if not millions, of years,

Newspaper editors may well refer to a millennium to be ushered in in this manner as very far ahead. It seems quite a hopeless matter. And the idea of Christ's coming being so indefinitely postponed does not agree in the least with those commands of his to "Watch" for his return, to be on the tip-toe of expectation, because we know not what hour he may be here. Popular notions make it quite unnecessary to watch at all, for they postpone his coming till the end of the millennium, which itself is a long way off, and so a large number of commands and exhortations in the New Testament are useless, of no practical value to us, much less to those to whom they were at first given. Now we tell you plainly that war will not be abolished in this manner. No evangelistic effort will do it. All the sectarian efforts combined will fail. How little have they accomplished so far! The gospel was never intended primarily to bring about such a result, but to call out from the nations a people for the name of the Lord (Acts xv. 14). That is, those who hear it, believe it, and obey it, are called out, or separated from the mass, as a people in whom he will manifest his name, or nature, or characteristics in a future age. *War is to be abolished by the direct interference of the Son of God in human affairs, and by his mighty power alone.* "THIS MAN SHALL BE THE PEACE." Did you ever notice that statement? It occurs in the 5th chapter of the prophecies of Micah, in a prophecy relating to Christ. In the 2nd verse we read thus: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel." Now we have the authority of Matthew's history to apply this passage to Christ. When the wise men came seeking the new-born king, and asking the question, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" you remember how troubled Herod was, and all Jerusalem with him. That tyrant hastily gathered together the chief priests and the scribes, men who knew the scriptures, and demanded of them where the Messiah was to be born. They immediately told him in Bethlehem of Judæa, referring in proof to this prophecy of Micah—"Out of thee

(Bethlehem) shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel" (Matt. ii. 1-6). They had no idea, mind you, of any spiritual reign of Christ in the hearts of men. Such an idea would have had no disturbing influence upon the mind of Herod; but they believed that he who was foretold by the prophet, was to be a real earthly potentate, who should rule over God's people Israel. Referring further to this personage, Micah says of him in the 4th and 5th verses of the 5th chap., "And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God: and they (the Israelites) shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. *And this man shall be the peace.*" This prediction which appears to be continued in the verse, we are told by some scholars, should close here, the next sentence commencing a new prediction. So that Christ is the one born in Bethlehem, born to rule in Israel, and to be great far beyond Israel's territory—"even to the ends of the earth" "And this man shall be the" source of perpetual "peace."

This declaration concerning Christ does not stand alone. The future age, which may dawn upon the world very shortly, is described constantly in the most glowing language by the prophets of Israel, and among its chief characteristics are those of peace and righteousness. Christ is the ruler—the supreme ruler—of this coming age in which so many blessings are to be dispensed to Israel, and through them to all the nations of the earth. The chapter we read a little while ago (Isa. ii.) has reference to this much-to-be-desired time. "It shall come to pass," we read, commencing at verse 2, "in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall

rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Now it is most evident that such a state of society has never yet existed as is here depicted, since the prophecy was uttered. Jehovah's house is not established upon Zion's hill and the nations of the earth are not flowing there for worship and knowledge. No king reigns there judging among the nations, and they have only resorted thither for purposes of war, plunder, and desolation, till its walls have been broken down, its temple destroyed, its people scattered, and the city itself trodden down of the Gentiles, and looked upon with scorn. Swords are not yet beaten into ploughshares, nor spears into pruning hooks, and the nations are learning war more madly than ever; yet these things are predicted and are bound to come to pass. How, we shall see by and bye. Further on in this book, in the 9th chapter, the birth of Christ is foretold, and among other titles applied to him in the 6th verse is this one: "The Prince of Peace." It is also said that "The government shall be upon his shoulders," and "of the increase of his government *and peace there shall be no end*, upon the throne of David."

Now that is an important statement which identifies clearly the dynasty with which his rulership will be connected—even if the other passages had not to which we referred—"Upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." How is this to be accomplished? Read on just one sentence more—"The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this." That is satisfactory: there is no doubt about it. "Will perform this."

All this has a very close relation to our subject to-night. We cannot understand how war is to be abolished if we do not understand the mission and the kingly character of Christ. The allusion in the mission just referred to to the throne of

David is based upon a covenant the Almighty made with that king that he should have a Son who should reign upon his throne before him, or in his presence for ever. It was to David in reality a promise of everlasting life, and in his last words he describes the realization of this promise or covenant as "all his salvation and all his desire" (2 Sam. xxiii. 1-5). The references to this covenant in the Psalms and in the writings of the prophets are most abundant. These we will not now refer to. There is a New Testament reference to the same which we have often quoted, and will now refer to again. It is the angel's statement to his mother, contained in the 32nd and 33rd verses of Luke's history, chapter i. Speaking of Jesus, the angel said, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and *the Lord God shall give unto him THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*" Now, friends, you who may be in the habit of attending church or chapel, do you really understand that passage and other kindred statements? There ought to be no misunderstanding language of that description. It is exceedingly plain and easy of comprehension. Nothing could possibly be much clearer. Come, let us reason together. Suppose, now, some divine messenger singled out a person in England to-day, and guaranteed to him that he should sit upon the throne of Queen Victoria, and reign over the English people in the future, no one would think of seeking for some deep spiritual meaning to attach to the words. It would be most singular, and we should suppose would evidence some symptoms of lunacy if persons interpreted such a message to mean that the individual thus selected would *never* sit upon Victoria's throne, *never* reign in London or in any other portion of Her Majesty's dominions, and *never* exercise authority over the English people any more than over the other nations of the earth; but instead, should go to some far off region beyond the stars, and from thence exercise a *spiritual* authority over the hearts and minds of a few *selected from the various nations of the earth!* That, we should say, would be an unfair, an

unreasonable, and a most ridiculous application of the divine messenger's communication. Yet this is exactly what religious people do with the words of the divine messenger who came to Mary. The message in *that* case is as clear as in the suppositious one. Why, then, should it be so misunderstood and so misapplied? David's throne was literal enough—it was in Jerusalem. There was nothing mystical about it. He never had a throne in the skies. He was the king of the Jews. He reigned over the twelve tribes of Israel. He ruled over the whole house of Jacob for thirty-three years. This throne is fallen; as literally as the throne of the Bourbons of France. Nebuchadnezzar carried Zedokiah the last king captive; he put out his eyes and took him to Babylon. Before that happened, Ezekiel the prophet said to this wicked, unprincipled monarch, that the diadem should be removed, and the crown taken off, and that the whole reigning authority should be "overturned," and remain so "Until *he* come whose right it is, and" the divine message concluded, "I will give it him" (Ezek. xxi. 25-27). Christ is the one whose right it is. He is the heir. The throne of David is covenanted to him by a covenant "ordered in all things and sure." He is a king by divine right. The overturned throne will be established again in the land of Israel, for exactly the same things which were to be subverted are to be restored—that is the crown, and throne, and kingdom of David, confirmed again to Jesus by the angel's message and by innumerable promises besides. To spiritualize the passage is to subvert its meaning, and to say that Jesus sits on David's throne in heaven—where neither David or his throne has ever been (Acts ii. 34)—and reigns over the house of Jacob at the present time—the members of which house treat his name with the utmost scorn and contempt—is ridiculous and utterly false.

Christ, then, is a king: yea, the "King of kings and Lord of lords." He was born to rule. He was destined to wear the crown of universal dominion as well as the plaited crown of thorns: to sit upon the throne of the world as well as hang

upon the malefactor's cross: to sway the sceptre of universal empire and receive the homage of all mankind as well as to be mocked with a reed, and receive the insults and mock worship of the brutal soldiery of Rome. To be "fashioned after the power of an indissoluble life," as well as to be pierced, and groan in the agonies of death. His mission embraces both these experiences and objects. He is a "Lion" as well as a "Lamb."—"Art thou a king?" he was asked by Pilate, when standing before his bar. "Thou sayest it," he replied, "I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John xviii. 37). As a king he died, and the superscription of his accusation, the cause assigned for his death by the Roman Governor was this claim: "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS."

In the days of his flesh he went about, with his disciples, preaching "the glad tidings of the kingdom of God," inviting men and women to share with him its glory and honour, and to partake of the immortality associated therewith; to become joint rulers with him of the kingdom which it is the intention of God to establish upon the earth, a kingdom which will embrace all existing dominions under the sun, and be established upon their ruins, and which will extend from one end of the earth to the other. His first coming and death—which does not so much enter into our consideration to-night—was preparatory to his second appearance and glory. It was the means of opening up a way of deliverance from death and the grave; so that they which are called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance of the land, and a means of establishing a basis of righteousness, by which God "might be just, and the justifier" of those repentant sinners "who believe in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 21-26). This work concluded, he went away to heaven "to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return" (Luke xix. 12); the reference being to the fact that the princes of those nations subject to the Romans went up to Rome to be inaugurated and to receive the diadem, and then

went back to their own country to exercise authority. So Christ has gone into the "far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return" to reign. He has not returned yet to establish that kingdom, but he will, and to redeem from the dust of the earth all those who sleep in him, and those who are alive who "look for his appearing." This coming of Christ is the pivot upon which the salvation of individuals, and the redemption of the world from all the evils under which it groans, turns. There is no hope apart from Christ's present existence in heaven and his return to earth. This great truth is hid from the eyes of our contemporaries by an utterly false system of theology which teaches them that they have immortal souls which go to him at death, to dwell in heaven. Hence there is no need to "wait for God's Son from heaven," as Paul commanded the Thessalonian believers to do (1 Thess. i. 10); or to "watch" for his appearing, as he commanded his disciples. The whole truth is set aside by the false notions everywhere prevalent concerning the nature of man and what happens to him at death. The true believer looks for the coming of Christ and the kingdom of God. "If I go away," said he, "I will come again" (John xiv. 3). "This same Jesus," said the angels, "which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts. i. 11). "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thess. iv. 16). "And to you who are troubled," Paul writes again, "rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction (not, mind you, preservation in torment) from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day" (2 Thess. i. 7-10).

Christ, then, is coming—there can be no doubt about it in the mind of a believer of the Bible—and the object of his coming is to rule the world in righteousness. This object will be preceded by that other event to which we have referred, connected with it, the details of which we shall not enter into, viz. : the resurrection, judgment, and bestowing of immortality upon his saints and brethren, who are to be associated with him in the regeneration of the world, who are to be made “kings and priests unto God, and reign upon the earth” (Rev. v. 10). . When this preliminary work is accomplished, he will interfere in the affairs of the nations of the earth, commencing with the affairs of his own nation, the Jews. The scriptures make known the fact that at this time a considerable number of Jews will have returned to Palestine, and that they will be dwelling there in defenceless cities—cities “without gates and bars,”—and that their increasing wealth in cattle and goods will have incited the cupidity and rapacity of a northern potentate who may very easily be identified with the Czar of Russia * This personage comes with his hosts, and the combined armies of many other nations, like a cloud to cover the land. They assemble against Jerusalem the beloved city; they capture it; they rifle the houses; they ravish the women; they behave as brutal soldiers often do. Half the people are taken captive; the rest are doubtless in great straits: what happens next? We learn—in one place where these events are referred to (Zech. xiv. 3, 4)—what follows: “Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east.” The passage then goes on to declare that certain events will happen that will altogether alter the configuration of the land, that the Lord shall come and all the saints with him (ver. 5), and the 9th verse states that “The Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one.” The concluding portion of

* See *Russia and Britain in the East*. Price 2½d. post free; by same Author.

the chapter predicts the awful calamities which will overtake the armies that fight against Jerusalem, and the condition of things existing subsequent to these events, when the king is enthroned in Zion and those who are left of the nations go up year after year, "to worship the king, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."

The kingdom of God will not be established without a marvellous display of power by Christ. The nations of the earth will not submit to him without a struggle. They will not believe that he is the Lord from heaven, but rather some new pretender to power in the east. Kings will not give up their sceptres, and take off their crowns only under compulsion. They will combine against him. They will "make war with the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him," at this time, "are the called and chosen, and faithful." It will be an awful time for the kings, and rulers, and armies of the earth. The predictions of the 2nd Psalm will find a fulfilment in the history of the days to come. "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet"—notwithstanding their malice and rage—"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Religious people are amazed, if not horrified at the thought that Christ is a Man of War, as well as a Prince of Peace. They cannot think of him destroying the armies that oppose his power. *They can think of him torturing unnumbered millions of people in hell throughout eternity.* They know not his real mission. They forget that he is Judah's lion. They sing of him as

"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild."

Oh! but he will "strike through kings in the day of his wrath" (Ps. cx. 5). He will "break them with a rod of iron,

and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Ps. ii. 9) "With the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked" (Isa. xi. 4). It is the only way the inhabitants of the earth will admit his power and learn righteousness. The judgments that will then be abroad in the earth will be necessitated by existing facts—not from the desire to slaughter men. It will not be a war such as human warriors have engaged in, to gratify ambition and get human praise. It will not be based upon wickedness, as many of the wars of the past. "With righteousness doth *he* judge and make war" (Rev. xix. 11). His reign of peace will follow; but first the nations must be humbled, and their prowess destroyed, and their armies disbanded, and their weapons of war cast to the winds, and "the Lord alone" must "be exalted in that day." The world teems with wickedness, and there will have to be a great clearance. "Every one that is proud and lofty, and every one that is lifted up, shall be brought low." Human greatness will be abased; human power will be cast down; human thrones will be abolished; human laws will be abrogated. God alone will be exalted. And the judgments of that period will be so awful, and the terror excited so great, that men shall creep into "the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (Is. ii. 19). It's the storm that will clear the political atmosphere. The rumblings of it can already be heard. The sky is darkening; the heavens are gathering blackness. The booming thunder will be heard anon, and the forked lightnings of Jehovah's wrath will play, and the deluge will come.—"As the lightning, that lightneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of Man be in his day" (Luke xvii. 24).

The war spirit, and war preparation which men now deplore but cannot avert, is a sign of the nearness of these stupendous events. The very thing which to those ignorant of the scriptures seems to indefinitely postpone the millennium is an evidence to the enlightened, that it is close at hand. They are getting

ready for "the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Rev. xvi. 14). They are preparing, unconsciously enough, for that "supper of the great God," to which "all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven" are invited, that they "may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great" (Rev. xix. 17, 18). They are obeying the prophet Joel's command; the Gentiles are preparing war, and waking up the mighty men; they are "beating their ploughshares into swords, and their pruninghooks into spears"; the weak States of Europe are saying "I am strong," and are preparing for the mighty conflict, when Jehovah's sickle will be put into the assembled mass ripe for the slaughter because their wickedness is great, and the harvest time has come (Joel iii. 9-17; Rev. xiv. 15-20).

It is not at a time of profound peace and purity that Christ returns from heaven, but at a time when the war fever is at its height and general wickedness prevails. Then it is that God's kingdom is established. John records a vision which he saw, which proves this. It is recorded in the 11th chap. of Revelation, commencing at verse 15, "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. *And the nations were angry,* and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldest destroy them that destroy the earth." That is conclusive, and I need not tell you how angry the nations are to-day; what little confidence there is in each other among them; how suspiciously they are watching each

other; how they are snarling like angry dogs; how they are ready to spring at each other's throats. All this you know. Their power will be broken and scattered by and bye. As Isaiah said, Christ "shall judge among the nations *and rebuke many people,*" and it is after this most necessary work is accomplished, and the kingdom of God is firmly established, and Christ's power everywhere acknowledged, that "they beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks," and that the time so much desired shall come when "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

We cannot now dwell upon the exceeding glory of the reign of the Son of God, but the earth will be filled with blessing. "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish: *and abundance of peace* so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight. And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised. There shall be abundance of corn" (not "an handful") "in the earth upon the top of the mountains" (usually barren places); "the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.

And blessed be his glorious name for ever : and let the whole earth be filled with his glory : Amen and Amen " (Ps. lxxii). Everywhere the Scriptures present a most delightful picture of the future age under the beneficent rule of the Son of David, the Prince of Peace. One unbroken calm. A morning without clouds. An untroubled sea, no casting up of mire and dirt. No raging tempest. No political storm. No unsettled Eastern question. No frontier difficulty to rectify. No boundary line to make more secure. No march of armed men, no clang of deadly steel, no rumbling thunder of deadly cannon. No explosives used for the destruction of men, melinite and torpedoes and magazine guns for ever put aside. No deadly hate betwixt man and man, no thirst for blood, no intense longing for revonge, all nationalities merged into one; peace flowing like a river; the whole earth quiet and at rest. The entire face of nature changed, the earth clad with verdure and resplendent with beauty, and the wilderness budding and blossoming as the rose. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious," *glorious!* (Isa. xi. 6-10). Haste, happy day, day of triumph and of gladness for which "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Long has the earth been cursed by barbarism and stained with the blood of men slain in war. May thy light soon arise, may thy glory soon gladden our race, may thy sun soon shine forth from the destructive storm with *healing* in his wings.

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SOUTH SHIELDS:
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1839.

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THE WORLD TO COME, AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING.

THE words which you have just heard announced—which embrace two most important subjects, upon which we propose to address you this evening—ought to be very familiar to any persons present who have been in the habit of attending the services of the Church of England. They occur a number of times in the regular services of that Church, and cannot well fail to be noticed. In the morning, and in the evening services they are repeated. In the Litany they also occur, and those who repeat the Creed contained in the Communion Service, assert their belief in “The life of the world to come.” In the “Prayer of St. Chrysoston,” repeated several times every Sunday, these words occur:—“Fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of Thy truth, *and in the world to come life everlasting.*” Now that is a beautiful and scriptural petition when offered by an enlightened mind, and one in which we can most heartily join, for those words represent what is most ardently desired by every true son and daughter of the Lord God Almighty; but, suppose now, by way of experiment, you were to go to all your Church acquaintances and ask them to kindly tell you what impression was conveyed to their minds by the words they so often repeated at Church—“the world to come and the life everlasting,” I fear that in many cases you would get no intelligent reply; that you would find the words were repeated formally without any particular meaning being attached to them; while others attached to them a meaning at variance altogether with the scriptural ideas connected

with the words, and probably different altogether to what was meant by the man who wrote the prayer, and the men who compiled the Prayer Book, and contradictory also to another expression—to be noticed directly—they often repeat from the same much-used book. I have tested the matter for myself. Only recently I asked a person what meaning the words conveyed to her mind. "You are a Church-woman," I said, "and you often repeat these words at Church, what do they mean?" "Why, of course, they mean what they say," was the intelligent(?) reply, "the future life; don't bother me." That was the only answer I was able to get. And though we know that many intelligent people who attend Church could, doubtless, give you a better reply than this, we venture to say that the vast majority would be no more able to give an answer to the question than the person addressed by me.

Now these words are scriptural words; they occur more than once in the Bible. Jesus himself declared—you will find the words I am about to quote in the 18th chapter of Luke's history, 29th and 30th verses,—that all those who had "left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the Kingdom of God's sake," should "receive manifold more in this present time, and in the *world to come life everlasting*." Evidently, therefore, it is a something to hope for and pray for, and we do right to be greatly concerned to find out what the meaning of the promise can be. Words are, indeed, no use unless they convey a meaning to our minds, and it is a most unfortunate thing for us, or for any one else, if, even in all sincerity, we attach a meaning to them they were never intended to bear, and so go on hoping and praying for that we shall never receive, because it has never been promised, and is altogether opposed to that which has. For instance, the words "the world to COME," cannot, by any fair mode of interpretation, mean *the world* to go to. And yet it is to be feared that this is the impression which these words convey to many minds; that they refer to that state of happiness or misery, which a person is—without any scriptural proof—supposed to enter into at death. But if it were, indeed, a fact

that, when we die, there is a something within us that takes its departure to another sphere where it consciously exists apart from its earthly environments, what appropriateness would there be in speaking of this as "the world to come?" and how could it, in truth, be said that life everlasting—that is—unending existence, was conferred upon us, as a reward for a particular course of conduct in that future state when it is NOT a *life conferred*, but simply a *prolongation or perpetuation of the life we now possess* under other conditions to which we have not been accustomed before? Such an idea "clearly implies that that world is not to *come* in the sense of being absolutely futuro to the present time, or even to Christ's time, but that it has been existing since the death of the first human being," if not before; it cannot be right, therefore, to speak of a world already in existence, to which people are supposed to go at death, as a "world to come."

There is another idea we may just glance at quite as far removed from the truth as that to which we have just referred, that is, that the present world upon which we live, meaning the earth in the literal and physical sense, is to pass away, and be succeeded by a newly-created world, upon which the saints will dwell for ever. This idea is, of course, somewhat antagonistic to the one just examined, and is based upon a misapprehension of a few passages of the Bible. Besides, if it be held by our Church friends, I should like to ask them what idea is conveyed to their minds by another expression they often sing and repeat at Church—"world without end." What "world" is it that is "without end?" That expression occurs a great many times in the Prayer Book, and it is quite scriptural. The same words occur in the Book. We find them, for instance, in the 45th chapter of Isaiah. Commencing at the 16th verse, we read thus: "They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols. But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded, *world without end*. For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath estab-

lished it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else." In that passage we have a most solemn declaration of Jehovah's purpose, in reference to the literal earth upon which we tread. It is His handiwork. He created it for a purpose, even for the habitation of man; as the Psalmist declared "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's, but the earth hath He given to the children of men" (cxv. 16). He has never promised them a share of His home. Remember that, and when your ministers tell you that He has, ask them for the proof, and don't be content without they give it you, which we may tell you in advance they will not be able to do. No! God has made the earth for man throughout all time. "The earth abideth for ever" (Eccles. i, 4.) He has established it. And He has not formed it in vain as some might suppose who look only at its present condition, and the experience of its millions of inhabitants to-day. Truly it is a sad spectacle. Sorrow and anguish; misery and pain; want and despair; poverty and wretchedness; vice and depravity exist throughout the world. The dying and the dead are here; the haughty tyrant and the groaning captive; the oppressive master and the crushed operative; the boasting villain and the violated victim; these things exist the wide world through. The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty (Psalm lxxiv. 20.) I know other men paint bright and glowing pictures. I know that the precepts of the Bible—even when its doctrinal truths are not rightly understood—have done much to ameliorate and bless those where its influence is felt. I know that there are some bright spots on the earth's surface, but if you obtained a large map of the world, and painted black all those lands which are heathenish and barbaric, and those which are only half civilized, and those which are full of superstition; and if, in the most Christian lands—so called—you could mark all the places where vice reigns among the high and the low, all the drinking and gambling dens, all the houses of ill-fame where virtue has perished; if by lifting up the secret veil that hides the actions of men from their

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fellows ; you were permitted, as Ezekiel was, to see the reeking abominations of men, even the men who frequent the temple of the Lord, how astounded would you feel, and how few bright spots would be left upon the map ! “ The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain,” and sorrow and sin “ together unto now’ (Rom. viii. 22.) If this is all, men might say, the earth was created in vain. But God’s purpose is not completed yet. There is a glorious scheme to be carried out in which the house of Israel will have a prominent place. “ Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation : ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded, *world without end.*” Ye, the literal house of Israel,—now scattered about the world, dispersed among the nations because of iniquity—ye shall be delivered from this dispersed and down-trodden condition, ye shall be saved—in the national sense—with an everlasting salvation, ye shall be exalted to the pinnacle of power among the nations of the earth—as many other passages declare—and shall be made the basis of that great political salvation the Almighty is about to accomplish upon the earth, when the King of the Jews returns from heaven to reign in Jerusalem, and to inaugurate that long-predicted time of righteousness, and glory, and peace, which will reflect the glory of God to the utmost parts of the earth, and prove that the earth has not been created in vain ;—in this coming time, ye Israelites “ shall not be ashamed nor confounded, *world without end.*” In the 21st verse of the 3rd chapter of Eph., we have the same expression “ world without end.” “ Unto Him (God) be glory in the Church of Christ Jesus throughout all ages, *world without end.*”

Those who believe the present literal earth is to pass away base their belief upon certain passages where we read of “ the end of the world ”—which we shall refer to again presently—and which, on the face of them, seem to be somewhat contradictory to those which declare that the world is without end,—but more especially upon a passage in the 3rd chapter of the 2nd Epistle of Peter, where we read of “ the heavens and earth” which existed in Peter’s day being “ reserved unto fire against the

day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men," and of the same heavens passing away with a great noise, and of the earth also and the works that are therein being burned up. The writer then goes on to say, at the 13th verse, "Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for *new heavens* and a *new earth*, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Those who apply these words in the literal sense overlook two very important considerations, the first of which is that the terms "heaven" and "earth" are used constantly in the Scriptures in the symbolic or metaphorical sense as well as the literal, meaning *the political constitution of a nation*, the "heavens" standing for the ruling authority, and the "earth" for the ruled. So the sun, moon, and stars, denote kings, queens, rulers, and persons in authority. These figures of speech are constantly used in the Bible, and in this sense "the heavens and the earth" have frequently passed away. Thus in the 13th chapter of Isaiah, we read of the Babylonian heavens and earth passing away, of "the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof" ceasing to give their light; of the sun being "darkened in his going forth," and of the light of the moon failing, and in the 13th verse the Almighty says, "I will shake the heavens; and the earth shall remove out of her place. . . . And it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up." Further on—in the 34th chapter—we read of the passing away of the Idumean heavens, and in this connection we are told at verse 4, that "all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine and as a fallen fig from a fig tree." Again, elsewhere, we have similar language applied to Egypt (Ezekiel xxxii. 7, 8), but all these events had happened long before Peter's day, and referred to the political convulsions which had taken place in those nations to which the prophecies referred, when their ruling authorities were abolished, and the old order of things changed, or altogether ceased to be. The "heavens and earth" of which Peter wrote were the Jewish, which had become so corrupt, and which passed away in the awful conflagrations kindled by the

Roman power, of which it is not our intention now to particularise, as we are only very hastily glancing at this subject in order to clear the ground. The Jewish commonwealth passed away and has never existed since, but, there was a something beyond that for which the Apostles looked, most intimately connected with our subject this evening,—which is the second consideration to which I referred overlooked by those who believe in the ending of the literal world. You remember the words I quoted before, “Nevertheless we, according to His promise, LOOK FOR NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH wherein dwelleth righteousness.” Now, the very thing people neglect to do is to go back to the promise. In the 2nd verse of that chapter the writer states that his object in writing the Epistle was that they might “be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour,” and in the 13th verse he draws their attention to a specific promise “according to his promise.” Obviously the best thing to do is to refer to the promise and see what light it throws upon the subject under discussion. This promise occurs in the 65th ch. of Isaiah and has special reference to the “world to come.” “For, behold,” says Jehovah—I am reading from v. 17—“I create *new heavens and a new earth*; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.” Now I particularly invite the attention of believers in the literal heaven and earth theory to notice what follows:—“But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, *I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy*. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old: but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; (as they did formerly, see Amos v. 2.; Zeph. i. 13); they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of

my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." That is the promise which Peter had in view when he wrote of the "new heavens and new earth." It is a picture—a very glorious one—of the world, or age to come. It has to do, you see, with Jerusalem, the capital city of God's ancient kingdom. It has to do with the Jews—God's ancient people. It speaks of a new order of things, a new political arrangement, in connection with that city and that people, which shall far eclipse all that has been experienced before, so much so that the former arrangement of things should not be remembered nor come into mind in comparison therewith. It speaks of a time of great national blessing and prosperity. Human life is to be prolonged. Security will be experienced. Sorrow will be banished. War will cease to desolate and alarm: for in all God's holy mountain none shall hurt or destroy. That we say is a picture of the world, or age to come.

But why introduce the word "age" as synonymous with, or as a substitute for, the word "world?" For this reason—it is the correct word to use. It is the word "world" which has confused the matter in so many minds, and a correct understanding of the original word helps to simplify the truth very much. Now, in the New Testament there are five different Greek words translated "world." One of these is *aion*—a-i-o-n, a word very frequently translated "ever," and very frequently "world." "It denotes," says Parkhurst, in his Greek Lexicon, "*duration, or continuance of time, but with great variety.*" One of his definitions of the meaning of the word in some of its New Testament occurrences is this:—"An age, period, or periodical dispensation of Divine providence." This is quite correct, and if the

word were rendered *age* instead of *world*, it would make many passages much clearer to the mind of an ordinary reader. A few illustrations will make this plain. In Matt. xii. 32, Jesus mentions a sin which He declares shall not be forgiven, "neither in this world (age), neither in the world (age) to come." In the 39th verse of the next chapter (xiii.) interpreting the parable of the tares, He said, "the harvest is the end of the world" or age. Next verse, "as therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world," or age. In the last verse of the 28th chapter of Matthew's history, we have the promise of Christ to be with His disciples "even unto the end of the world" or age. "The cares of this world," or age, are said to "choke the word," and make it unfruitful (Mark iv. 19). Paul exhorts us not to be "conformed to this world," or age (Rom. xii. 2). The end of the age that Christ referred to in some instances, was the Jewish age, the one contemporary with Himself. This age was drawing to a close in Apostolic days. Hence Paul writing to the Corinthians, says—in the 10th chapter of his first epistle, verse 2, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." If you take that in the literal sense, Paul seems to have made a mistake, for the world still moves on as it did in his day, but the end of the Mosaic age was drawing to a close, and you will find by referring to the Revised Version that the word is rendered "ages" instead of "world." So in the 26th verse of the 9th chapter of Hebrews, we read that "now once in the end of the world" (Revised Version, "at the end of the ages") "hath He (Jesus) appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." The disciples—as we learn from Matt. xxiv. 3—earnestly desired to know from Jesus what should be the sign of His coming, and of "the end of the age," and these passages, with others that we might quote, serve to show that the word "world" obscures the meaning, and that "age" or "ages" more correctly represents the original word.

Now there has been different ages or dispensations of God's redemptive plan in the past, but they all centre in Christ.

There was the patriarchal age—the age of the family; the Mosaic age—the age of the nation, when the families developed into tribes, and the tribes were welded into a nation, to which was given a divine law through Moses at Mount Sinai, in the end of which age Jesus appeared to put away sin, but all the ages of the past were related to Christ and centred in Him. This we are told in more places than one. In the 2nd verse of the 1st chapter of Hebrews, we are told that God “hath in these last days” (*i.e.* of the Mosaic dispensation) “spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds.” The last clause of that verse is a very unfortunate translation. If we understand it to mean that the material worlds were created by Christ, it at once conflicts with many passages which ascribe the work of creation to the Father, and also with other passages relating to the origin and nature of Christ, who was not in existence at the time the material heavens and earth were formed, except in the mind of His Father, to whom all things are foreknown, and in whose mind all His “works were finished from the foundation of the world” (Heb. iv. 3). For the word “by” the Revised Version substitutes “through,” and in the margin they have given the Greek word “ages” for “worlds,” which they have wrongly, as we think, retained in the text. Through whom, or for whom, He constituted the ages—that is the idea. Everything leads up to Christ. It is the same idea that we find in the 3rd chapter of Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians. The Apostle tells us there—reading from the 8th verse—that the grace of God was given to him that “he should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship (or dispensation R.V.) of the mystery which from the beginning of the world (or as the R.V. reads, “which from all ages”) hath been hid in God, who created all things”—not “by Jesus Christ” as the text reads, those words are spurious, and are left out of the Revised Version—“God who created all things; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of

God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Now we are not in the habit of referring much to the originals when quoting from the Scriptures, but we have to remark again here that this last verse quoted is an unfortunate rendering of the text. This we do not state upon our own authority, but upon the authority of eminent scholars. You will find by referring to the margin of the Revised Version that the Revisers have given *as the correct Greek translation of the passage*, "according to the purpose of the ages." I don't know why it was not put into the text. It is the correct idea. The Greek word or words rendered "eternal" mean "of the ages," and the word "purpose," denotes a "plan," or "arrangement." It should, therefore, read "plan," or "purpose," or "arrangement of the ages," and the whole sentence should read, "According to the purpose of the ages which he made for Christ Jesus our Lord." We thus see that God had a plan before Him, which in all the ages past He has been working out according to the counsel of His own will, and that those "ages" were all arranged with a view to Christ. The promises to the fathers related to Him in the Abrahamic age. The types and shadows of the Mosaic economy found in Him their fulfilment. The prophetic age pointed forward to Him, for "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," and the prophets testified both of "the sufferings of Christ and of the glory that should follow" (1. Pet. i. 2).

Now all these past ages pointed forward to one that is yet to come, an age in which Christ will be the acknowledged head of all mankind. The present is the age of Gentile power, and running along parallel with that we might say is also the age of the Church, but these are to be followed by the Millennial age. God's purpose—though ripening fast—is not completed yet. There is a good time coming. The earth has not been created in vain. All present evil is to be banished in due time. The world has wandered from God, but it is to be redeemed, or brought back to Him; for, to quote Paul's words in the 9th and 10th verses of the 1st chapter of his epistle to the Ephesians, God has "made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good

pleasure which he hath purposed in Himself: that, *in the dispensation of the fulness of times* he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him." Christ thus, as you see, becomes the object around which, in the future dispensation, all things gather. He will be God's representative on earth. "The government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Father of the future age, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even for ever" (Isaiah ix. 6, 7).

The teaching and preaching of Christ had largely to do with this "age to come," and with the conduct that would fit persons to become identified therewith. It is the age in which the kingdom of God will be established, which indeed forms its chief glory. It is that which distinguishes it from the present and past ages. God is going to rule the earth "in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." That man is he upon whose head they once placed a crown of thorns, to whom they paid mock homage, upon whom, in derision, they placed a purple robe, and to whom they said, smiting him with the palm of their hands, "Hail, King of the Jews." That man is he whom they lifted upon the Cross, and over whose head they placed the superscription "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." That man is He whom they laid in the sepulchre of the rich Arimathæan, into the mouth of whose sepulchre they rolled a great stone, and sealed it with a seal. *That* man is going to rule the world in righteousness, for God has "given assurance of this fact to all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts xvi. 31). All the glory and grandeur of these sublime truths is hid from those who are taught, and believe in the theories propounded from the pulpits to-day concerning heaven-going at death and reigning in the skies! The earth,—renovated, beautified, cleared of all its evils, ruled over by the glorified Son

of Man—will be the everlasting home of the righteous. "They shall inherit the land and dwell therein for ever" (Psalm xxxvii. 9, 11, 22, 29). "Blessed are the meek," said Jesus, "for they shall inherit the earth" (Matth. v. 5). This renewing or renovating process is the work of the age to come, preparatory for the fuller glory of the ages to follow on. It will last a thousand years. It is spoken of as a time of "restitution of all things" predicted. There has been a work of demolition in the past. The law of God was despised. The people of God were broken and dispersed. The throne of David was overthrown. Jerusalem, the capital of God's Kingdom, was demolished, and has for ages been "trodden down of the Gentiles." The Israelites have for many days, as Hosea said, been "without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an ephod, without all their various national characteristics—(ch. iii. 4, 5)—but the various prophets foretold a time when their national life and grandeur as a nation should be restored and greatly increased, when there should be "new heavens"—a new ruling-power and aristocracy, and a "new earth"—a completely regenerated people. It is "the age to come" which witnesses this renewing and transforming power in the earth, and the fulfilment of the many glowing predictions of the Seers of Israel. As Peter said—3rd ch. of Acts, verses 20 and 21—God "shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive *until the times of restoration of all things*, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the ages began." In another place the future age is spoken of as a time of regeneration. It was when his disciples were astonished at his remarks concerning the extreme difficulty of rich men entering the Kingdom of God. It made them think of their own position and prospects, and on his own behalf, and on behalf of the rest of the disciples, Peter addressed the question to Jesus, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, *in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory*, ye

also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix. 27-29). It was at this time that he made the further promise quoted earlier in our address, that all who had made sacrifices on his behalf should receive "*in the age to come life everlasting.*" What do we learn from a passage like this? First, That there is to be a time of regeneration or new birth for the world in an age future to the time when the promise was made. Secondly, That it is at that time, and not before, that the Son of Man sits upon his glorious throne. Thirdly, by implication, that that throne will be an Israelitish throne. Fourthly, That the twelve tribes of Israel, ten of which were dispersed among the heathen in the time of Christ, will be restored. Fifthly, That, in the Kingdom of God, the twelve apostles will be exalted to special positions of honour, each having rulership over a tribe of Israel. Sixthly, That reward time is not at death, but when the Son of Man returns from heaven, and that the reward is on earth—not in heaven, as it would be foolish to consider that the tribes of Israel would require judging or ruling in the skies! And lastly, that eternal life is not a present possession, but a future gift, bestowed upon the righteous as a reward for their obedience to the truth now. We see from these facts why such importance is attached in the Scriptures to the second coming of Christ from heaven. On the theory that we go to him at death, and that our reward is not here, but yonder, the constant references to Christ's return, and to the saints "waiting" and "watching" for the same must ever be inexplicable; but when we perceive that it is *the only hope* held out to man, and that, apart from the coming of Christ, there is no salvation for the individual, and no world-wide deliverance for the human race from the multitudinous evils under which they live, and suffer, and groan, and die, then we cease to wonder at the great prominence given to his return, and at the ardent desires expressed by the divine writers for that event to be accomplished.

All previous ages are but preparatory for the age to come. Christ is to be the universal King of men, reconstituting the

Israelitish throne and polity, and afterwards subverting all earthly dominions, and subduing all earthly potentates by his invincible power. Israel will be the favoured nation, and the Gentile power that will not yield to Israel's King must perish, but those who yield will be blessed by his rule, for he comes to rule all nations, and to be King over the entire earth. This Kingdom is in more places than one referred to parabolically, and in symbol, as a marriage feast, to which Jesus invited men in the days of his flesh, and to which they are still invited by the preaching of the gospel. In plain language they are invited to participate in the honours of the coming age. There will be many positions of administrative authority to fill in a world-wide dominion. Men and women are now being invited to fill them. They are honoured by a call to God's Kingdom and glory. Many esteem it no honour, or will not make the necessary sacrifices to attain unto it, and turn aside. Like the Jews to whom the honour was first offered, they begin "with one consent to make excuse" (Luke xiv. 18), they "judge themselves unworthy of eternal life" (Acts xiv. 46). A few accept it. In the end the few of every age will prove to be a vast number in the aggregate, so vast a multitude to look upon that no man will be able to number them. These will be raised from the dead at the return of Christ from heaven, while those who are alive at his return will be gathered from the midst of the people by whom they are surrounded, to meet the Lord. They are to be constituted "kings and priests unto God," and they have to "reign upon the earth"—Rev. v. 10—subject, of course, to Christ, the King and Father of the future age. Their mission will be to instruct the mortal nations of the earth in righteousness, to execute justice and judgment in the earth, to crush the oppressor, to help the helpless, to befriend the poor and friendless, everywhere to defend the right and the true. If these things are strange to you it must be because you have overlooked such a passage as this "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. iii. 21). Or

your attention has never been arrested by the promise of Christ contained in the 26th and 27th verses of the 2nd ch. of Rev., "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father." It is a very difficult matter to spiritualize such a promise as that; its meaning is very plain, but such passages seldom get selected as the basis of sermons at church or chapel, and if the truth about the age to come is not sought out by the earnest occupier of the pew, the pulpit will do very little to enlighten the mind.

I need hardly remind you that the saints would hardly be qualified for the purpose of reigning over the nations with a rod of iron if their natures underwent no change, if they still remained weak and frail and subject to decay as they now are. It would be impossible for them to "live and reign with Christ a thousand years" under present conditions. Three score years and ten, aye and less, bounds most human lives now. We are all under the penalty of death, and there is not a shred of immortality about any one of us by nature—not a shred. But our subject speaks of "the world to come, and the life everlasting." The repeater of the creed, whatever it may represent to his mind, expresses his belief in "the life of the age to come." Ah! there is a life connected with that age not experienced by men now. A life that none can destroy. A life that those who inherit will not fear to lose. The rulers of the future age will not tremble upon their thrones as the Czar of Russia quakes upon his. They will be proof against powder and shot and dynamite and all the explosives the art and science of men can invent. No plot will avail against them, for "the powers of the age to come," which were partly experienced in apostolic days, enabling the possessors thereof to work miracles and detect deceit, and foretell future events, will enable them to detect and punish the plotter, although, if any conceivable plot was allowed to be put in operation it would avail nothing against those it was designed to destroy. No! they possess an endless life. It is

. 26!

the gift of God through Christ. "I give unto my sheep *eternal life, and they shall never perish*, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John x. 28). What a blessed promise! How inconceivably glorious to be permitted to realise its fulfilment! This is what will be conferred upon all the worthy ones. Let us find a place where this is made very clear by the word of Christ. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. So they came to Christ—as others did—with a question which they thought would greatly puzzle him. The law given through Moses provided, for certain reasons we need not refer to now, that if a man died without issue, his brother might, or ought, to marry the wife of the deceased, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now, said these unbelieving Sadducees, "There were with us seven brethren, and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife." Now they thought they had cornered Jesus with a question like that. It was based upon unbelief and ignorance. They argued—in their question—as though the resurrection state was to be organised altogether upon the same conditions as the present life, as though the marriage relationship would exist then, as now, and they asked, when this woman in the resurrection was confronted with her seven husbands, whose wife of the seven would she be, seeing that she was lawfully married to each. It was a carnal question, as well as an ignorant and sceptical one; but the truth was in no way compromised, and Jesus was able to give an answer which astonished the listening multitude, silenced the Sadducees, and elicited the remark from certain scribes to the effect that he had answered them well. This was his reply—I quote from the 34th v. of the 20th ch. of Luke—"The children of this age marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain *that age, and the resurrection from the dead*, neither

marry, nor are given in marriage: *neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels*; and are the children of God, *being the children of the resurrection.*" There we have something about "the world to come and the life everlasting." Not everybody, you see, will be "accounted worthy to obtain that age." Only "the called, and faithful, and chosen." It will be a select number. It will be an undefiled community. All the evil will be excluded. "There shall in no wise enter" into that glorified community "anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." You will find that declaration in the last verse of the 21st ch. of Rev. That will shut a great many objectionable people out of the age to come, for there are a vast number of people who work abomination, and millions who think nothing at all of making a lie. They won't be there, thank God, and they are only a nuisance here, but we have to endure them for the present. No, those who are accounted worthy are those who—to quote the Apostle Paul—"by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality"—*seek for it, friends: that means that you hav'nt got it yet.* To such the Apostle says God will render "eternal life" (Rom. ii. 7), they will be made "equal to the angels" and will "die no more." It is a most blessed prospect and hope. Well may we pray "Thy Kingdom come." It has been the cry of the saints in every age. They fell asleep with this blessed hope; and "silently from the graves of the sleepers goes forth the prayer—'Thy Kingdom come!' From many a grave, scattered far and wide over this fallen world, from the pathless waste of the sandy desert, from the crowded cemetery, from the lone hamlet churchyard, from the depths of wild ocean, comes up the silent prayer of the sleepers, 'Thy Kingdom come!' From many a languishing couch, from many a dying pillow, from many a mourner, the sunshine of whose life has faded, whilst sighing for the glimpse of a vanished face, the prayer goes forth and has gone forth—'Thy Kingdom come.'" Christ's coming will turn their sorrow into laughter, their mourning into rejoicing, their anguish into

joy. It will bring back the sleeping dead, it will immortalize the dying saint, it will beautify the meek with salvation, and it will fill the earth with gladness and peace. "And I saw," says John, reading from the 1st verse of the 21st chapter of the Apocalypse—"I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea," no more troubled nations on the earth. "And I (John) saw the holy city, new Jerusalem,"—a symbolic representation of the glorified church,—“coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things,”—the first heaven and earth state of things—“are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.”—“All things new.” What a social and political revolution it means, and what a magnificent result! The old order of things will never *thus* change under the influence of any political organization in the world to-day. Tory, or Whig, or Radical cannot make all things new, and banish sorrow, and suffering, and tears, and death from the universe. But Christ—the “desire of all nations” will. His rule upon earth will ultimately bring all these things to pass, for his reign of one thousand years is preparatory for the ages to succeed, even as the past and present ages are preparatory for that to come. He will put all enemies under his feet, and ultimately destroy death itself from the universe, so that at last the earth will be peopled with an entirely immortal throng, all “children of the resurrection,” who will die no more. The heavens and earth are not created in vain and they are not going to be literally destroyed. God will not burn them up. He will send Jesus to renovate, not to destroy; to bless, not to blast; to beautify not to desolate. Why, all creation

is called upon to rejoice and be glad at the coming of the Lord. "Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth : the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved : he shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad ; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the fields be joyful, and all that is therein : then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord : for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth : he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth " (Ps. xcvi. 10-13) How can you understand that, if, when he is coming, he is only coming to burn it up ? " Why is the creation represented by the Apostle in the 8th of Romans, as standing on tiptoe, with outstretched neck awaiting for his coming, listening to catch the rumble of his chariot wheels ? Why is the heaving ocean called upon to lift up its hands on high and pour its gleesome music on every shore, if when he comes he is coming to hush the laughter of its waves into eternal silence : if at his coming it is to be the sepulchre and shroud of all that lives on its shores—where all is dumb ? Why are the trees of the field to clap their hands, and the cedars of Lebanon to rejoice, if they are only fuel for the final fire to be kindled when he comes ? If this theory be true, rather let Nature, our mournful mother, drape herself in sackcloth, and summoning her sorrowing delegates from all the realms, march up in mournful procession to Messiah's throne, and beseech him *not* to come ! " * But he will come to reign over and bless the living, and raise and confer immortality upon the worthy dead, and the very " wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad ; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing " (Isa. xxxv. 1, 2).

May it be the portion of him who speaks, and of those who listen, to join in the song of the Redeemed in the age to come, and the song of " every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them " when the Kingdom is established, and to joy-

* "Rev." Burlington B. Wale, F.R.G.S.

fully and gratefully exclaim "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. v. 12, 13).



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*Author of "THE KEYS OF HELL,"
Etc., Etc.,*

DELIVERED IN THE TEMPERANCE HALL, STOURFORT, TUESDAY,
JANUARY 1st, 1884,

IN REPLY

TO A SERMON PREACHED BY MR. R. EVANS, PASTOR OF THE
BAPTIST CHURCH IN THAT TOWN, IN OPPOSITION TO THE
CHRISTADELPHIAN BELIEF, AND IN DEFENCE OF
THE DOCTRINE OF THE

IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

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NOTE TO THE READER.

THIS LECTURE is printed with the earnest desire of the writer that the attention of some of its readers may be arrested, and that they may be led to examine more fully into the question of which it treats, and into the many important subjects that arise out of it. It does not of course exhaust the subject. It does not deal with every objection that can be raised against the Christadelphian position. But it deals with most of the arguments and most of the passages raised by Mr. R. EVANS—as many as could be dealt with in the time. A few slight additions—some of them were omitted at the time, owing to the length of the Lecture—have been made, and those who feel interested and desire to read further upon this and kindred questions, are referred to the Works advertised on the cover, or to a catalogue of Christadelphian Publications, which will be sent free from the office at Birmingham (R. ROBERTS, Edmund Street), to anyone who likes to make application for the same.

J. B.

I may add that Mr. J. H. CHAMBERLIN, of Birmingham, Ex-Methodist Minister, offered to debate with Mr. EVANS on the Scripturalness of the doctrines held by the Christadelphians, but that gentleman declined to do so.

LIVING AGAIN.

THREE lectures were recently delivered in this hall upon some of the doctrines revealed for our enlightenment and eternal good in the word of God. The understanding of those doctrines is—in our estimation—of the highest importance. We are not of those who declare that it matters little, or matters not at all what a man believes, but we assert that everything revealed by Jehovah is to be received with reverence and humility, and not to be treated with indifference, still less with contempt. In taking this stand, we are in full agreement with all the apostles, who, in their various writings, urge those to whom they wrote to “give heed unto the *doctrine*” and “to continue in them,” as the only means of saving themselves and others to whom they preached (1 Tim. iv. 16). We cannot, therefore, overvalue the importance of the subjects proclaimed by us; we give these matters no secondary position; we say at once that it is vitally important to comprehend them, and we do not shrink from any consequences arising from that admission. The views we set forth are diametrically opposed to those generally proclaimed from the pulpit, and both cannot be right. Either the one or the other is false. If the pulpit be right, the Christadelphians are hopelessly wrong, and a terrible doom awaits them; while, if the despised and oft-times misrepresented *few* have the truth—a fact that can be clearly demonstrated—then the ordinary leaders of the people, and those whom they lead, are wandering out of the way of understanding, and will, therefore, as Solomon declares, “*remain* in the congregation of the dead.” (Prov. xxi. 16). The “Rev” Mr. Flowers, a late pastor of a Nonconformist Church at Kidderminster, once overtook me in the street, and exclaimed, “Who teaches heresy, Mr. Bland, you or me?” “You, sir,” I replied, “from our standpoint.” “Neither of us, from mine,” he exclaimed! “How do you reconcile the two?” I asked. But he gave no reply. Yet on various occasions he warned those of his flock not to attend our meetings, which exhibited great inconsistency upon his part if he thought we were right, while his remark to me was a manifestation of spurious charity if he thought we were wrong. *We* have no charity of this kind; if a thing is false we say so, and if a false belief leads to sad consequences, we say so; and this is the truest charity, for it is far better to probe a wound, and discover the seat of a disease, and if possible remove it, than to heal it over, in order to save a little pain, when we know that the result will be certain death.

The views, however, which were set forth by the present and other speakers, were not acceptable to all. We did not expect they would be, neither did we ask any one to adopt them only after careful enquiry into their truth : and Mr. R. Evans, of this town (for whom we have no other feeling but that of friendliness), whom I suppose I may describe as the pastor of the Baptist community here, has thought fit to deliver a series of four sermons in reply. We are not here to question his right in any way to do so. If, after an examination of *both sides of the subject*, he is thoroughly convinced of our error, he has simply done his duty ; if he has attempted to reply—as he appears to have done—without any grasp of our teaching, what he has said is of little worth, it being simply the result of prejudice, and the desire to defend an old and cherished belief. There are but few regular occupants of the pulpit who have the courage boldly to attack the Christadelphians : they have more discretion ; we can hear sometimes that this and the other preacher has attacked us, and perhaps stated what is not true concerning us, but they seldom advertise the attack for fear of the consequences, for a thorough discussion of the subject not unfrequently ends in the loss to them of some of their best workers and most enlightened hearers, as it ever will do when men desire nothing but the truth. But the shrinking from a manly defence of their doctrines is nothing but moral cowardice. It is the opposite of Paul's conduct, who "disputed daily" with his opponents, and whose life was a continual battle for doctrinal truth. If the soul be indeed immortal, and the proof be at hand, men who get their living on the basis of that teaching *ought* to defend it and *contend earnestly* for it, and if the doctrine of the eternal torment of wicked men and women in hell fire be true, it ought to be proclaimed from the house-tops, and those who believe it, should rest not night nor day in their efforts to save men from this yawning hell ; whereas the professed believers in this doctrine seem to live as comfortably as other people, and enjoy life, and attend theatres and entertainments as though the thought that the unnumbered millions of the past, whose lives have been flagrantly wicked, were not weltering in seas of fire, and as though the well-nigh inconceivable millions of the present, who have no true knowledge of God and His Son, were all going to a land of perfect and perpetual peace.

Mr. Evans said in his sermon, and it is almost the only thing we can agree with in it, that "he was as open and willing to receive the light as any man," and that if the views he expressed were "not in harmony with the Bible, let them go." These are noble sentiments, and they seem to me to breathe the kind of spirit that will yet "let them go." The examination of the doctrines of "orthodoxy" by candid men, for the purpose of defending them, has many times revealed to the would-be defenders, the complete hollowness and unscripturalness, and heathenism of the whole foundation upon which they have hitherto built, and has led them to abandon the very doctrines they have set themselves to defend. Who knows that this may not be the case with Mr. Evans?

At least, we will hope so. The Apostle Paul, on one occasion, requested of the Thessalonian believers that they would "pray for him that the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified." "And," he adds, "that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith," or the capacity for its exercise (2 Thess. iii. 1, 2). It is a splendid thing to get a congregation of *reasonable* men to speak to. They can stand hard hitting and plain speaking where truth is involved. There are some men whose judgments are so warped and whose minds are so cramped that they have only room for one idea, and that one not their own. They cannot reason, they cannot appreciate an argument, you cannot by any means get a new thought—however true—into their heads. If they look at our publications, it is not in an impartial manner to accept what is true in them, but—like men of another class read the Bible—to pick out here and there something—torn from its connection perhaps—which they may use against us. Before the book is opened, their minds—such as they have—are made up, and they only read to cavil, not to learn. It is labour in vain to try to enlighten such, for the Bible above all books calls forth the exercise of judgment and reason, we are not to have a blind faith, but we are to be intelligent and to grow in the knowledge of the purposes of God. To reasonable men and women we appeal to-night to listen, to judge, and to decide who is on the Lord's side.

The first of the lectures delivered here some little while ago dealt with the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, a belief which we impugned, and which we endeavoured to show—not, we have reason to believe, without some success—had no foundation in science, and was totally opposed to the plain teaching of the word of God, creating a false basis of hope, kindling within unthinking minds desires which would never be realised, and utterly perverting the truth concerning the immortality which Jesus brought to light, and which is over and over again declared to be "the gift of God," and which can only be obtained by those who "seek for it"—as Paul declares—in the appointed way (Rom. ii. 6. 7). Mr. Evans has attacked in his first special sermon the truths we there set forth, and to-night we are here to defend them, and to reply as well as time will admit to some of the arguments put forth by him, though we are bound to say—and we generally speak out pretty plainly—that a more feeble, and disconnected—a more weak defence of the doctrine than his it has never, we think, been our lot to peruse. I am sure the intelligent portion of his audience must have been exceedingly disappointed, for many of his "proof texts" prove exactly the opposite to that for which they were quoted, and are such as we should employ ourselves to prove the *mortality* rather than the *immortality* of man.

I think it will be wise at this point—as it all has to do with his address—to notice one or two misrepresentations made by him in the course of his remarks. There is nothing like fairness in controversy. We should never impute what is not true; we should never put a false

gloss upon the arguments of our opponent. "I am not going," said Mr. Evans, "to bring before you the opinions of heathen philosophers or infidel historians." There was an implication in this that my former lecture was based upon this kind of evidence. Surely my remarks could not have been attentively listened to! I never quoted a single heathen writer in favour of the views which we advocate, unless Mr. Evans classes Archbishop Whateley, Lord Macaulay, and Albert Barnes among the heathen! What I did was to identify *his* belief with heathenism, to show that Plato and Socrates, the well-known heathen philosophers, whose works are so highly esteemed by the clergy, propounded the very doctrines which he now holds and defends, and, as Jesus brought the true life and immortality to light by a resurrection from the dead, *that* could not be truth which these speculators—unenlightened by the Spirit of God—gave to the world. Neither do we depend upon infidels to establish the truth. I quoted one sentence—containing fifteen words—in a lecture which took, perhaps, over an hour to deliver—from Gibbon, the well-known author of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," one of the most distinguished of all English historians, and a gentleman whose writings commentators are never tired of quoting on matters of history to illustrate divine truth, because his patience, and caution, and critical ability, and general trustworthiness are so well known. The sentence I quoted said that "The doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul is omitted in the law of Moses." In a matter of pure criticism it must surely be admitted that the judgment of such a man must have some weight. There is nothing in this inconsistent with Mr. Evans' remark, with which I fully agree that we must "look at this matter from what the Bible says about it." Mr. Gibbon simply says—truly says—that one part, at least, of the Bible says *nothing* about it.

I come to another mis-statement—to use a mild word—in which the preacher endeavoured to show that Mr. Chamberlin and myself contradicted each other. "We are told" said he, "that man is nothing more than an animal," and "whilst we are told that one evening, on another evening we are told that man is more than a beast. One says one thing, the other says the other. When two, who profess to hold the same things, differ, it is not our duty to put them right." Now, all who were present when Mr. Chamberlin lectured, will remember his expression—rightly stated by Mr. Evans—that man was "more than a beast." What did he mean? Why that man was organized on a higher basis, that he had nobler powers, grander faculties than the beasts of the field; splendid intellectual abilities, which they have not—not, mind you, that he was not created on the same plan, and animated by the same spirit of life, because Mr. Chamberlin's argument was that man *was mortal* even like "the beast that perish." Did I say anything to contradict this in any way? Decidedly not. I will quote you the exact words that I used, and you will then see if there was the slightest disagreement between us. After having referred to the intelligence of some of the lower orders of

creation as a proof that matter can be organised to think, I said :—"The fact is, there is one principle of life pervades the whole creation, but God has created a vast variety of creatures, in which there is a beautiful gradation, an advancement from those without intelligence or feeling to those higher forms of life where the nerves are finely strung, and the brain is quick to perceive. At the head of all—yet organised on the same principle—is man, endowed with greater power, with larger brain capacity, with the power of speech and with wisdom to control the lower orders of creation (Ps. viii. 6-8). The power, the capacity, the speech, the wisdom, have all been conferred upon man in addition to what He has given to the beasts of the field. How beautifully Elihu puts the matter as we have it in the 11th verse of the 35th chapter of Job, where he says God 'teacheth *us* MORE than the beasts of the earth, and maketh *us* WISER than the fowls of heaven,'—He has taught them much, he has taught us *more*, but we are not, therefore, necessarily immortal." Those are the exact words I used, and I challenge any man to prove from them that there is any contradiction between them and those of Mr. Chamberlin, or any difference to reconcile. There would—as a matter of fact—be nothing unscriptural in speaking of man as an animal. The word animal simply means a living creature; it *would* be a mistake to speak of him as *no more*, no higher in organisation *that one of the animals of the field*. But though of a higher type of organism, there are millions of men and women who are so debased in their habits, so grovelling in their pursuits, so sensual in their desires that—even on orthodox platforms—they are frequently spoken of as worse than beasts, and you and I would rather have the companionship of many a dumb animal than that of many of the sons and daughters of men. Why, it is in the records of inspiration that even a dumb ass once rebuked the foolishness of a prophet; and I am inclined to think that if some of them could speak now a great many modern "prophets" would be reprov'd. Dr. Kiito, in his *Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature*, renders the 7th verse of the 2nd chapter of Genesis thus :—"And Jehovah God formed the man [HEB. the Adam] dust from the ground, and blew into his nostrils the breath of life; and *the man* became a *living animal*;" while Griesbach, the great German scholar, renders the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, the 15th chapter, commencing at verse 44, thus :—"It is sown an *animal* body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is an *animal* body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written"—this is Paul's proof that there is an animal body—"the first man, Adam, was made a *living soul*, the last Adam a lifegiving spirit. Howbeit, the spiritual was not the first thing but *the animal*; afterwards the spiritual. *The first man was of the earth, earthy*; the second man, the Lord from heaven." In this connection I will remind you of two other passages, one of which was referred to by Mr. Evans. Peter, in the 2nd chapter of his 2nd epistle, at verse 12, speaks of certain false teachers who should arise, in this strain—I quote from the New Version—"But these, as creatures without reason, born *more animals*,"—MERE ANIMALS, fancy that !—"to

be taken and destroyed, railing in matters whereof they are ignorant, shall in their destroying surely be destroyed." Why if the apostle were to reappear, and teach such doctrine in Stourport, the preachers would not recognise him, they would all close their pulpits to him—if he wanted to use them, which is questionable. They would call him a heretic, and say he didn't preach the truth, while speaking in such a manner of the dignified being called man. Sermons would be advertised against him, and all the place would be astir! But there it is, nevertheless. The words are his. "*Mere animals, made to be taken and destroyed, and in their destroying they shall surely be destroyed.*" How can they exist for ever after they are surely destroyed? And how do they destroy mere animals? Don't they take their life away? And do they not cease to be? Well, it will ultimately be the same with wicked men. The Bible says, they will be blotted out of *the book of life*, and when they are *surely* destroyed by the "*second death*" there will be an end of them for ever.

The other passage to which I refer is the 3rd chapter of Ecclesiastes, commencing at verse 18. Of this passage Mr. Evans says,—I give his own words—"Now it is believed by many (and there are many examples of such in the word of God), to be an argument used by the writer as an argument of the infidels of his day, and some think it is the writer's desire that the matter should be made plain to those who think so." Why do people say it is an argument of the infidels? I will tell you. Because it clears away completely the doctrine of the natural immortality of man, and the idea of reward and punishment at death. Let us read it. But first look at the verses before, verses 16 and 17, "Moreover, I saw under the sun the place of judgment" (where justice ought to be administered) "that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there. I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work." Now is that I ask you, an infidel sentiment? "No?" you say. Well, listen, "I said in mine heart; you see it is a continuation of his words, and he begins this sentence in the very same way as the verse before—"I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. For"—here is the evidence of the fact which he desired God to make plain to them—"that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: *as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath (or spirit); so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast; for all is vanity. "All go unto one place: all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again."* That was Solomon's testimony against the false philosophy of his day. "All go unto one place." Do your ministers tell you that? No! They have one place for good men, another place for bad men, and another for beasts. But the Bible says they all sleep alike in the dust of the earth and know nothing, are conscious of nothing. This you will find stated also in ch. ix, v. 5 of the same book: "For the living know that they

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shall die ; *but the dead know not anything*, neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy is now perished." "Another proof," says Martin Luther, "that the dead are insensible. Solomon thinks, therefore, that the dead are altogether asleep, and think of nothing. They lie, not reckoning days or years, but when awakened, will seem to themselves to have slept scarcely a moment." (*Debt and Grace*, p. 258). It would be a mere quibble to say that this language referred only to the body, while the immortal soul escaped. No man would trouble to affirm that a man's dead body knew nothing if it was not the real man. The thing is self-evident. The words cover everything pertaining to the whole man—the love and the hatred and the envy which are supposed to be, and said by Mr. Evans to be the faculties of the soul, are all completely perished. Hence the Psalmist says, in the 146th Psalm, verses 3 and 4, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth ; *in that very day his thoughts perish.*"

We come now to the text selected by Mr. Evans, as the basis of his discourse. Truly, he was most unfortunate in the selection of a text. It was taken from the 14th chapter of the book of Job and the 14th verse, and is the passage which we have advertised as the subject of our lecture. A man must be hard put to for evidence when he selects a text like that as the foundation for a discourse on the immortality of the soul. It looks quite the other way. Perhaps Mr. Evans thought so too, for I do not find that he made use of it in his discourse. I do not think he even once referred to it after he gave it out. "If a man *die*, shall he *live again*?" That is the question. The preacher never answered it. Why, he does not believe that man—the real man—does die ! He believes that he is undying, that he never goes out of existence, and, therefore, that the question about *living again* is ridiculous. But Job believed in the reality of death. He believed that the man actually did cease to live ; and so in his trouble, and sadness, and perplexity, and possible doubt, he asks "If a man *die*, shall he *live again*?" *live a second time*. It was not a question of living on, but actually having the life restored when once it had gone out. Could it be ? Should it be ? The full and complete answer to this question is to be found in the words and the work, the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. He showed in his own person how such a thing could be accomplished. He both "died and lived *again*" that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living" (Rom. xiv. 9). That was the object of his death and resurrection. That he *might be* Lord of the dead and living. But according to Mr. Evans he *was* the Lord of all the righteous dead—who were *not* dead but *alive* in heaven—long before he died and rose again ! for he believes that he existed as a God before his appearance on earth, and therefore, the salvation of those who died well-pleasing to God, before Christ came at all, did not depend in the least upon his resurrection !

But that is a false view, false in all its assumptions. He died and rose again that he *might* exercise lordship over dead ones, that is, bring them to life again, and if he had not risen again, what then? Ah! we might well ask that question with bated breath. Paul gives the answer, an answer that cannot be understood while you accept the theology of Mr. Evans. You will find it in the 15th chapter of his 1st epistle to the Corinthians, the 16th and 17th verses, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain: ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." PERISHED. There is an end of them as the word literally means. But how could that be if they all had immortal souls? The non-resurrection of Christ could not effect their souls, and certainly not the souls of those who had died in faith before he came! But see what he says in the chapter lower down, verse 31. He was speaking of the dangers they passed through every hour, and he says "I die daily." "What," asks Mr. Evans with great shortsightedness, "what did he mean by that? Did he mean that every day he felt the pangs of dying? No. Death does not always mean death in the literal sense." Well, did Paul die in the spiritual sense? What? became spiritually dead? Poor Mr. Evans! Of course Paul meant that he daily felt the pangs of dying. He says in another place that he had "the sentence of death in himself;" and in another, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life—the eternal life—also of Jesus, might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered—constantly being delivered—unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you" (2 Cor. iv. 10, 12). The dying of the Lord Jesus was literal: you cannot spiritualise that in any way, for he neither died in the spiritual sense, nor had he to crucify sin, not having any to crucify, and he says here that he (Paul) stood in jeopardy every hour. And then he adds, verse 32, "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, *what advantageth it me if the dead rise not?*" Why if the apostle preached that doctrine to-day, he would be called to task at once. We could imagine Mr. Evans, for instance, saying to him "Why brother Paul, you will be advantaged every way independently of any resurrection of the dead, for thy soul will at death immediately depart and enjoy the glories of the skies: its music will entrance thine ears, and its gladness will satiate thy troubled heart." But Paul says—No resurrection, no advantage, and if there be no future resurrection, "let us eat and drink;" let us make the most of this life, let us enjoy ourselves, "for to-morrow we die," and shall be seen no more. That is the apostle's argument; it is for you to decide whose authority you will accept—that of Mr. Evans, or that of Paul.

A further answer to Job's questions is to be found in the words of Christ, spoken prior to the resurrection of Lazarus, to Martha, as recorded in the 11th chapter of John, verses 25 and 26, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, *though he die, yet shall he live:*

and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." (literally, "shall not die in the age"). And in the 6th chapter of John, in various places, he told his hearers that "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life;" and, he adds, "I will raise him up at the last day." So that everlasting life, or the power to live for ever, depends upon being raised up by Christ, and is entirely conditional upon our believing upon him. Apart from Christ, we are simply—in the words of the Psalmist—"flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again" (Ps. lxxviii, 39). Like withering grass and fading flowers, and instead of being of such immense value in the sight of Jehovah, as preachers falsely state, we are told by the prophet Isaiah (xl, 15, 17, 22-24) that the "inhabitants of the earth are but as grasshoppers," that "the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance;" yea, that "all nations before him are as nothing (not more precious than a thousand worlds!) and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity." "Surely," says the Psalmist, "men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie,"—a deceit, a sham, a delusion, "to be weighed in the balance they are altogether lighter than vanity." That is ever the way the Bible speaks of unenlightened man; never in the high flown, complimentary, exalting strain indulged in by the Gentile writers of the present day.

But, to return for a little while to the book of Job. The book is nearly full, from beginning to end, of the mortality of man, and of the doctrine of the complete destruction of the wicked. Mr. Evans had better not read it all if he would still hold his present belief. "Shall mortal man be more just than God," asks Eliphaz, in ch. iv, 17. *Mortal man. Not immortal man.* Why, it ought to read, "Shall man's mortal body," &c., to make it harmonious with popular views. But it is mortal *man*, and no less than forty-two times in the Hebrew Scriptures is man affirmed to be mortal, while all the searching in the world will not find one passage which affirms the opposite belief. That is worth thinking about. That God *never once* by his prophets warned the Israelites that they were beings possessing "never-dying souls," which must live on in weal or woe for ever.

We are further told, in the book of Job, that "man's foundation is in the dust" (iv, 19), that his "life is wind" (vii, 7), that if Job had died as an infant, he would "have been as though he had not been" (x, 18, 19), that "man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble," that he "continueth not;" and in the 14th ch., from which the text of Mr. Evans was chosen, these words—which he must have overlooked—occur, verse 7, "For there is hope of a tree, if *it* be cut down, that *it* will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. But *man* dieth, and wasteth away :

yea, *man giveth up the ghost*," or, more correctly, man expires—"this is all that the word means. The notion of giving up the spirit or ghost is not found in the Hebrew word, nor is it in the corresponding Greek word in the New Testament." Compare Acts v, 10. Barnes),—"AND WHERE IS HE? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: so *man* lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret until thy wrath be past. . . . If a man die, shall he live again?" "Where is he?" asks Job, and echo answers "where?" He is gone. He is vanished. He dissolves away. He returns to dust. He mingles with what one American orator speaks of as "the elemental wealth of the world." "Dust thou art," said Jehovah "and unto dust shalt thou return." That is not the language of one who thought himself immortal: the grave he looked upon as his long home.

But here I wish you to notice that word *grave*. You may not be aware that it is precisely the same word as the one elsewhere rendered "hell." The Hebrew word is *sheol*. It occurs sixty-two times in the Old Testament. Mr. Evans will not have it that it means grave, yet it is translated "grave" in twenty-eight places, "pit" in three places, and "hell" in thirty-one. It never means the hell—the horrible hell of torment that theologians have invented, and in which they say God will torment untold millions of His creatures for ever. *That* belief—we hesitate not to say—is most blasphemous, and most dishonouring to the justice and to the love of the eternal God. It cannot be proved from the Bible. It is only by the greatest perversion of plain language that the Bible is made to teach this terrible belief. The word hell in the Old Testament does not countenance it in the least. Some few years back, a series of articles appeared in the *General Baptist Magazine* on "The abuse of Metaphor in Religious Belief. The writer was the "Rev," Dawson Burns. I suppose he will be acknowledged as a thoroughly "orthodox" writer. He is well-known in the temperance world, and as a Baptist preacher. So the writer and the publication should have some weight and influence with some present. One of the articles was "Concerning Heaven and Hell." He speaks about the word *sheol*, as I have told you, being rendered "grave," "pit," and "hell," and says "It is not easy to conjecture on what principle the word *sheol* was translated both 'grave' and 'hell,' because, on a comparison of passages, it is clear that in nearly every case one rendering would have sufficed. The idea invariably conveyed is that of the grave, or its attendant darkness and sadness. *In no case is it used to indicate a place where the spirits of the wicked are subjected to retributive suffering.* Not a few sermons," says he "have been preached from Psalm ix, 17, 'The wicked shall be turned into hell (*sheol*), and all the nations that forget God.'" Preachers from this text should *not* allow their hearers to suppose that the Psalmist looked upon

the 'hell' here named as a place of spiritual punishment ; the falsity of such an inference may be seen by consulting the context, and also those passages where a similar fate is described, and where, as the sense obviously demands, *sheol* is translated 'grave.' I quote Mr. Burns because I think his words will have more weight than my own, but the fact is, these things are known to most people of not very advanced Biblical knowledge, and to deny them is only to proclaim one's ignorance to the world. The worst feature of the case is, that many preachers who know these things do not educate their flocks, but for various reasons conceal the truth, and allow their hearers to go on believing things which *they* know to be utterly false. Now in this passage quoted from Job, chap. xiv, 13, it is this very word, "O that thou wouldst hide me in *sheol*." How would it do to read hell there, with the belief of Mr. Evans attached to it? Do you think for a moment that the sincere and upright patriarch desired—anxiously desired—to go to the hell of popular belief, the hell of Milton, and Edwards, and Wesley, and Spurgeon, each of whom have written some of the most inconceivably awful things about the manner in which Jehovah is going to torment the wicked as soon as they die, and throughout the endless ages of eternity? No! Job meant not that. He thought only of resting for a time in the grave. In chapter 17, at verses 13 and 16, the same word occurs again, "If I wait, the grave (*sheol*, hell) is mine house, (or home): I have made my bed in darkness. I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister. And where is now my hope? As for my hope, who shall see it? They shall go down to the bars of the pit (*sheol*, hell), when our rest together is in the dust." So Job contemplated his own mortality; he expected to enter the gates of *sheol*, and rest there in the dust. The sepulchres of the ancients were often immense and magnificent places hewn out of the solid rock. They were the mansions of the dead, possessing gates and bars, and locked with a key. These things are over and over again alluded to in the Scriptures. Jesus proclaims himself the conqueror of death, and the releaser of its captives in the words, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell (Hades, the Greek word, corresponding with *Sheol* in the Heb.) and of death." (Rev. i. 18). "Hades," said Mr. Evans, "cannot mean the grave." Yet we see that Christ has the keys, and the words show that he intends to use them to release its captives; but he is not supposed to have the keys of the sulphurous hell of popular belief, or even to release those who it is supposed enter its dark and horrid precincts. Again, he told his disciples that "the gates of hell, or the grave, should not prevail against his church," because he had the power to bring them all forth from its portals, and give them an unending existence, an immortal nature, at his appearing to raise and judge the dead, and establish his kingdom.

So much at present on the word "Hell." At a future time we may go more fully into that question, but I wish now to notice some further

arguments employed by Mr. Evans to establish the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul. "Immortality," said Mr. Evans, "is not a craving, but a belief, a faith that is something more than a craving, a belief that is universal. *That*" says he, "*is one of the strongest arguments apart from the Bible, mind you, of the immortality of the soul.*" Well, the "strongest" arguments of Mr. Evans are very frail. They are a rope of sand only; to lean on them is to lean on a broken reed. I deny emphatically that it is an universal belief. The so called Christian world to-day is torn asunder on this question. While many affirm it, there are, I suppose, thousands—at the head of which are such men as Dr. Dale, Edward White, Dr. Leask, Arthur Mursell, Samnel Minton, Prebendary Constable, and a host of others well known in the literary world—who entirely deny the natural immortality of man. There are a number present here to-night who deny it on Bible grounds, and if the thing were self-evident, we should not be able to do so. It is not an universal belief. "The Bechuanas, and Australians, and several tribes of Central Africa, have been found destitute of the notion of immortality" (E. White), and it ought to be known that there are 480,000,000 Buddhists in India, Siam, Japan, and China, with whom it is a first principle of religious belief that the soul can be dissolved, and who believe that "separate existence is so miserable, that the highest object of hope is to lose individual being, and to be absorbed in the universal 'spirit' of their belief." The majority of people around us seem by no means impressed with a sense of their own immortality: they do not *live* like immortal beings; the great, the absorbing questions of their lives are "What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" The Methodists, when I was with them, used to sing of this class—only they did not believe it—

" Like brutes they live, like brutes they die ;
Like grass they flourish, till thy breath
Dooms them to *everlasting death.*"

Suppose, however, that it was true that all men, all heathen nations believed it. Is it, therefore, true? The apostle John said, "We know we are of God, and the *whole world* lieth in wickedness" (1 John v, 19). You see they were in a great minority then. So was Noah at the time of the flood. The truth has ever been held by the few and rejected by the many. If Mr. Evans goes by what the majority believe, he must renounce Christianity altogether, and if he be led by the majority of so-called Christians, he must sprinkle babies, and believe in purgatory and saint-worship, and transubstantiation, and masses for the souls of the dead, and a host of other things, which he rightly rejects as foolish and unscriptural. *This* doctrine comes from the same fountain head, and it will be well for him, and all present, to trust not to wide-spread beliefs, but seek only for truth springing from a source divine.

We come now to another argument, viz., that there is "a marked difference between the creation of beasts and man." Mr. Evans quoted

the passage "Let us make man after our own image, after our own likeness," and said, "I think there *is* a marked difference in this. What image, if man is nothing more than an animal?" but I have already shown that that inference is false, because man *is* more than any animal of the field,—“In what likeness,” he continued, “is he made, because God is a spirit, and hath not flesh and blood as we have?” in other words, he argues that God has no shape, hence man was not made in His outward form. Well, no one believes that God has flesh and blood, because that term is really synonymous with mortality; but the fact that He is Spirit does not preclude the idea of form. The angels are spirit nature, but they are like men in appearance, and have more than once been mistaken for men. It is an extraordinary belief that God has no shape. And yet Jesus, they tell us, is God, and certainly *he* was seen and handled. And we read of him that he was in the “form of God” (Phil. ii. 6); that is the form of one who had no form! the express image of the person of one who had no appearance, of one whom Jesus said once to the Pharisees, “Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen *his shape*,”—most clearly implying that his Father had some shape. There are many who teach that God is a kind of gaseous all-pervading Spirit, instead of a personal being enthroned in heaven, sitting on the throne of the universe, and filling all space by that universal Spirit which the Scriptures teach radiates from His person. They tell you that there are three distinct beings, each God, and yet not three but one! One of these three is the Son of the other, and yet co-eternal with Him! and this one *has* form and substance, and has gone to dwell at the right hand of his Father, who has no right hand, no form, no shape, so that there are two without form, and one with form, and yet there are not three but one! Friends, you will have to split your heads over this matter to try to understand it, and then you will fail. The Trinity doctrine is absurd and false, and without foundation in the Bible. But man, we are told, was made in the image of God, or of the Elohim. The idea intended to be conveyed being, doubtless, the form, the words also implying the mental capacity for understanding God and His works, and the fact that man was a moral being, capable of exercising obedience and love towards his Creator. But what is the inference sought to be drawn from this expression? Why, we are told that it means he was made immortal! It is a queer way of proving it. Why select that one attribute of the Almighty alone for Adam to possess? God is immutable: Is man also? God is omnipotent: Is man also? God is omniscient: Is man also? God is incorruptible: Is man also? God is all-wise: Is man also? No! no! no! We see that he is not. We see that he is mutable, feeble, shortsighted, unwise, and corruptible,—the very opposite to God. So we see plainly the answer to the question, Is he immortal? God is, and Paul says *He alone is* (1 Tim. vi. 16). He can lift up His hand to heaven and say, “I live for ever,” but not man (Deut. xxxii. 39, 40). The cemeteries tell a different tale to theologians. You will prove it some day. The undertaker will

knock at your door, and the coffin will come, and sheol will open her mouth to receive you, and it will depend entirely upon your attitude towards Christ whether you will ever come out again to the resurrection of eternal life. Now, we find in the case of Adam that he was made in the image of Elohim *before* the breath of life was given, and that then he was placed on probation *for* immortality; with the threat of death if he sinned. The serpent came and said to Eve, "Ye shall *not* surely die." That is the only passage in the Bible which affirms that man does not die. It comes from a suspicious source, but it would have made a better text than the one selected by our friend as the basis of his sermon. You know the result. They transgressed. They were sentenced to return to the ground from whence they were taken, which is the divine definition of the word death, and Jehovah said (Gen. iii. 22), "Behold the man has become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, *lest* he put forth his hand, and take also of the *tree of life, and eat, and live for ever*, —Therefore, the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground *from whence he was taken*. So He drove out the man." Aye, and he placed cherubims to prevent Adam partaking of the tree of life. Took all these precautions to prevent Adam living for ever, because His purpose was not to perpetuate evil for ever, but to abolish it, and yet we are told by Mr. Evans and others that Adam was immortal all the while in the essential part of his nature, and could not be destroyed. I leave you to ponder over the inconsistency of this theory, and proceed to notice the argument of Mr. Evans upon the word Soul.

I am sure that in dealing with the use of the word soul, Mr. Evans has not examined the subject. I am astounded at the lack of perception manifested in this part of the discourse. Because the words, "my soul" and "your soul," and such expressions occur, we are asked to believe that it means a separate, independent, undying entity inside a man. There is not a shadow of proof that such is the case. You were led to believe by Mr. Evans that I had said that soul always meant life or living creature. I said nothing of the kind. I will tell you what I did say. That the "primary meaning—the *primary* meaning—of the word soul in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin is respiration, or life; or in a constructive sense, an animal, a living creature; *or in a more extended sense, it is employed to express any variety of aspects in which a living creature can be contemplated*, such as person, body, mind, disposition, heart, appetite, lust, etc." The word *nephesh*—translated *Soul*—occurs no less than 752 times in the Hebrew, and out of all that number there is not a whisper about immortality. Do you think any modern writer holding Plato's views could mention the soul 752 times without calling it immortal? I trow not. It may be a surprise to many present to learn that this one word, *nephesh*, in the Hebrew, is rendered by 45 different words in the English. Sometimes "person;" sometimes "body;" sometimes "beast;" sometimes "yourselves;" sometimes "himself," "me," "myself," "themselves," and many other words. Will you listen to what "Dr." Albert Barnes, the

well-known commentator, says? He was not a "heathen or an infidel" writer, but a Presbyterian "divine," a thorough believer in the immortality of the soul, and in everlasting torment in Hell, so I surely cannot do wrong in quoting him. Well, he says, "There is no clear instance in which this Hebrew word is applied to the soul in a (its) separate state, or disjoined from the body. It means properly breath; then life, or the vital principle, a living being." . . . "It is put for the individual himself, meaning me, or myself." This is the plain and truthful testimony of a great scholar, and no one with any pretence to scholarship will deny it. And this explanation will meet the case of all the passages quoted by Mr. Evans. To make an atonement for "their souls" was to make an atonement for themselves, and this was in most cases done by forfeiting the life or soul of an animal by pouring out its blood, acknowledging in the act that their own soul or life was forfeited by sin, and rejoicing that God accepted the life of the animal instead. We are told repeatedly that "the soul of all flesh is in the blood" (Lev. xvii. 10-15, Gen. ix. 4-5, &c.), the same word exactly being used, hence the Israelites were strictly commanded not to eat blood. "No soul of you shall eat blood," said Moses (Lev. xvii. 12). Fancy an immortal soul eating blood! And as the soul of all flesh—man and beast alike—is over and over again declared to be in the blood, for which reason they were commanded not to eat it, we might make the matter look more foolish still by asking you to imagine one immortal soul eating another! "No man can keep alive his own soul" (Ps. xxii. 29) is another of Mr. Evan's proof texts of immortality! Rather a strange one wasn't it? I should think some at least of his audience thought so. In plain English it means "No man can keep himself alive." However great a man's wealth, "none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him, that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption" (Ps. xlix. 7-9). Another proof text was Ps. xxxiii. 19—"To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine." Why, the "orthodox" soul don't die, but this speaks of delivering it from death, and you cannot say that it does not mean literal death, because it resulted from scarcity of food. You see his "proof texts" prove directly the opposite to that for which he contended, and show that the soul does die. Mr. Evans said "the Bible does not say that the soul dies!" I say it does. His own quotations prove it. But I could give you many that expressly say so. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." That is the person that sinneth. "Neither," said Moses, "shall ye go in to any dead *soul*" (Lev. xxi 11). "He shall come at no dead *soul*" (Num. vi. 6). "We are defiled by the dead *soul* of a man" (Num. ix. 7). You say it reads "body!" Yes, it does, but it is "soul" in the original, and seven times it is rendered "body." The translators believed in immortal souls, and they saw it would'nt fit just here. Samson said—prayed—"Let me die with the Philistines:" in the margin of your Bibles you will see it says, "Let *my soul* die with the Philistines." So also Balaam, "Let *my soul* die the death of the

righteous." Then we have Job saying—the man from whose words the text was chosen—at ch. vii. and the 15th verse, "*My soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life.*" What did he mean? Strangle an immortal soul! Why it is incredible! They are supposed to be immaterial—that is, made of nothing—untouchable: you can pass a sword through them and not hurt them. They escape through the ceiling when a man dies,—that is the sort of soul believed in now! You can't strangle that sort of soul. But Job didn't mean that sort. He meant a soul like Jehovah created from the dust—his own living person, and when he said "My soul," he simply meant—such was the intensity of his pain and the force of his grief—"I would rather be strangled than live like this: death is preferable to life."

Another of Mr. Evans's texts, Ps. xxxiv. 21, 22, "Evil shall slay the wicked; and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate. The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants." *He doesn't redeem the soul or life or person of the wicked, you see.* He slays them, puts them out of existence; but the opposite is the case with the righteous—another text, you perceive quite opposed to Mr. Evans. To "win souls" is to win persons, men or women, for God, and he that does that is truly wise. For Jesus to "pour out his soul unto death"—he couldn't do it, you know, if it could not die—was to sacrifice his life, because, as I have shown, "the life or soul of all flesh was in the blood." And for him to say, "my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," was to say "*I am exceeding sorrowful,*" etc. To "confirm the souls of the disciples" is the Bible way of saying that the apostles confirmed or strengthened them in faith. And to "save a soul from death" is to save a person from the consequences of sin, for "the wages of sin is *death,*" but it appears somewhat superfluous to talk about saving from death, something that cannot, by any possibility, die! Jesus told his disciples to "Take no thought for their *souls!*" You never hear preachers use such words. He said to them, on another occasion, "Whosoever will save his soul (or life) shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his soul for my sake, shall find it." It is an extraordinary passage, with "orthodox" ideas in view, the thought of losing your soul for Christ's sake! but, understanding the words to mean the person, or the life of the person, it is clear. The man who would, for fear of persecution, save his life, would hereafter, at the judgment seat, lose it, or himself become a castaway; but the disciple who lost his life in the service of Christ, for his sake, should find it again in that blessed and perfect life which it was in his power to bestow. And it would not profit a man in the least if he gained the whole world and lost his soul, or life, because in that case he would be unable to enjoy all that he had reaped together. A passage was quoted from Proverbs (xxiii. 14), which says, "Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell," with the following comment, "Put life for soul, and grave for hell, and see how it will read. Read it as God has put it here, and we can understand it."

Well, after the explanation I have given you of soul and hell, you will have no difficulty over the passage. The verse before says, "If thou beatest him with the rod he shall *not die*," and the other verse says the same thing in slightly different language. By proper correction, his life, or soul, or he, would be saved from those ways which would bring him to a premature grave. One hundred and twenty times the same word is rendered "life" and "lives." The Psalmist in the 49th Psalm, uses the very same words when he says at verse 15, "But God will redeem *my soul* from the power of the grave, *sheol*, hell." That is, would redeem *him* from death, for immortal souls don't go into the grave. It reads very well, "as God put it" there to use our friend's expression, and yet the words are the same as in the other passage. When we speak of so many souls being saved at sea, we have the same idea, that is, so many persons, or lives of persons delivered from a watery grave.

Now there is nothing that Mr. Evans quoted that affects these great foundation facts. David's melancholy remark that he should go to his child, but the child would not return to him, was a fact, and David went; for as Peter said, "he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. . . . For David is not ascended into the heavens" (Acts ii. 29-34).

The appeal made by Mr. Evans to the feelings of those who have had the misfortune to lose a friend or a child is beside the mark. "What consolation," he asks, "would there be in the thought that they were gone to the grave, and that you would be (do?) the same. It is mockery. But if we believe they are gone to heaven, there is comfort in that thought." Ah! there is no consolation in the thought of any going to the grave. God intended it as the punishment of sin, not as a source of consolation. He had no intention of comforting Adam when He said "Unto dust shalt thou return." It is best to recognise this fact. The Christadelphians are not inhuman. They love their friends and children as other people do. Aye, and some of them have stood at the open grave-side, and committed their loved ones to the dust, and the big tears of well-nigh uncontrollable sorrow have chased each other down their cheeks because their loss has been so keenly felt, and because they have recognised the reality of the divine decree, and know that death is a great and awful fact. Truth is sometimes bitter, but it is better to swallow it than to swallow a sugared lie.

The reply of Christ to the Sadducees that "God was not the God of the dead, but the living," is of no more effect. What are the facts? The Sadducees—who denied the doctrine of the resurrection—came to him as they thought, with a puzzling question. He answered it, and answered it well, and then turned the tables on them by saying, "Now that *the dead are raised*"—that was the proposition mind you—"even

Moses showed at the bush, when he said, I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." How did this prove a resurrection? Was it by saying *they were all alive and didn't need one*? No. How then? Why, because Jehovah called Himself their God, it proved that they were not finally dead, but that it was His purpose to raise them, for He "quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which *be not (but are to be) as though they were*" already in existence (Rom. iv. 17). In the same way God said to Abraham, "I *have* made thee a father of many nations when as yet he had no child." Mr. Evans might as well say he "mocked" Abraham, as that he did the Sadducees, it would be as much to the point. His argument silenced them, because it proved—not the continued existence—but the resurrection of the patriarchs for ages dead.

There is another argument employed sometimes against the truth which may as well be noticed here. Like some others, it is destructive of the very theory it is quoted to support. It is said that "God hath given to us eternal life" (1 John v. 11); and that Jesus said "He that believeth on me *hath* everlasting life" (John vi. 47); and other passages—and they are many—are quoted to prove that eternal life is a *present possession*. Now those who quote the passages use the words very often in the literal sense, implying not merely happiness, but *eternal existence*. That the latter—the idea of existence—is the correct one we do not doubt, carrying with it—embracing in it—the thought of happiness as well, for all who will attain the unspeakable privilege of a deathless nature will be filled with immeasurable joy. But this contention of our opponents cuts the ground from under their own feet, for do they not state that ALL MEN are *naturally* immortal or deathless, that they are born so, *that they cannot help living for ever, that it is thrust upon them whether they desire it or not*? While the class of passages I have referred to *limit it to a certain class*. The Bible limits it to the righteous *only*, to "him that believeth," while it is stated of another class—the wicked, the unbeliever, the rejecter of God's salvation—that "He that believeth not the Son *shall not see life*" (John iii. 36). Here is an important consideration, which introduces confusion in the orthodox belief, for while they quote some passages to prove that eternal life is a present possession, we find that it is "the gift of God" to a certain class, resulting from a condition of faith on the part of those of whom it is spoken, while they maintain that immortality, or eternal life is the possession of every man, woman, and child in the entire universe *to start with*, independently of faith, or righteousness, or any other qualification that can be named.

But is "eternal life" a present possession? Or is it prospective only, something to be conferred when Christ comes, after the judgment has taken place when Christ says, "Enter into the joy of thy Lord!" Is the life *in ourselves*, or is it at present, as Paul declares "*hid with Christ in God*?" (Col. iii. 3). There can be no doubt about the answer. It is not

a present possession. The very fact that the righteous *die* as well as other men disproves it. A man who *has* eternal life cannot die. He is "equal to the angels," and will "die no more." The very passages quoted in its favour—if the contexts were consulted—show the contrary. In the sixth chapter of John the everlasting life is connected with the resurrection. Four times we have the words, "I will raise him up (i.e., the believer) at the last day;" and the possession of the life is made conditional all through.

In the epistle (1 John v.) we read at verse 11, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and *this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life*: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not (shall not have) life." Yes, the life is in Christ. If we have him, by exercising faith in him and his word, we have the life in a prospective sense, and as Paul says (Col. iii. 4) "*When Christ, who is our life*, shall appear, THEN shall ye also appear with him in glory." It is quite a common thing in the Scriptures for a thing to be spoken of as done, or as in existence, which God intends to do, or bestow in the future. The passage already referred to (Rom. iv. 17) clearly proves this, and many others might be quoted to prove the same. (See Luke i. 51-55; John xvii. 22; Ezek. xxx. 21, 22; Isaiah xlv. 1, etc).

The answer of Christ to the dying thief is one that is generally raised in this controversy. Aye, that dying malefactor knew more about the gospel of the kingdom of God than *the preachers* of our day. And he asked Christ to remember him when *he came* into his kingdom. What did Jesus reply, "Verily I say unto thee to-day, Thou shalt be with me in paradise." Ah! but says Mr. Evans, "it will not do to alter the words." It is the stop, the comma, that we alter. Mr. Evans knows, surely, that there is nothing divine about the stops? The disciples never put them there. They were divided into verses, and the stops put in a later age. To put it after the word "to-day," brings it at once into harmony with the teaching of the Bible, and some of the old manuscripts actually have the comma there. Besides, the second chapter of Acts says, *the soul* of Jesus was not "left in hell," and hell is not synonymous with paradise in the theology of Mr. Evans. But when the kingdom of God comes, when paradise is restored, we may expect the promise of Christ to be fulfilled, and his repentant dying companion to re-appear.

There is one argument which I should like to notice, before I close, and that is, that there is a secondary meaning to the word death. The word death, says Mr. Evans, "does not always mean the same thing: we make a mistake, if we say it does." No, it means life eternal, with those who hold his views, so that life would have done equally as well as death. They are synonymous expressions. If we read "The soul that sinneth, it shall *die*," we are told that it is not true, for "The soul that sinneth shall live for ever in torment!" If we read that "The wages of

sin is death," we are told that the wages of sin is *not* death, but everlasting life in pain! Is not this a preposterous way of interpreting Scripture? And you cannot say, in these passages, that it means spiritual death, because it is the *wages of* spiritual death, otherwise called sin. No! the death is literal enough, it is the extinction of life. But Mr. Evans referred to some passages in proof. They were a most unfortunate selection. The first was the 5th chapter of John, the 24th and 25th verses, "Verily verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but, is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." "Who," asks Mr. Evans, "Who are the dead referred to there? Are they the dead that lie in their graves? Are they to live? No! they were those who were dead in trespasses and sins, dead to all divine things, and Christ said the hour was now come that they should live." What an extraordinary exposition! Not the dead in their graves, but the dead in trespasses and sins! And he (Christ) came to raise them from this death state? Yes! Will that fit in with Christ's words? No. It is about the most marvellous perversion of them I ever read. Christ goes on to say, in this very discourse, in the succeeding verses, that those who thus hear his voice, and come forth out of their graves, come forth—some to a "resurrection of life," and some "unto the resurrection of damnation" or condemnation, that is to the condemnation of the second death. That hardly agrees with the interpretation just read to you. Mr. Evans says they were not the dead who lay in their graves. Christ says they were. Mr. Evans says they hear his voice and live in the spiritual sense. Christ says they hear his voice (some of them) and come forth to the resurrection of damnation. We believe Christ; you must please yourselves whose teaching you accept. I need not refer to the other passages quoted under this head. They were but few, and are not difficult to understand. The primary meaning of the word death—i.e., the cessation or absence of life, the dissolution of the being in the grave—is the one which governs its use in most other places. If living men are dead in trespasses and sins, it does not mean, of course, that they are physically dead, but that there is an absence of all spiritual life, and the condition they are in will land them in that state of physical destruction which is the result of sin, and from which there is no redemption, except by the power of God exercised through Christ Jesus the Lord.

But I must conclude. I have long taxed your patience. I thank you for the marked attention given me. The passages on future punishment must be deferred to another time. His arguments on these passages are as hollow as those we have examined. He referred to the passage that the wicked will "go away into everlasting punishment." We believe it. This takes place when Christ comes to judgment—not at death. But what is everlasting punishment? Is it everlasting *punishing*? No. It

is something the opposite of everlasting life, or existence, which is at this time conferred upon the righteous. We read of "eternal judgment" (Heb. vi. 2), but it does not mean *eternal judging*. The judgment won't last for ever, *but its consequences will*. So the punishment will last for ever, but the punishment is death, eternal death; "everlasting *destruction*"—not preservation—"from the presence of the Lord." The wicked will be beaten with *few* or *many* stripes as they deserve, and then be "burnt up," "blotted out" of existence; "consumed as tares and stubble," "perish for ever," "be as though they had not been." Such are the Bible phrases applied to the wicked, and many others that mean their complete destruction. God will not keep them in perpetual torture. The thought is hideous. The conception is awful. The doctrine is hateful. Evil—moral and physical evil—is not to be eternal. "All things" are to be "made new." God will be "all in all." Instead of the poet's vision being the fact—instead of there being

"Regions of sorrow—doleful shades, where peace
 And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
 Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
 With ever-burning sulphur unconsum'd,"

the testimony of inspiration is that "there shall be no more curse" (Rev. xxii. 3), and that all sin and suffering shall be abolished. Instead of beings dwelling

"Forlorn in woe, in utter darkness far remote,
 Burning continually, yet unconsum'd,"

Instead of

"Groans that ended not, and sighs
 That always sighed, and tears that ever wept
 And ever fell, but not in mercy's sight,"

"there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things shall have passed away." These are the hopes inspired by the truths of the Bible. There shall be "new heavens and a new earth (political) wherein dwelleth righteousness" (Isa. lxv. 17-25; 2 Pet. iii. 13), to be a partaker in which you are earnestly and affectionately invited, but to obtain which you must reject those errors which on every hand abound, and give heed only to that word of the Lord which endureth for ever, through obedience to which you may obtain a name, and an inheritance, and a nature as imperishable as His who sits upon the throne of the universe, whose days are as the days of eternity; to whom be ascribed "blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, for ever and ever. Amen."

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THE DYING YEAR:

ITS LESSONS—

AN APPEAL TO THE THOUGHTFUL.

THE year 1893 has well nigh passed away. The sands of its life have nearly run out and shortly it will be numbered with the dead. Like all its predecessors its days have slipped away, and anon the church bells will ring out its last moments and usher in the New Year, which also, with the same rapidity, will pass away. It has joined the untold and unfathomable ages of the past, and in its hurried flight it has swept away into the land of forgetfulness thousands whose cheeks—at its birth—were rosy with health; whose limbs were active and strong, and whose hearts beat high with hope that they would see its close and many, many years to come besides, just as the hearts of thousands—and perhaps of some who are assembled here to night are filled with like anticipations at the present moment, who at the close of 1894 will be sleeping that silent sleep in the grave from which no voice but that which penetrated the cave in which Lazarus of Bethany was placed can ever awaken them, or disturb the calmness of their profound repose. It is a fact well calculated to awaken solemn and serious reflection that another year of our existence has passed away. Its record is made up, and there is no event that has happened, there is no work we have done that can be re-called, neither can we fill in now anything we have left undone that ought to have been accomplished. A year is a large portion of the time we have to live. If we stretch out the period of our life to the full eighty years when its strength becomes but labour and sorrow, one-eightieth part of it has again fled away. If we put the average of human life at forty years, which I think it does not nearly reach, then one-fortieth portion of it has once more disappeared. Taking that length of time as the average of human existence, then considerably more than half of the life of most who are present to-night has gone, and in many cases there is but little time left to obey the injunction of the wise man who penned the well-known and oft-quoted words—"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Eccles. ix. 10.) Thus, to use the expressive words of the Psalmist, "We spend our years as a tale that is told" (Ps. xc. 9), we soon get to the

end thereof. You take up a book of some four or five hundred pages, divided into fifty or sixty chapters, and you think, because of its length, it is almost folly on your part to attempt to read it, and you exclaim "Oh! I shall never get to the end of that book," but you begin it, and as you have opportunity you read a chapter of the story till the last—the conclusion—is reached, and the book is closed. Every year is a chapter—and a very large chapter too—in our lives. A life of fifty, sixty, or seventy years seems long to look forward to, seems a great way to the end of it, but the days swiftly pass, the years fly by like the chapters of a story, we spend them "as a tale that is told," and at last the conclusion comes, we reach the great full stop, the book is closed and put away. A child starts on a long journey of ninety or a hundred miles—what a while it appears to his mind before it will be ended! How tedious it sometimes becomes! But station after station is passed, mile after mile is travelled, minute and hour pass away one after another till the end of the journey is reached, and in like manner the journey of life is travelled too. We have reached another station now—how many more have we to pass before the journey comes to an end? Ah! we cannot tell, we cannot tell! But it is one nearer the close.

"The year rolls round and steals away
The breath that first it gave;
Whate'er we do, where'er we be,
We're travelling to the grave."

"We all do fade as a leaf" is a declaration of the prophet Isaiah true to the experience of all the generations of the sons of Adam. A few months ago and the trees whose branches are now bare and barren, or only covered with frost or snow, were covered with variously tinted leaves or profuse with rich and beautiful blossom, but the "sere and yellow" time shortly followed, and in a little while the wind scattered the foliage to wither and rot upon the ground, or to be trampled under the feet of the passers by. We have our spring time too, our summer also in which rich fruit ought to be borne, our autumn sere, when the strength fails and the wrinkles and the grey hairs gather, and anon the winter comes to us when we return to the dust and be "as though we had not been." Beautifully has England's national poet put the same sentiments into the mouth of Wolsey:—

"This is the state of man; to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him.
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,
And—when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a ripening—nips his root,
And then he falls."

Yes! then he falls—you have seen it often so, have you not? so have I. Man has no security in his wealth, or in his greatness, or in his wisdom. "Wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others" (Ps. xlix. 10.) How often have we quoted another passage from the same Psalm—the 49th. as the one in which that verse is found. "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means

redeem his brother (*i.e.* from death) nor give to God a ransom for him : that he should still live for ever and not see corruption." No! the rich and the poor are on exactly the same level in this respect. Their natures are alike. There is no immunity from death. Perpetual life is not to be purchased with money. All the gold in all the coffers of all the rich men in all the world cannot keep one man out of the grave. Neither can it give security for a day—not even for an hour. To those in the first century who talked of what they would do "to-day or to-morrow," independently of the Author of their being, how they would "go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain," the apostle James reprovably said "Ye know not what shall be on the morrow." "For what is your life?" he asks, "it is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (ch. iv. 13 — 15). "Your life is a vapour"—there is nothing very substantial about that. *Your* life is a vapour—do you realise it? You hear men spoken of sometimes as "men of substance"—because they have plenty of money and plenty of property, but do they not pass away the same as others? We saw one put in the tomb not long ago, who but a very little while before was talking about, and entering into, the arrangements for Christmas which came and went without his presence or knowledge! And how often does death come suddenly and cross the path of those we know and love? How often do we hear the expression used of those even who have been ailing a long time "He went off very sudden at last!" While of others who have been suddenly cut down in the prime of life and in the full vigour of their strength you hear the expression "Such a big, fine, healthy looking man, you might have taken a lease of his life." Ah! I heard a poor widow, standing at my door, say to another person not long ago, "He was only ill a week, and you might have took a lease of his life." You can't take a lease of any man's life. It's a vapour, it's a bubble, it's a sigh. Jehovah "blows upon him and he withers and the whirlwind takes him away as stubble" (Isa. xl. 24). With many it is thus. They are cut down in a moment. A sudden, an unforeseen accident!—a cold which rapidly developes into inflammation!—a deadly disease! And before any one scarcely knows of the illness, the blinds are pulled down, the shutters are put up, the undertaker is busy, and the mourners go about the streets, because man goeth to his long home, and the chapter of his life is closed. With others there is a gradual decay. The law of our nature is permitted to operate. Old age creeps on steadily but surely, sometimes apparently more rapid than others, and you will hear one person say to another who has perhaps not been seen for a length of time, "You are broke lately." Yes! it is the decay of nature, sometimes accelerated by poignant trouble, or worrying care, as you imagine from the reply "Ah! well I might be" from the person addressed who will begin to unfold a budget of trouble through which he or she—as the case may be—has had to pass through. Thus are the days of many "as a shadow that declineth"—it lengthens out longer and longer, until it disappears.

We have thought well to lay hold of the present opportunity to press home to the minds of all who are here to listen, the fleeting nature of

this present existence, not that we neglect it at other times, not that we think it any more important at the end of the year than in the middle, but that it brings us face to face with the fact that one more of our years has passed away, that its pages are filled up—either with good writing or bad, blotted and blurred with evil, or showing a steady improvement in a desire to imitate that divine copy set us by him whose life was untarnished by sin, whose character was altogether beyond reproach. We wish to enforce the lesson, and to learn it, which the writer of the 90th Psalm desired to learn “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” We wish you one and all to realize—like David—the ephemerality and vanity of this present mortal existence. In the 39th Psalm commencing at verse 4, this prayer of his is recorded, “Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is : that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou hast made my days as an hand-breadth ; and mine age is as nothing before thee : verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Surely every man walketh in a vain show : surely they are disquieted in vain : he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them. And now Lord, what wait I for ? my hope is in thee.” And if those to whom we speak to night cannot say the same, if they cannot look up to the God of Israel, and exclaim with David “My hope is in thee,” if they are not trusting in that God who abideth, whose days are eternal, who lifts up his hand to heaven and exclaims “I live for ever,” of whom the Psalmist exclaimed in another Psalm when contrasting his own nature with that of the Almighty “But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever ; and thy remembrance unto all generations ” (Psalm cii. 11, 12), if this is not the case, your lives are being spent in vain, and shortly—though you may even attain unto much worldly honour and dignity—you will abide not, for the pen of inspiration has declared of every one such “he is like the beasts that perish ” (Ps. xlix. 12, 20).

To a reflecting mind it appears almost unnecessary perhaps that we should enforce the truth of man's mortality, that we should remind you that days and months and years are rapidly flying away, that the grave lies a little away ahead waiting to receive its prey. We have such constant reminders of these facts, we cannot shut them out from our consciousness. Week by week we see the closed shutter, or hear the tolling bell, but it *is* necessary to bring these truths to remembrance. It is constantly done throughout the Scriptures which in this matter are a guide to us as in others. Mankind are so prone to forget them, and act as though they were not true, live as though the present life was lasting. Some eminent man has said that “All men think all men mortal but themselves,” and though this assertion may be too sweeping in its scope yet is it not a fact that large numbers of our fellow creatures live as though they had not to die? Do we not behold them clutching at shadows, and neglecting those things which are divine and therefore substantial and eternal? The same fact was observed years ago and commented upon. “Their inward thought is” says an ancient writer quoted previously, “that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwell-

ing places to all generations ; they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless—nevertheless man being in honour abideth not : he is like the beasts that perish. This their way is their folly : yet their posterity approve their sayings” and act precisely as did their fathers. “Like sheep they are laid in the grave ; death shall feed on them”—or be their shepherd ; “and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning ; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling. But,” says the Psalmist, “God will redeem my soul,” or redeem me, “from the power of the grave ; for he shall receive me.” This hope we shall have more to say about directly, we wish to ask you just now how are your lives being spent ? Are you living merely for the uncertain present ? Are your hearts set upon the things which are seen, which are temporal, unenduring, vanishing ? Are you trying to write your name upon the present order of things ?—you might as well write it upon the sand by the sea shore. Are you a shrewd man of the world, determined to make your mark, bent upon building up a fortune, one of that kind of men of whom others remark, “He knows what he’s about,” “You can’t catch him napping,” “He’s doing a good thing for himself,” “He’s got his eye-teeth cut ?” Well, now consider a moment. Let us say, however, that we do not deprecate perseverance and industry in business. Work is a necessity. If men will not work, their bread and butter will not drop out of the clouds, and their families will soon be ragged and shoeless. We have nothing to say against, but everything in favour of industry in business. What we would warn any one against, is living entirely for the present, a determination to build up a fortune regardless of higher considerations, a shutting out of every thought of things that will abide when this transitory life is done. Therefore consider a moment. Suppose you succeed beyond your utmost expectations. Your business, your wealth, your property increases amazingly,—will you live a century, a half-century, twenty years, five years to enjoy it ? Ah ! there’s the rub. There is no security. You are not sure of a day. Many people toil and hoard and retire and die, and others squander the wealth they so carefully gathered. Listen :—“The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully : and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits ? And he said, This will I do, I will pull down my barns, and build greater ; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul,” (or thy life as the word frequently means), “this night shall thy life be required of thee : then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided ? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.” If there are any of that class here to-night that parable is worth thinking about. The sin lay not in his possession of wealth, but in his utter selfishness, in his disregard of God and of those of his fellow-creatures whom he might assist by his wealth. He thought only of self, of his own ease and gratification. His wealth was laid up for self only. He was not rich towards God. Did not consecrate any portion of his abundance to the service of the giver of all good. Was a

mere sensual animal, and so having the things to enjoy was at one stroke deprived of the power to enjoy them, and the divine hand wrote him down a fool. "When a wicked man dieth, his expectation"—no matter what it is—"shall perish" (Prov. xi. 7.) "What is the hope of the godless"—this is a question asked by the patriarch Job—"though he get him gain, when God taketh away his soul (or life)? Will God hear his cry, when trouble cometh upon him?" (Job xxvii. 8, 9). And a similar question was asked by Jesus "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?" (Mark viii. 36, 37). The question answers itself—he gains nothing, he loses everything. The wealth is gathered but he loses all capacity to enjoy it, and he can give nothing in exchange for his life. We have already seen that man's life cannot be redeemed by money, hence the utter vanity of disquieting one's self in vain for that from which in a moment we may be forever cut off.

We think every one present will admit now, in the calm moments of this last Sunday of the year, with the fact so clearly brought to our notice that time swiftly flies, and with the assurances from scripture to that effect, that really our existence is a very short one, that though it reaches the period of "threescore years and ten" yet it is soon gone, and that which James the Apostle declared is perfectly correct that our "life is a vapour, which appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." Such truths are calculated to produce solemn reflections, and the solemnity of those reflections will be deepened and intensified when we realize the exact truth concerning our nature, and the literal meaning of such passages of scripture as those to which we have referred to-night. You are aware that, popularly, the passages we have quoted to-night and many more of a similiar nature which relate to the mortality of man and the ephemerality of his existence, are applied generally by the religious guides of the people, and by the people themselves, to one part of man only. Death is supposed to be a law of nature, which, so to speak, cuts a man in two, divides a material and an immaterial being, separates a mortal and an immortal being, rends asunder a destructible and an indestructible person; parts two natures that were mysteriously connected before death but that are by that law severed, one of which is consigned to the dust, the other of which escapes to the skies, or is unwillingly conducted somewhere else where it would very much prefer not to go. A distinction is made between the words "body" and "soul," which are frequently interchangeable terms in the scripture and where their meaning is not identical, the word "soul" never means an immortal entity, but either the "life" of man, or various aspects in which the man may be viewed. Natural immortality, the idea that there is a something connected with man, a spiritual entity within him, which indeed is declared to be the real man himself, is a belief not taught in the scriptures. It comes from a source that ought ever to be regarded with suspicion, that is from the heathen world. It was from among the pagans that this doctrine came. But divine truth is not discoverable by "the light of nature." We feel a great pity for Plato, Socrates and others who might be mentioned with them, because of the darkness of their surroundings, because of the

absence of that divine light which could alone have illuminated their minds with the "light of life." They were men of earnest mind who groped in the dark. The darkness around them they endeavoured to penetrate but failed. They tried to lift the veil of the future but could discern nothing but shadows. They reasoned and philosophized but remained in the dark. All they could do was to speculate. They could decide nothing. They could arrive at nothing certain. And their reasonings took this form. Man has wonderful mental endowments. He has the power of thought. He has marvellous intellectual capacity. Matter cannot think, therefore there must be a power, a thinking power, an immaterial personality residing within this mortal body with which resides the consciousness and which in fact is the real Ego, Soul, or Self. This soul they argued was not mortal and destructible like the body, but was severed from the latter in the hour and article of death, and took its departure at that solemn time to other spheres. As to where it went or what it did all was speculation. There were plenty of theories constructed, but you can perceive—each one of you—that apart from authoritative revelation, all this was guess work, without the slightest real foundation for their theories to be built upon. Some taught that the soul had a past existence as well as a future, that it passed from one body into another, this view was known by the name of the transmigration of souls—a belief held by some in our own day—and it was believed that the soul passed into animals as well as men and women, arriving ultimately at a state of perfection. Then there were beliefs in Elysian fields and Tartarian punishments which find a counterpart in what is taught about heaven and hell in the Churches and Chapels of Christendom, but these various views we repeat were mere speculations of unenlightened men of whom Paul declares in the 21st. verse of the 1st ch. of the first epistle to the Corinthians, "After that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Corinth was one of the polished cities of Greece where this human learning, this human philosophy was highly esteemed. With all their wisdom they fell short of the mark of the knowledge of the true God and the way of eternal life. We have said that we pity the men who groped in the dark desirous of light, but we cannot tell whether they would have preferred the real truth to their own philosophy if they had heard it. Those who lived after them in the days of the Apostles esteemed the preaching of the cross foolishness, and when in the polished city of Athens, the various sects of philosophers—curious to hear what they esteemed to be some new opinion of man—encountered Paul, they only mocked when he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection, no doubt esteeming the former to be a person concerning whom Paul held some fabulous notions, and the latter, the resurrection, to be quite an impossible event. In all probability they held precisely the same views as many now, that the body could not be restored when once it had mouldered away, and that the only hope of immortality was associated with the continued existence of that soul about which they speculated, but concerning the existence of which they had absolutely no proof what-

ever. It is this ancient Pagan view of the immortality of the soul which is the very foundation of the teaching of Christendom to-day. It was early incorporated into the Christian Church. Corrupt doctrines abounded in the early centuries. The desire on the part of early professors of the truth to propitiate the Pagans, to swell their own numbers, was the cause of much harm to the Christian cause, and ultimately gave rise to that great anti-christian system which at the present time arrogates to itself the title of "the only true Church," the headstone of which is the Pope, for whom is claimed absolute infallibility in all matters of doctrine, and whose decisions are credulously supposed by the members of that Church to be completely in harmony with divine truth, and in fact, themselves to be divine !

In the writings of these ancient pagans, and in the writings of modern professors of Christianity we find elaborate books written to teach or to defend the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, but is it not singular—I appeal now to your honesty, I appeal to your intelligence, at least I ask you to consider the matter—is it not singular that, supposing the belief were indeed based upon truth, there is no elaborate statement of this kind in the revelation from God, not even a dogmatic utterance to that effect, no assurance of the immortality of man's soul, not even a hint of the deathlessness of his nature, but instead a constant repetition of language conveying an altogether opposite view, assuring man of his nothingness, of his contemptibility, of his complete mortality and ultimate return to the dust. Over and over again we are reminded that there is no man who liveth that shall not see death, and we are assured that they are powerless to deliver their souls from the power of the grave (Ps. lxxxix. 48). The death state, too, we are constantly taught is one of entire unconsciousness, no man knows anything when dead—in the very "day of death his thoughts perish" (Ps. cxlvi. 4 ; Eccles. ix. 5). He falls asleep and his work is ended, the grave is his habitation and in Sheol there is no remembrance of God or of any one else or of anything, none there can give God thanks or undo the work of the few short years of their lives (Ps. vi. 5 ; Isa. xxxviii. 18, 19).

These truths we say when realized deepen and intensify the solemnity of the fact that our years are short and quickly flying, that what we have to do must be done quickly, for in a little time we shall be in the land of thick darkness from which none but the living Christ can bring us back. I want you to feel these truths, to vividly realize that

"Time is ever on the wing
Gliding unperceived away,
Mortals ! feel the truth I sing
Life is but a transient day."

Death is the full stop to our existence, cuts short all our activities, puts an end to all our plans as far as we are personally concerned in them, seals our eyes, quiets our pulse beat, stops our heart throb, and we moulder away and cease to be. It is not the passport to heaven but to the grave, and viewing the divine declarations in this manner life becomes more solemn and death in many cases more sad.

What would endless life be worth if for money it could be obtained? And when we speak of endless life we associate with it freedom from pain, freedom from sorrow, freedom from all those evils which underpresent circumstances surround us and tend to damp what joys we have, and otherwise blight our lives. What would such a life be worth? Why there is not a millionaire, there is not a person in the world who would not willingly give every farthing he possesses to obtain a life such as that to which we have just referred. Even Jay Gould, the American Millionaire, would freely have given his enormous wealth—his twenty millions—to have purchased a life as desirable as this. "All that a man hath will he gave for his life"—even for the preservation of the poor life he now possesses, how much more willingly would he part with all things for a life that would never pass away? Well, we have seen that life cannot be purchased in this manner. It would be confined to a very few if it could. But we are here to-night to tell you that endless, glorious, incorruptible life can be obtained "without money and without price," that there is no obstacle placed in the way of any one here that would hinder them obtaining it, that it is open to all to freely partake of, that in the Scriptures is a great big hearty "Whosoever," and that means you and I—"Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely,"—aye freely. All are welcome—come. Friends, life and incorruptibility has been brought to light by Jesus. Oh! it means literal life—of that there ought to be no doubt in the mind of any impartial person, after an examination of the evidence. It is the fiction entertained concerning man's nature that blinds the eyes of our contemporaries to a perception of this great truth. When we realize that death is a reality, then we can see the beauty and the adaptability to our circumstances of the salvation of God. *Life*—that is what he offers us—who wants it? Who desires to live for ever? What man is there among you who desireth life and would see good days? You can have it, you can see them, even for ever and ever—on God's conditions. Paul wrote to a certain class of people in the city of Colosse a letter in which he said "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. iii. 3, 4). Our life. In what sense is Christ our life? Let us look at another passage. In Deut. xxx. at verses 15, 19 and 20, we have these words, "See I have set before thee this day *life* and good, and *death* and evil..... I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you *life* and *death*, blessing and cursing: therefore choose *life*, that both thou and thy seed may *live*: that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: *for he is thy life, and the length of thy days.*" You have, we think, no difficulty in understanding that address to the Israelites. Life or death, blessing or cursing—those were the alternatives set before them as the result of obedience or disobedience. Literal life, literal death, and if they obeyed God, if they cleaved unto him and were faithful to his commandments, he was their life—the source of their life, and the length of their days, in like manner Christ is our life, the instrumentality by which endless life will be conferred upon those who are

faithful to his laws and who obey his commandments. This life is not manifested at present, it is hid with Christ in God. Now is the time for the development of the persons upon whom it is to be conferred. Those who hear and believe the gospel, those who obey its precepts and live in accordance with the will of Christ, they are the class to whom reference is made by the Apostle, whose lives are hid with Christ. They may die now, they may pass away and be forgotten, but their life is, nevertheless secure, when he who is their life shall appear, he will raise them from the dead, and they also shall appear with him in glory.

Let us look at another passage contained in the 32nd chapter of Deuteronomy. In the 40th verse Jehovah makes this declaration, "I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever." You do not, you cannot misunderstand that sentence. God's existence is eternal. He changes not: his years have no end. "From everlasting to everlasting" he is the same immutable being. It is a special attribute of his. He only possesses underived immortality. Man cannot truly utter such language. He claims to be able to do so but it is a claim, as we have seen, based upon philosophic speculation, it is a power or attribute belonging only to God. "I live for ever." Well, seeing the plain significance of the words, turn with me to a passage in the 6th chapter of John, and let us read together from verse 47, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, *he shall live for ever*: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Jehovah says, "I live for ever," meaning that his days end not, Jesus says, "If any man eat of this bread *he shall live for ever*," is that any more difficult to understand? It stamps Christ as the life-giver. It proves that we do not naturally possess immortality, we do not live for ever apart from Jesus. If our existence is to be perpetuated it must be by and through him, but we must partake of the living bread. We must be enlightened by the Spirit words of Deity, we must eat of the manna that came down from heaven and was manifested in Jesus. There is further proof that this life is to be understood literally in the passage quoted, and in other parts of the chapter. The Israelites partook of manna in the wilderness, and, Jesus said of them, "are dead," dead. That was a literal death. They passed away, their carcasses fell in the wilderness, but he said if any man eat of this bread he shall not die, his life shall be perpetuated for ever, for believing upon him, he has—in him—everlasting life. This life is associated in other parts of this chapter, in four places, with resurrection from the dead. That is the actual time when it will be conferred. "This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi., 39, 40).

The life Christ confers is connected with an age of blessedness and glory to be inaugurated at his coming. To this his brethren, the saints, those who hear his voice and follow him, are introduced by a resurrection from the dead and a change of nature into his incorruptible likeness. They will be transformed into his image, they will be made deathless like him, and will be associated with him in the rulership of that glorious, world-wide dominion he comes to establish, known in the scripture as "the kingdom of God." But it is only a comparative few who will be permitted to attain unto the glory and honour and endless life associated with this coming age. Do not mistake this. It is not all who will attain unto it. We will give you one proof passage out of many. It is in the answer of Christ to certain Sadducees who came to him with a question concerning the resurrection which they thought would puzzle him, and in his answer to them he said—quoting now from the 20th chapter of Luke, verses 34—36, "The children of this world—or age—marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." They can't die any more—what a privilege, what glory, what inconceivable honour! "Equal to the angels" in nature, in dignity, in power, oh! what a position of grandeur to be raised unto! But it is to those only who "shall be accounted worthy to obtain that age," and Christ is the judge of worthiness, and the test will be our repentance, our knowledge, our faith, our obedience, and the love and zeal we manifest now. It is a limited honour you must plainly perceive. And that fact will lead you to recognize the motives that actuated Paul who wrote to the Philippians that he was "Striving if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection from the dead" (Phil. iii, 11.) We may remind you, too, of the hope of the Psalmist previously referred to, that God would "redeem his soul from the power of the grave," in contrast to those others of whom he wrote who were laid in the grave like sheep, and whose shepherd would be death for ever, and whose beauty would consume away in the depths of Sheol (Ps. xlix. 14).

And now, friends, what about your position in regard to this blessed, and much to be desired, and unending life. We proclaim it unto you to-night. When the high priest and the Sadducees imprisoned some of the Apostles, and the angel of the Lord released them during the night, the command was given them "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people *all the words of this life*" (Acts v. 17—20). What a message for them to bear, what a message for us to bring to you to-night! An invitation to you to "count yourselves worthy of eternal life"! Oh! there is every right consideration to influence you to listen to the invitation. What love has been manifested towards us as a race by God and his Son. Remember the cross of Jesus. Remember that he said "The bread that I will give is *my flesh*, which I will give for the life of the world." Remember how he was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Remember how his face was marred more than any man's and his form

more than the sons of men. Think of Gethsemane, of the traitor's kiss, of the rabble throng, of the mock trial, of the indignities heaped upon him by soldiers, and civilians, and scribes, and priests. Remember the scourging, and the robe, and the reed sceptre, and the spitting, and the mock worship, and the crown of thorns ! Behold him agonizing upon the cross, thirsting, groaning, dying that you might live. Will you spurn such love ? Will you ungratefully reject his mercy ? Will you continue in sin, will you not repent of your transgressions, will you reject the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth it, or shall swift winged messengers of love convey to the inhabitants of heaven the blessed intelligence that to-night there are hearts yearning for union with God, that in the presence of the angels there may be exceeding joy ? Forget not the lessons we have endeavoured to teach. Life is slowly ebbing away. You may be active and buoyant now, but it is sadly true what we sung a little while ago—

" Youth's smooth unwrinkled brow
Age soon shall furrow, and the tear
Down the fair cheek shall flow."

We live in a world of sorrow and change. All things are passing away. There is none abiding. We shall go with the stream. We shall fade like the leaves, wither like the grass, droop like the flowers, yet there is that changes not. Jehovah abides. Jehovah's word abides. Blessed are they who put their trust in him. If you would abide too you must make yourselves acquainted with that life-giving word and fly to the refuge provided in Christ from the great destroyer, for thus only is it possible to become a partaker of the divine nature and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. vi. 8.)

Let me remind you, too, that we are nearing that great event of the ages—the coming of Christ. We are one year nearer the appearance of earth's great King and deliverer, the Son of David, the Son of God. One year nearer the kingdom of God, one year nearer the judgment seat of Christ when all his servants must appear before him to receive according to their works. Who among you will prepare for that great and solemn event ? Who will be ready to meet and to welcome him ? His coming may not be delayed much longer. He may shortly be here. The coming year may witness his appearance—who will be ready ? Oh ! some will be glad to welcome him and to be relieved of every care, and freed from all weakness and sorrow and pain. Well, be encouraged. Let all such toil on, and wait and watch. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. The morning will soon break, the shadows soon fly away. That is a message of comfort and hope to the friends of Jesus. It shall be my closing word to you to night, and may we soon realize its truthfulness.

" Over the mists of the wintry sea,
A message of gladness is sent to me,
And I pass it on to my friends to-night.
This message is written in words of light :
' Though dense is the darkness in which we stand,
The night is far spent, the day is at hand.' "

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A PART from the predictions and records of the Bible, the history of the Jews for the past eighteen centuries, and their present position among the nations of the earth is profoundly mysterious. With those records and predictions, and with the acknowledgement of their divine origin the mystery vanishes, because we perceive that whatever has happened them was foreseen by divine omniscience and foretold—through holy men of old—by the Spirit of the all-wise God. Their position and history—with this knowledge—still remains marvellous and wonderful. “Under the whole heaven hath not been done” to any nation that which has been accomplished to the people of Israel. We look abroad and we find the Jews everywhere. Where is the land that has been untrodden by the foot of the Jew? We believe it would be impossible to name it. They have been discovered in almost inaccessible regions where it was thought the footsteps of civilized beings were utterly unknown. North, South, East and West, in every climate, among all people—savage and civilized alike—in busy centres of industry where the force of natural talent and industry brings them ever to the front, and in the outskirts of society, in far off regions, in the outer circle of the world, so to speak, can be found the Jew. They have wandered everywhere and still wander. Lord Byron’s brief and emphatic description of the Jews is alike characteristic of the fact, and illustrative of the ancient predictions:—

“ Tribes of the *wandering foot and weary breast,*
When shall we flee away and be at rest.”

“The Lord shall scatter thee” (said Moses) “among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other” (Deut. xxviii. 64). So it has come to pass. They are citizens of the world without a country. Neither mountains, nor rivers, nor deserts, nor oceans, which form the natural boundaries of other nations have terminated their wanderings. “They abound” says Dr. Keith, “in Poland, in Holland, in Russia, and Turkey. In Germany, Spain, Italy, France and Britain they are more thinly scattered. In Persia, China, and India, on the east and on

the west of the Ganges, they are few in number among the heathen. They have trod the snows of Siberia, and the sands of the burning desert, and the European traveller hears of their existence in regions which he cannot reach, even in the very interior of Africa, south of Timbuctoo. From Moscow to Lisbon, from Japan to Britain, from Borneo to Archangel, from Hindostan to Honduras, no inhabitant of any nation upon the earth would be known in all the intervening regions but a Jew alone." But though scattered thus everywhere they survive a distinct people. They cannot be suppressed, they cannot be destroyed, they cannot be blotted out of the universe, they cannot lose their individuality, they cannot lose their national characteristics, for there is a purpose for them to fulfil decreed by heaven that necessitates their permanent existence, and the infallible voice of the Most High God has given utterance to the words "Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee" (Jer. xxx. 2; Amos ix. 8). The effort has been made repeatedly by the various nations of the earth to falsify this divine utterance, but it has signally failed, as it ever will. And yet, through what seas of blood have they passed! How—through all the centuries since they were driven from their land—have the peoples of the earth striven to exterminate them from under heaven, and torment them with a thousand plagues! What a thrillingly interesting history is theirs! Driven from land to land, expelled from city to city, persecuted, fined, imprisoned, slaughtered by thousands; their goods confiscated, their homes broken up wherever they have settled; edict after edict passed against them, forced time after time to become homeless wanderers upon the earth amongst bitter foes, truly their plagues have been wonderful and of long continuance; they have found no rest for the soles of their feet; they have indeed been "an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations whither Jehovah has led them," and abundantly has the prediction—contained in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, 65th to the 68th verses—uttered by Moses the man of God, upwards of three thousand years ago, been fulfilled—"And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life. In the morning thou shalt say, would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see."

Not one word of this ancient prediction—and the whole chapter is a very long one—has been unfulfilled. The sorrows and the sufferings of this nation have never been surpassed, there has been nothing to equal them in the history of the world. "Scattered and peeled, despised and down trodden; the objects of quenchless hate and ruthless cruelty—such has been their condition, more or less, ever since the armies of Titus led them forth as slaves from their own land, sent them as such to work the mines in Egypt; to Syria to be exposed for shows, or gave them to the wild beasts to be devoured." All nations, too, have been guilty

in this work of hatred and villany. Protestants, and Catholics, and Pagans have alike conspired against them, and reddened their hands in their blood. "In lands designated Christian"—but where the love of Christ has not been felt or known—"no less than in Pagan realms, derision, oppression, spoliation, and persecution have hunted the exiles of Judah fiercely as the bloodhound tracks his prey. Their property has rarely been held sacred, or their persons inviolate: unsparing confiscations have a thousand times stripped them of their possessions, and inexorable banishments driven them from shore to shore;—alike the victims of the rapacious tyrant and the infuriate rabble, they have been alternately ground down by political cupidity and trampled in the dust by the frenzy of popular fanaticism. To murder them has scarcely been reputed a crime, and to torment them has been regarded as a meritorious service."* In Rome, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, Austria, Russia, Persia, Babylon, Egypt, yea, all lands, the inhabitants have been "equally infamous for Jewish suffering, and stained with Jewish blood." In France, multitudes of them were burnt, others were banished, and others had their goods confiscated by order of King Philip,—in the 10th century,—and such as offered to sell their effects, and remove, could get none to buy them—a similar experience to which they are passing through in Russia at the present time. In Persia—history tells us—the Tartars murdered them in multitudes. In France again, at a later period—the year 1253—they were banished. Twenty-two years after they were recalled; but in twenty-five years the King again banished them that he might enrich himself with their wealth. In twelve years after they obtained re-admission for a great sum of money, but in a very brief period afterwards, the Crusades of the fanatic shepherds who wasted the south of France, terribly massacred them wherever they were found; and besides this, fifteen thousand were murdered on another occasion, and in the year 1358 they were finally banished from France, since which time to the commencement of the present century, but few entered that country. In Naples—Pope John the XXII, pretending that they had affronted the "holy cross," ordered their banishment from his territories; but recalled the edict for the sake of 100,000 florins, and the Popes of the past would do anything for gold. About the year 1492, from six to eight hundred thousand Jews were banished from Spain. Partly by drowning in their passage to Africa, and partly by the hard usage they received the greater part of these were cut off, and many of their carcasses lay in the fields till the wild beasts devoured them. The African Mahometans shut their gates against the remnant of them, and many were obliged to sell their children to the Moors for slaves to obtain food for the support of their lives. In Spain and Portugal thousands of them, it is said, became Papists in appearance, and even monks and bishops, in order to escape persecution, and yet continued faithful to their own religion, and educated their children in it from age to age. Have they been treated any better in our own land? Alas! No. The same bitter persecution has been meted out to

them here. "History testifies that the criminality of England is dark indeed. During the period of the Crusades, indiscriminate havoc was made of the devoted people." Richard—the King—had scarce gone off to the so-called "sacred war," when the populace rose and murdered multitudes of them, intending not to leave one alive in the country. About fifteen hundred of them, including women and children, got into the city of York, and thought to defend themselves in it. They were hemmed in on every side and furiously besieged. They offered to ransom their lives with money, but this was refused, and no quarter allowed them, when as Stowell says—"goaded on to madness, and in the frenzy of their despair, they became their own mutual murderers," first killing their wives and children—rather than surrender them to the brutality of a maddened mob,—and then retiring to the palace and burning it on themselves. "On another occasion" says this same writer, "a British monarch—libeller of the name—ordered seven hundred Jews to be butchered, their dwellings to be pillaged, and their synagogue to be consumed. Another English King, disgracing the sceptre which he swayed, first plundered the Jews resident in this country of all their property, and then drove them forth into desolate banishment—fifteen thousand pennyless, homeless, hopeless wanderers. Centuries" he adds, "passed away before the footsteps of this outraged race again marked our desecrated shores." In the year 1291, King Edward "for ever expelled them from England, to the number of one hundred and sixty thousand. He permitted them to carry their effects and money with them over to France, where, in his own dominions, he confiscated all to his own use, so that most of them died for want."

These are only a very few incidents* which illustrate what this scattered nation has had to endure since the destruction of Jerusalem, when her streets ran with Jewish blood, and 1,100,000 of her doomed people perished. Truly the curses of their divine law have followed swift upon their disobedience! Truly their exclamation—as they clamoured for the death of their rejected King—"His blood be upon us and upon our children"—"Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"—has had an awful and unexpected realization. Terrible has been the retribution meted out to them. There was a time when Hadrian crucified daily five hundred Jews! and their great historian tells us that Titus crucified so many that it was equally difficult to find wood for crosses, and places in which the crosses might be fixed.

The Jews as a race, however, possess marvellous vitality, and a power to right themselves truly surprising. Put them on an equal footing with any other race of men, and they will without doubt surpass them in almost, if not every, pursuit of life. In art, in literature, in statesmanship, in finance, in all commercial pursuits, aye, and in longevity, there is none to surpass them among men. Much of this is doubtless owing to their training, their thriftiness, their industry, and their attention—as regards the latter feature at least, (for it is a fact that they live longer than other people, a quotation in the *Manchester Evening News* stating

* Mainly taken from *Brown's Dictionary*.

not long ago that "they increase faster than Christians, and of every 100,000 persons only 89 Jews die to 143 Christians")—to those habits of cleanliness and purity inculcated by their divine law. Even with all the disadvantages they have had to contend with, and the many legal disabilities which from time to time, even to the present moment, have been enforced against them, they come to the front, they rise to eminence, they become the leaders of thought in the nations of Europe, for the press is largely in their hands, and they hold the purse strings of the civilized governments of the earth. "They pass (as one writer declared some time ago) from country and country to become practically masters wherever they go. They get the land in Germany and Hungary, and grow rich in Russia; they are the great bankers in London and Paris and the centres of European commerce. In ten (recent) years the Rothschild's furnished £100,000,000 in loans to England, Austria, Prussia, France, Russia, and Brazil." No vast undertaking involving the expenditure of great sums of money can be undertaken by some governments without consultation with the Jew princes of finance. Some time ago, in a debate in the Pennsylvania Senate at Harrisburg, one member, disagreeing with the action of the Democratic party on a certain question asserted that it was "as disreputable as a Jew's trade." Another member of the Senate, not himself a Jew, made the following impromptu and eloquent remarks:—

"The Jewish people require no defence at my hands. Their history has been written and is being written in the enterprises of the world. From the early dawn of civilization, they have been in the van. In literature and art and science they occupy no second place. In finance they lead the world. In benevolence and charity they put to shame those who attack them. Though a people without a nation or a country of their own, their statesmanship has served and made great nations under their leadership. Who will estimate what England to-day owes to her Jewish statesmen. No one can truthfully charge disloyalty or cowardice upon this people. Their blood and their treasure are dedicated to the nation that protects them. Withdraw Jewish brain, enterprise, and capital from this country and how would you set back the hands on the dial of our financial progress. The panic of 1877 would be no comparison to the consequences we would suffer. If industry be a subject of scorn, if frugality be a matter for obloquy, if sobriety be worthy of contempt, if enterprise be a matter for derision, continue in what, in mild terms, I call cowardly, ignominious abuse, your ignorant and bigoted attacks. Your poor-houses hold none of these people, and you scorn them. They are not in your jails and penitentiaries, and you taunt them with being dishonest. You have never been asked to drop a penny in charity in their palms, and you deride them.

They may thank heaven that you do not disgrace them. They need no defence. You and your colleagues have sinned against a noble people. You have again shown your know-nothing character. Acknowledge your fault in shame. Cease to do evil; learn to do good by simulating their characteristics; and never again let us blush to hear a representative of this great commonwealth stand in this place

and utter words so unbecoming an American citizen."—*Jewish Paper*.

It is the remarkable success of this people from a business standpoint—the manner in which they secure the best positions in various trade pursuits, their shrewdness, their sagacity, their indomitable perseverance, their unconquerable spirit, together with their undoubted capacity to outwit their neighbours—it is these very features which often produce the hatred and fear manifested towards them by the Continental nations in recent times. The same cause operated against them in Egypt centuries ago (Exod. i. 7). Give the Jew fair play,—aye, and it would seem even if disabilities are imposed upon him—and he will prosper and come to the front. The race seems superior to every other. They excel in whatever they put their hands to. The liberal press of Germany is mostly in their hands. And in Germany they have been so successful in statesmanship, in literature, and in commerce, that of late years even there they have begotten fear and jealousy among their fellow Christian subjects, and it is not so long since that we saw how that fear was turned to hatred, of which persecution was born. The prizes of this life fall one after another into their hands. The agricultural and trading classes get deeply into their debt, and as a consequence cherish a deep dislike to their creditors.

It may be—we cannot tell—that the Jews have oppressed their creditors. We know they love gold, and be it understood we do not defend the moral or spiritual character of this people—their avarice and cunning is proverbial—but in their success lies the human cause of their persecutions, though, of course, their industry and perseverance and prosperity by no means deserves such a reward, and does not in the slightest degree justify their persecutors. But here is the secret as is well known. This was frankly avowed by a German in high office when there was a bitter cry against them in Germany a few years back. The question was put to him—according to a correspondent in the *Jewish Chronicle*:—"Why are you getting up this Anti-Semitic movement, this persecution of the Jews all over Germany"? The reply was this:—"These Jews if they undertake anything—look how they prosper; if they go into commerce, they are sure to be at the head of the establishment; if they become bankers, they are the first bankers in all the places of Europe; if they are literary men, their power of application is so great that they beat all of us; and that is a state of things we will not tolerate." At a crowded "Christian" meeting held in Berlin some time ago, one gentleman who spoke said,—and his speech was enthusiastically applauded:—"The Jews intrude into our universities, hospitals, and courts of law; we shall be obliged to confess with pain that we are approaching an age of Jewish-German hybrid culture, and the German Christian will one day exclaim with a sigh: 'Make my will before a Jew, a Jew instructs my children, a Jew is family doctor, a Jew exercises the right of patronage over my church.' Viewing this state of things, we Christians must feel deep shame; it is the fault of ourselves. We have not declined because the Jews have risen, but the Jews have risen because we have declined. They take

advantage of the rotting condition of nations growing old to invade all domains." A Roumanian paper calls them "leeches," and adds, "if we do not erect iron walls against the Jews—these sly, cowardly, and lying people—they will absorb in a short time the little fortune that is still left to us." It is the same in the Empire of the Czar. Notwithstanding the fact that they have, in the past, laboured under many and galling disabilities, have been deprived of equal rights of citizenship, and confined by law to certain specified districts, they have prospered exceedingly, and have proved themselves considerably more than a match in business affairs for the natives of the country. A distinguished Russian journalist has said that "liberty for the Jews means the subjection of the Russian people," which is a wonderful testimony to the superior industry, enterprise, or intelligence of the Hebrew community, for there are perhaps not more than five millions of Jews in Russia, and it is hard to conceive how, except by the exercise of these qualities, they can acquire ascendancy over the vast mass of the citizens of the Empire. Thus in every land the Jews come to the top. Just as Joseph in Egypt, Daniel and his three friends in Babylon, and Mordecai and Nehemiah in Persia rose to positions of influence and power, so in these latter days we find them occupying similarly important positions. Wherever we turn, the Jew appears, shaping, moulding, and influencing the world's progress, and, as the *Saturday Review* said some time ago "the phenomenon is one of the strangest in all history: the more it is thought of, the more its thorough strangeness come out."

Here then before our eyes are this wonderful people. Whence came they? How far back does their history extend? What is their destiny? Who can tell? Well, it can be told—it has been told; told too by the pen of Inspiration, hundreds, yea, thousands of years ago, when the present nations of Europe were unborn, and their ancestors were in a state of barbarism pure and simple, from which the grosser forms only are stripped off even now. With their past history we have little to do to-night. We will briefly allude to it and summarise it for the sake of connecting the future with what has gone before. To get to the commencement of their history we must go back some four thousand years, and we find a solitary individual, named Abram, a dweller in Ur of the Chaldees, chosen of God as the basis of that great salvation which is ultimately, to include and bless every family of the earth. This man was ordered by God to depart from his friends, kindred, and surroundings into a land that Jehovah would show him. He developed characteristics of great faithfulness. He went forth not knowing at first whither he went. God directed him, and led him into Canaan, promised to give him personally the whole land as a possession, promised that in him and his seed all nations should be blessed; and, speaking of the nation that should come forth from his loins, said that they should be strangers in a land not their own, where they should be cruelly treated, but eventually come forth from it with "great substance" (Gen. xii. 1-5; xiii. 14-18; xv. 1-18). Well, after a long period of time, during which the faith of Abraham was severely tested, not until he was an old man, a son was born to him by Sarah his wife, to Isaac was born Esau

and Jacob, and to the latter, who was selected to inherit the promises, was born the twelve patriarchs,—the fathers of the Jewish nation, the heads of the tribes of Israel. In course of time these—through a terrible famine existing in the land—went down into Egypt, whither Joseph, in the providence of God, had been sent before “to keep them alive.” They, and their families, and their cattle, were allotted a certain portion of territory—the country of Goschen—where they dwelt for a time—under the fostering care of Joseph, who was practically the ruler of Egypt—in great prosperity, multiplying exceedingly. At length Joseph died, and another dynasty came into existence, and alarm began to be experienced at the rapid growth of the Israelitish nation. Measures of repression were adopted, cruelties were enforced, but yet they multiplied still. God was not sleeping all this while. The specified time for the fulfilment of the promise drew near, Moses was born, providentially preserved from death, trained up in the household of the King, prepared as a statesman for the great work God intended him to do, and eventually invested with authority to demand the freedom of Israel, and clothed with divine power to follow up the demand by bringing upon the Egyptians those marvellous plagues which at last forced them to let, and even desire the Israelites to depart from their midst. Then came those hitherto unknown manifestations of divine power at Sinai in connection with the giving of the law, which law was to govern their private and national life in Canaan, possession of which was predicated only upon obedience to the same. Under Joshua they were led into Canaan and dispossessed the wicked inhabitants, being established in their place. There, they were under the rule of successive judges who were raised up to deliver them from oppressive foes who were permitted to oppress because of their repeated idolatry and sins. At last they desired a king, which was granted. Saul reigned. Then David, with whom God entered into covenant relationship to give a Son who should sit upon his throne and reign over the house of Jacob for ever. After his and Solomon’s reign—in the time of Rehoboam, the kingdom was divided, two tribes—Judah and Benjamin—remained faithful to the dynasty of David, while the ten other tribes formed a separate kingdom of their own. It was ever a wicked dominion, subject to many vicissitudes, and at last, in the reign of Hoshea, the last king of the ten tribes, the land was invaded by Shalmaneser the king of Assyria, who put an end to the dominion, carried the Israelites away captive, and transplanted other nations in their land. This kingdom was never restored, and let me also ask you to remember the fact that the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel were never united after the first division took place. The kingdom of Judah existed for some time after this, but at length,—the cup of their iniquity being full to the brim, the prophet Ezekiel, commissioned by God, uttered the prediction to be found in the 21st chapter of his prophecies, against Zedekiah, the last king who sat upon the throne of David, which reads thus, commencing at verse 25, “And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God : Remove the diadem, and take off the crown : this shall not be the same : exalt him that is low,

and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it : and it shall be no more, *until he come whose right it is : and I will give it him.*" Here was a most clear and distinct declaration that the ruling power should cease, the crown be removed, and the kingdom completely overturned ; but blended with that threat was a promise that it should not remain in that condition perpetually, but should cease to exist only for a time, that time bounded by an until ; "until he shall come whose right it is," one with a previous character of *lowliness*, and said Jehovah "I will give it him," that is, the diadem, the crown, and the kingdom which was to be overturned. Well the overturning process took place. Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian king, was the instrument. Zedekiah was captured, his eyes put out, and himself carried captive to Babylon. Jerusalem, its temple, its palaces and all its magnificence was destroyed. The people who escaped the sword were carried captive to Babylon, beside whose rivers they sat down and wept when they remembered Zion. The captivity lasted seventy years. Under the Persians they were restored. To Persia they were subject, after them to Greece, after them to Rome. Awful persecution and dreadful wars, and terrible struggles for existence filled up the interval to the coming of Christ, the lowly one to whom the throne of David is covenanted ; Him the nation rejected ; they said, "we will not have this man to reign over us." "He came to his own land (or his "own things" Rev. Ver.) but his own people received him not" (John i. 2). They said "this is the heir, come let us kill him," and they cast him out of the vineyard (Matt. xxi. 38, 39). He was delivered up to the Roman power, was crucified and slain with wicked hands, and hung upon the cross the rejected of the Jews, with the superscription over his head describing his real title and claim—"Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." In crucifying him the nation fulfilled the prior determination of God to make Jesus perfect through suffering, to put away sin, to bring life and immortality to light, and to lay the foundation of the redemption of mankind from sin and death. This fact however did not exculpate the Jews. *Their* sin remained and as a consequence—according to the prediction of Jesus—God sent forth His armies—employing those of Rome for this purpose—who destroyed their temple and city once more, and entirely subverted the Jewish state, since which time they have been—as we have said—scattered amongst all the nations of the world, homeless wanderers upon the earth, while "Jerusalem has been trodden down of the Gentiles," which was its predicted fate "until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke xxi. 24).

Is there, we now ask, any future national existence for the Israelitish race? Are they being preserved distinct from all the other nations of the earth for any wonderful purpose in the future? Is it Providence that keeps the atoms of Israel from mixing up with other human elements in the earth? Is there a divine hand which isolates them and preserves them in that isolated condition? *Can* their whole past history be considered a purely natural affair? Why is it that they, like a swiftly flowing river, preserve an uncontaminated course through the oceans of people all over the globe? Oh! it is because there is a

divine scheme laid out by which they will re-occupy their land, become the mightiest nation upon the face of the earth under their once rejected Messiah, under whose sway every sceptre will be subdued, and every nation of the earth become subservient to the race which for centuries has been trodden under the foot of men. Jerusalem is only to be trodden down for a certain time. The Jews are not always to remain scattered, for "he that scattered Israel will gather him and keep him as a shepherd doth his sheep." And in this future time of which the prophets have so much to say, when Israel is gathered and purified and righteous, "the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: and shall weep no more," . . . their God "will be very gracious unto them at the voice of their cry" (Isa. xxx. 19). The Spirit will be poured upon them from on high, producing those fruits of righteousness which will be acceptable to God, and, says the prophet "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isa. xxxii. 15-18). A very great change will take place in the attitude of the nations towards them in this future day. The kingdom of Israel will be at the head of the nations of the earth, and "the nation and kingdom that will not serve them shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." In that time of exaltation and glory "the sons also of them that afflicted thee" says Isaiah "shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet" (ch. lx. 12, 14). Israel will rejoice then in their glorious and triumphant—though once rejected—King, for Jesus is not always to remain away, he will come back again to the scene of his suffering, not as a lamb to be led to slaughter, but as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," as the Branch of David, and reign—as the Angel stated to his mother—"over the house of Jacob for ever" (Luke i. 33) at a time when his countrymen will be prepared to say "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Luke xiii. 35).

Looking at the matter from a merely natural standpoint, if it be possible so to do, everything points to the restoration of the Jews to their own land. The land is waiting for them. All through the present century until recently there has been a constant easing of the position of the Jew. In almost every land disabilities have been removed, restrictions taken out of the way, political rights granted, and in a variety of ways which might be enumerated, greater friendliness has been manifested towards them. They have come to the front as a people. They are actually dreaded at the present time as we have seen in various European countries because of their commanding position. They possess enormous wealth as we all very well know. The press of Europe is largely in their hands. They are unsurpassed in industry. Many of the ablest politicians in the world are Jews; and I just want you for a moment to imagine this scattered but wealthy race, powerful in their scattered position,—more powerful, far, than you or I can tell,—imagine them with all their talent, their political sagacity, their literary ability, their enormous wealth, their great intelligence, welded

together into one compact nation, in a land which we have divine authority for saying is "the glory of all lands," a land of enormous capabilities of production when properly cultivated, and so situated that were anyone to desire a central spot for the government of the world a better situation could not be found. Would they not—even from a human standpoint,—without any special divine interposition—be a powerful nation, a mighty dominion, an exalted people? What then would they be with an omnipotent King, with immortal rulers, with all the artillery of heaven at their disposal, with the divine presence in their midst, with the pillar of fire so to speak continually with them to defend and guard them from every foe (Isa. ix. 2-6), and with the mantling protection of Jehovah on every side? "Aye! aye!" you say, "all imagination! An idle dream! An enthusiast's idea! The fancy of an overheated brain!" Is it so? You may think so, but this is what is coming. It is no idle dream. It is not merely a patriot's desire, or a poet's fancy, neither is it the imagination of a disordered brain; it is sober, solid fact. It is true, as God's word is true. It is on the pages of revelation, and as you turn over the leaves of the prophets it meets your eye on almost every page. It looms in the near future, why the preliminary events have already entered the region of practical politics; transpiring events confirm abundantly and wonderfully the word of "Him that is true," and bye-and-bye the "King of the Jews," once put to death for sin, but now "living after the power of an endless life," the avenger of the wronged, the spoiler of the spoilers; the Healer of His people's woes, the destroyer of the tyrants of the earth, will be here, and "will cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering and tempest, and hailstones. For through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian"—the latter day Assyrian—"be beaten down, which smote his people with a rod" (Isa. xxx. 30, 31), "For the day of vengeance is in his heart, and the year of his redeemed will have come" (Isa. lxiii. 4).

A great deal of testimony to this effect is to be found in the predictions of the prophet Ezekiel who was himself one of the captives carried away to Babylon during the reign of Jehoiachin king of Judah, before Jerusalem was totally destroyed. He has much to say about the exceeding depravity of his nation, and the judgments that were coming upon them, but he does not stop there; there was a time of blessing coming upon his people greater than they had ever experienced, when one should reign over them who would bless them with perpetual peace, and when their national troubles should for ever cease. To quote and comment upon all these prophecies would be to keep you here for hours; only a few of his many predictions can now be passed in review. In the 34th chapter we have clear predictions of this latter day glory. The chapter opens with a revelation of the character of the shepherds, or priests, or pastors, or rulers of Israel. Their characteristics correspond exactly with those of many of the religious shepherds to-day. They were abominable in the sight of God. The shepherds were hypocrites to the last degree.

They fed themselves and not the flock. "Ye eat," says Jehovah, "the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock." The sick were not healed, the diseased were not strengthened, the broken was not bound, the lost was not found or even sought for, but with force and cruelty they ruled them; and as a consequence the sheep wandered upon the mountains and hills, or in other words, were scattered upon all the face of the earth, where none sought their welfare or tried to restore them. Therefore judgments were pronounced against these false shepherds who were nothing better than ravenous wolves, and Jehovah went on to speak of a time when he himself would search out his sheep and find them and deliver them from all the places where they had been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. From all countries he would bring them out, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel, where they should lie in a good fold, and feed in a good pasture, at which time he would "bind up that which was broken, and strengthen that which was sick: but destroy the fat and the strong," that is the proud and haughty and oppressive, of which class he said "I will feed *them* with judgments." These promises are reiterated further on. Commencing at verse 22 we read thus: "Therefore will I save my flock, *and they shall no more be a prey*, . . . And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, *even my servant David*," that is, my beloved; "he shall feed them," or rule them, "and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, *and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it*. And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, *and they shall be safe in their land*, and shall know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them. *And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen* . . . but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid. And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall not . . . bear the shame of the heathen any more. Thus shall they know that I the Lord their God am with them, and that they even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord God." Now here are promises never realized in their history yet. They *are* the prey of the heathen nations at present. These nations are serving themselves of the Jews, and their scattered condition continues. These things are to happen *no more* after this prophecy is fulfilled, their iniquity also is to depart, which alas! is not the case yet; for they are stubborn and rebellious and sordid to this day, their land also is the prey of evil beasts in the political sense, while from the time of Zedekiah their last king no one answering to the description of the King here mentioned has had rule over them. They have been without a king ever since, it remains therefore for the beloved of the Lord to appear,—

"Great David's greater Son"

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—the sinless and immortal Prince of the house of David, the true "Plant of renown," the prophetic "Branch of David," under the sway of whose sceptre alone all these glorious and long predicted blessings will come to pass. In chapter xx. we have the same kind of testimony, in fact, dear friends, when we begin to quote testimonies concerning the restoration and future glory of Israel, the difficulty is to know where to stop. In this chapter the Almighty pledges himself by his own existence to restore them from all lands, "As I live," the 33rd verse commences, "saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you : and I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face." The object of this transaction is then described, namely, to purge from their midst all those of a rebellious nature, and to bring the nation "into the bond of the covenant," the result of the whole process being described from the 40th verse, "For in my holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord God, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me : there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the first-fruits of your oblations, with all your holy things. I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered : and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen." In the 37th chapter of Ezekiel we have the account of a very remarkable vision granted to the prophet, and its interpretation. Under the figure of the resurrection of a multitude of dry bones, the national re-organization of Ezekiel's people is beautifully set forth. The prophet—in a vision—is set down in the midst of a valley of dry bones. He is caused to pass round them, and he observes many, and perceives that they are very dry, as though they had long lain in that exposed condition. He is asked if it is possible for these bones to live, to which he replies, "O Lord God thou knowest." He is then commanded to prophecy unto them, and say, "O ye dry bones hear the word of the Lord . . . Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live : And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and ye shall live ; and ye shall know that I am the Lord." The prophet does as commanded, and as he speaks, he hears a noise in the valley, and beholds a shaking, and is profoundly astonished to find the bones come together, "bone to his bone." Then there is further developement. The sinews and flesh come up upon them, and the skin covers them, but there is no breath in them.—And just let me observe here that when there is no breath, there is no life. It is not a question of immortal souls occupying the bodies, but it is a question of breath, of power to inhale the atmospheric air, and when that power is absent the life is absent also.—The prophet is then commanded to invoke the wind to breathe upon them that they may live, and he does so, and immediately life was imparted, and "they stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army." Now it was not a physical

resurrection that was intended to be taught by this vision—though that is the basis of the teaching—but a political one. We have here a representation of the house of Israel. For many centuries the Israelites have been as here depicted. To their scattered, and isolated, and completely unorganised condition reference is here undoubtedly made. “These bones,” we are told at verse 11 “are,” or represent, “the whole house of Israel,” who are represented as saying “Our bones are dried, and our hope”—our national hope—“is lost : we are cut off for our parts.” But the prophet is commanded to say to them “Behold, O my people, I will open your graves”—that is, the foreign lands where they are expatriated,—“and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live”—live in the national sense—“and I shall place you in your own land.” The remaining portion of the chapter—under the figure of the union of two sticks, representing the formerly divided nation of Israel—shows how, at this time the whole of the twelve tribes shall be gathered together and united, for says Jehovah at verses 22, 24, “I will make them *one nation* in the land upon the mountains of Israel ; and one king shall be king to them all : and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all And David my servant shall be king over them, and they all shall have one shepherd.” The chapter closes with the further assurance that the personage here styled David shall be their prince *for ever*,—hence he must be immortal,—that a new covenant will be made with the nation, that purity and righteousness will characterize them, that they shall dwell in the land for evermore, that the tabernacle of the Most High God shall be in the midst of them, and that he will acknowledge them to be his people and declare himself their God.

Now this resurrection vision does not represent an instantaneous process, but a more or less protracted one. The opening of the 19th century found the Jews—as they had been for ages—in the dry bone state—scattered and disunited, having no unity of action, and in a well-nigh hopeless state. But since then there has been a noise and a shaking, resulting in greater organisation and compactness, by which the interests of the nation in its scattered condition are more effectually looked after. “The establishment of an universal Israelite Alliance, with head quarters at Paris, has laid the foundation of a corporate existence unknown to Jewish life for ages. It has given the Jews a rudimentary nationality which cannot fail to be of the utmost importance in all future movements for their national resuscitation. It is ‘bone coming to his bone,’ the broken people coming together. Under the auspices of the Alliance, there is an annual meeting of Jewish delegates from all parts of the world, at which matters affecting Jewish interests are debated, and from the officials of which, there is correspondence with the Jews throughout the world.” (*R. Roberts*).

They are thus bound together as by sinews, and in fact the whole vision seems well-nigh complete up to the one point—they wait for the wind to blow to once more give them national life; they wait for the divine hand to appear to effectually guide their destiny and gather them—in the complete sense—from all the graves in which they have been hidden, and assemble them once more in the land promised to their fathers, and upon the mountains sacred by so many hallowed memories of the past. Meanwhile—during the last few years—persecution has broken out afresh against this long down-trodden race, in Germany—where that terrible jealousy to which we have referred exists against the successful Jew, successful in every department of life—in Austria, in Roumania, but more especially in Russia, the latter-day persecutor of the Jews, in which country the most cruel deeds have been executed against them, obsolete laws having been enforced, through which they have been banished from their homes, while their houses have been ransacked, their wealth appropriated, and the most barbarous and cruel deeds done, the recital of which are most horrifying to the mind.

A few years ago we gave an address upon the persecution of the Jews in Russia at a time when great atrocities were being perpetrated, and ever since then—as those know who read the news, and especially those who read news particularly referring to the Jews—there has been a manifestation of intolerance and bitter treatment of this scattered people in the Russian Empire, where they are found in the largest numbers, their numbers being variously estimated at from three to five millions. Lately there has been a revival of persecution against the sons of Abraham, and the London papers gave—some time ago—in official form, information of the troubles, then impending over the Jewish inhabitants of that country. At the commencement of this recent outbreak it was stated very circumstantially that certain laws framed against the Jews in the year 1882, and not then put into force were to be revived, and although a denial was speedily given from Russia of the charge—after the civilized world had condemned in strong language the contemplated cruelty, yet there can be little doubt but that the report was perfectly true. These laws were of a very drastic nature, and their enforcement it was plainly pointed out would cause terrible suffering and injustice. They provided that Jews throughout Russia must reside in towns only for the future and not in the country. All Jewish landowners, farmers, and agricultural labourers were therefore to be expelled from their village homes. Jewish merchants at important commercial centres, numbering many thousands of families were also to be expelled. In like manner Jewish artizans were to be expelled from these places, and it was said that tens of thousands of families would be affected by this edict and rendered homeless. Further, it was provided that Jews were no longer to be allowed to be in any way connected with mines or

mining industry, nor even to hold shares in any mines. They were also to be practically debarred from partaking of any educational advantages, whether in schools, gymnasia, or universities. These laws also enacted that the legal profession, in which, hitherto, a large number of Jews in Russia have achieved great success, were in future to be closed to Jewish students, and that members of this race were to be henceforth prohibited from following the professions of engineer or army doctor, or from filling any Government post, however subordinate. It was very easy to conceive what misery and awful suffering would be caused by the enforcement of edicts of such severity as these, and it is estimated that nearly a million persons would be affected by the law and be expelled from their homes, and as one writer said, "The consequent migration and the congestion of the starving fugitives in those cities where Jews will be still allowed to dwell will be so dangerous, and possibly so pestilential in its results, that only one object can be contemplated by the instigators of these persecutions, namely, the total extermination of the four million Jews of Russia." The Jews themselves feel hopeless—at least many of them—that any mercy will be shown them by the Russians. The latter hate the former intensely, and the officials—when approached by the members of this afflicted people—address them as "Cursed Jew." The accounts received from correspondents are heartrending. A correspondent of the *Times* wrote recently as follows:—"We see the danger threatening us, but are powerless to avert it. We are driven from our posts as notaries. Thousands and tens of thousands of Jews who acted as clerks to the Government officials in the towns and in the Government offices of the villages have been discharged to the regret of their superiors, for there are no such faithful and industrious servants as the Jews. Our people have also been discharged from the Post Office, the railways, and the telegraph offices, and from every other post under Government. How are we to live and maintain ourselves in the midst of such a people? What will be our end? O merciful and gracious God! Brethren! The voice of five million Jews, your own flesh and blood, crieth unto you—whom God has favoured in your country with light and life—from their land, whence they are to be banished and expelled. Help to preserve us and our wives and our children—all of them at the gates of death and destruction. Help us with your substance, with your wisdom, with your advocacy."

Here is another representation of the subject. It is written by a prominent Jew in Russia to the chief minister of one of the London Synagogues:—"The troubles which afflicted the Jews in Russia seven years ago were lamentable enough. But those troubles were of a type differing altogether from the persecutions of to-day. They comprised wrongs committed by individuals—murder, personal outrage, arson, pillage, and other acts of violence—attributed, rightly or wrongly, to popular prejudice and frenzy. The Russian Government took steps, however tardily, for their repression, and

disavowed all complicity. The persecutions were breaches of law, and were so treated, a certain number of the perpetrators were brought to justice and punished. But in the present case there is no question of doubtful complicity or veiled sanction. The Russian Government, by the new edicts, legalizes persecution and openly declares war against the Jews of the Empire. These people were always subject to exceptional laws, which, however, did not render living impossible to them. They had always been compelled to pay special imports, to serve in the army without chance of promotion, to reside permanently within defined geographical limits, and to submit to other vexatious rules which fettered their action at every step. Nevertheless they could live and thrive. They increased in numbers, in wealth, and in intelligence. Industrious, peaceable, law-abiding, sober and thrifty, they achieved success as merchants, traders, artisans, and agriculturalists; while the few permitted to enter the universities obtained the highest academic honours, and later became distinguished as lawyers, physicians, and men of science. All this is now changed. The Czar has declared a religious war against all who fail to conform to the Orthodox Russian Church. The Lutherans have not escaped his vengeance, and have lately suffered for their contumacy. But the vials of the Imperial wrath have chiefly been poured out upon the Jews, always the scapegoats of religious fanatics. It appears, from the new edicts, to be the object of the Czar's Government to drive all the Jews from the rural districts into the overcrowded towns, there to be decimated either by the diseases resulting from congestion or by the starvation consequent on loss of livelihood. The village homes are broken up, the artisans and agriculturalists of the provinces are driven into towns where there is neither roof to shelter them nor work for their willing hands. Such a persecution involves a refinement of cruelty for which history affords no parallel. It means massacre, not by sword or dagger as of old, but by a slow automatic process of lingering death. The smaller incidents of the persecution—the deprivation of educational advantages, the closing of the Universities to the Jews, their exclusion from the professions—all these sink into insignificance compared with the vast and wide-spread scheme of expulsion from hearth and home, which means death to countless thousands."

Now these proposals of the Russian authorities have been severely condemned by the London press, and even *Punch* took up the matter, having a short time ago a very striking cartoon representing "The Shade of Pharaoh" warning the Russian Czar, a cartoon which, I believe was cut out of all the copies sent to Russia, and returned to England, it not being allowed to get into the hands of the Russian people. The cartoon represented the Czar placing his foot on the neck of a Jew, who is lying in a dungeon. As he is drawing the sword of persecution from its sheath, the shade of Pharaoh approaches and exclaims "Forbear! That

weapon always wounds the hand that wields it." Associated with the cartoon is a poem which closes with these lines :—

" O Muscovite, blind in your wrath, with your heel on the Israelite's neck,
 And your hand on that baleful old blade, Persecution, 'twere wisdom to reck
 The Pharaoh's calm warning. Beware! Lo, the pyramids pierce the grey gloom
 Of a desert that is but a waste, by a river that is but a tomb,
 Yet the Hebrew abides and is strong. Ameneman is gone to the ghosts
 He—the *prince* of the Coptic police who so harried the Israelite hosts
 When their lives with hard bondage were bitter. And now bitter bondage you'd try.
 Proscription, and exile and stern deprivation. Beware, Sire! Put by
 That blade in its blood-rusted scabbard. The Pharaohs, the Cæsars have found
 That it wounds him who wields it : and you, though your victim there, prone on
 the ground,
 Look helpless and hopeless, you also shall find Persecution a bane
 Which shall lead to a Red Sea of Blood to o'erwhelm Selfish Tyranny's train.
 " Beware ! 'Tis the shade of Meneptha that whispers the warning from far.
 Concerning *that* sword there's a lesson the Pharaoh may teach to the Tsar ! "

Now since these first reports of the intention of the Czar, or the Government officials of the Czar reached England, notwithstanding the denial given at the time, there has been an alarming development of the spirit of persecution against this long persecuted race. It would seem that the first reports—terrible as they were, did not reveal the whole of the intentions of the Russian Government against the Jews. Those intentions appear now to be to get rid of the whole of the Jewish population, to expel them from their territory at whatever cost of suffering and loss. It has been plainly stated that this is what the Czar intends to do. It is a tremendous task to undertake, and involves almost unimaginable cruelty. The Jews being so bitterly hated by those who surround them, who are often greatly in their debt, there is no difficulty in stirring up the wrath of the Russians against them, and the wishes of the officials in regard to their expulsion have been interpreted in the harshest possible manner, and thousands have been expelled without mercy from their homes, very little time being allowed them to make preparation. Their goods they have had to leave behind, their businesses and property they have not been able to dispose of, or if they have it has been at a great sacrifice, a mere trifle being obtained for that which at ordinary times would be of considerable value, and so once more in their history they are being spoiled and persecuted and their lives are hanging daily in doubt before them.

Whatever the moral character of this people may be there are but few in the more civilized countries of the earth who do not at this time feel a profound sympathy for them in this bitter experience, and so we find the press and the people of most countries unsparingly condemning the inhuman conduct of the Russian authorities and the Russian people at the present time. It has indeed become—this Jewish question—one of the most important questions of the day. It has been spoken of as the "New Eastern Question," and it has interests of a far-reaching nature not apparent upon the surface. Day by day items of intelligence are telegraphed from

Russia all over the world drawing attention to what is transpiring, relating the barbarous deeds and the cruel treatment meted out to the descendants of Jacob, and showing how they have been marched out of the country. "The accounts of the dreadful sufferings (to adopt the language of a leader in the *Daily Mail*) inflicted upon these poor people are most heart-rending reading. Religious and racial prejudices in these Western latitudes are sunk at once in the contemplation of extreme human misery. And what must these Jews have suffered? Can anything more terrible be imagined than one of those forced marches of men, women, and children through hundreds of miles of country? Jeered at and maltreated by the peasantry, scoffed at and whipped by the soldiers, weary and worn with thirst and hunger, yet condemned to plod on until the frontier was reached. Is it matter for wonder that dead bodies everywhere mark the line of such marches, or that in the province and city of Moscow alone 50,000 Jews have abjured the law of Moses rather than face the awful fate which the Czar has ordered for all those who profess the Jewish religion."

A correspondent of the *Daily News* has testified to the fact that Jews have been expelled from Moscow in chains, and numerous reports have appeared, to which it is unnecessary to refer relating the intense sufferings endured by those who have unfortunately incurred the hatred of the Emperor and his advisers.

There are causes of course for this terrible outbreak against the Jews. Human causes, and yet behind those human influences the hand of the Divine Being is at work fulfilling the counsel of His own will. Jewish success means hatred in return as we have seen. Yet this expulsion of a trading and industrious people from their midst may prove a very mistaken step in the long run. When Haman—"the Jews' enemy"—told Ahasuerus in his hatred to Mordecai that it was not "for the king's profit to suffer" the Jews to live in his territory, and made petition "if it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed," undertaking to pay a large sum of money into the king's treasuries that he might be no loser in the matter, he had not fully estimated the loss to the kingdom. Esther pointed this out to her autocratic lord when she sued for her life and turned the tables upon Haman. "If" she said "we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, *although the enemy could not countervail the King's damage*" (Esther iii. 8, 9; vii. 4). It is said that already certain financial troubles have resulted in Russia from this panic among the Jews, that "public credit is for the present gone," and that because of "this destruction of commercial credit and security of contract reacting on the national commerce" it is probable that those in high position are alarmed, and that certain ameliorations will be made to the Jews (*Daily News*). It is not likely, however, that confidence will very soon be restored in the Jewish community. They perceive that, for whatever cause, whether it be their

prosperity, or whether it be suspicion on the part of the Czar towards them—for it has been stated on good authority that he mistrusts them, and attributes the plots against his life to members of this race, or whether it be jealousy and a desire for political revenge on the part of Count Ignatieff for being thwarted in his political schemes at the close of the Russo-Turkish war by Lord Beaconsfield, and a desire to visit that revenge upon the whole race of which he was so distinguished a member, on the same principle that Haman acted upon (Esther iii. 6), whatever, we say the motive may be, they perceive that there is little prospect of any permanent rest in Russia for them, consequently, amongst those upon whom compulsion has not yet been brought to bear, there is a general desire to clear out; thousands are emigrating, and day by day the exodus assumes larger dimensions.

We said that beside the human causes at work for the expulsion of the Jews, there was a divine hand at work also. Who can doubt it? God ruleth in the kingdoms of men and guides the policies of the various nations toward a certain fore-ordained purpose. It is the divine intention to set His King upon Zion's holy hill, and however the nations may rage, this intention will be accomplished. One of the first announcements connected with the birth of Jesus, made by the angel Gabriel to his mother concerning the child to be born, was that "He should be great, and should be called the Son of the Most High: and," the angel continued, "the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: *and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever*; and of his Kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i. 32, 33). There ought to be no difficulty in understanding language of that description. There is nothing ambiguous about it. It is exceedingly plain and easy of comprehension. Nothing could possibly be much clearer. If some divine messenger singled out a person in England to-day, and guaranteed to him that he should sit upon the throne of Queen Victoria, and reign—in the future—over the English people, no one would think of seeking for some deep spiritual meaning to attach to the words. It would be most singular—and we should almost suppose would evidence some symptoms of lunacy—if any person interpreted such a message to mean that the one thus selected would *never* sit upon Victoria's throne, *never* reign in London or in any other portion of Her Majesty's dominions, and *never* exercise authority over the English people any more than over the other nations of the earth, but that, instead, should go to some far off region beyond the stars, and from thence exercise a *spiritual* authority over the hearts and minds of a few selected from the various nations of the earth! That we should say would be an unfair, an unreasonable, and a most ridiculous interpretation of the divine messenger's communication. Yet this is exactly what religious people do with the words of the angel to Mary. The message in that case is as clear as in the one we have supposed. Why then should it be so misunderstood and so misapplied? David's throne was literal enough. It was in Jerusalem. There was nothing mystical about it. He was the king of the Jews. He reigned over the twelve tribes of Israel. He ruled over the whole "house of Jacob" for thirty-three years. That throne has fallen. Nebuchadnezzar carried Zedekiah, the last king, captive. He put out his eyes and took him to Babylon.

Before that happened Ezekiel the prophet (in a passage quoted before) said to this wicked king that the diadem should be removed, and the crown be taken off, and that the whole reigning authority should be overturned and remain so "until he come whose right it is, and," the divine message concluded, "I will give it him" (Ezekiel xxi. 25-27). Christ is the one whose right it is. He is the heir. The throne of David is covenanted to him. He is a king by divine right. The overturned throne will be established again in the land of Israel, for exactly the same thing which was overturned is to be re-established—that is, the throne of David, confirmed again to Jesus by the angel's message and by innumerable promises besides. To spiritualize the passage is to subvert its plain meaning, and to say that Jesus sits upon David's throne in heaven—when it was never there—and reigns over the house of Jacob at the present time—the members of which house reject him and treat his name with the utmost scorn and contempt—is ridiculous and utterly false.

The Kingdom of Israel in the past was the Kingdom of God. This Kingdom is to be restored, only upon a far more glorious scale than it existed before. It will be ruled by immortal men, Jesus being the supreme King. The apostles will be honoured—according to the promise of Christ—by judging or ruling, "the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix 28), hence we can understand their anxiety to know if Jesus, after his resurrection, was then going to "restore the kingdom to Israel" (Acts i. 6). For these, and many other promises to be fulfilled the Jews must be regathered to their own land for they will form the subjects of the Kingdom of Christ, though, ultimately, all nations will bow to his sceptre and acknowledge him to be the Lord, "to the glory of God, the Father" (Phil ii. 10. 11).

This is one of the reasons why the Jews are preserved—amidst all their persecutions—a distinct people upon the face of the earth. They have an important part yet to play in the world's redemption. Jehovah watches over them in the lands of those who hate them. Depend upon it out of the present evil his purpose will be evolved. "Afflictions spring not out of the dust." Divine wisdom is at work and we should so conclude if the purpose of God was inscrutable. But in this case it does not appear to be so. According to many signs abroad in the earth observed by the students of scripture, to which reference need not now specially be made, "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Prior to the immediate manifestation of Christ to the Jews as their deliverer and King the scriptures lead us to understand that there will be a partial resettlement of the Jews in the land of Palestine, a gathering together of a number of the long outcast race, and a degree of prosperity and peace such as they have not known in their own land for long, weary centuries before. For many years past those interested in the Jews, those interested in "the hope of Israel," which was Paul's hope (Acts xxviii. 20), those waiting for the "Consolation of Israel" and looking for the Kingdom of God, have been on the watch tower looking for these events to take place, and they have been rewarded by seeing the land opened up to the ancient people, and a greater interest manifested in Palestine than has been the case for many generations. Evidently the time is

near when they "shall build the old waste places: and shall raise up the foundations of many generations" of desolation (Isa. lviii. 12).

First of all the law which forbade a Jew to acquire land in Palestine, which had existed for a long period of time, was repealed, the Sultan of Turkey—I think in the year 1857—permitting the Jews the privilege of doing this long forbidden thing. Then came the scheme of the venerable Sir Moses Montifiore for improving the position of the Jews in Palestine. A considerable period of time, too, was taken up in surveying the land by distinguished English officials, under the patronage of the Prince of Wales, the results of which survey were published to the world and threw a flood of light upon Bible references to Palestine. The Russo-Turkish war also resulted in a British Protectorate over the Holy Land, of which a great deal has not yet been heard but may be in the not far distant future, when England will cry "Hands Off" to the Russian power which would fain make Jerusalem the head quarters of her faith and absorb the territory of Bible fame into her vast possessions. Another result of the war was the seizing of Cyprus by the British power, and later on came the occupation of Egypt which we may now reckon a British possession, by which acquisitions we are brought into very close relationship with Palestine and shall be able to give practical effect to the Protectorate when the need arises so to do. There are now also a very large number of Jews in Palestine. The work of colonisation has been going on at a considerable rate for many years past. There has long been Societies in existence, under the patronage of some of the very wealthy Jews, with a large capital to work upon, with the object of assisting Jews to form colonies and once more bring this highly fruitful land under cultivation. The heart of every patriotic Israelite yearns to see the once favoured land prosperous once more, and to behold "Jerusalem a praise in the earth." The hope of a Messiah yet to come—though the true one is rejected—is not yet dead in the breasts of the truly devout. Their hope finds expression in the phrase "This year here, next year in Jerusalem" uttered upon the Day of Atonement when the rites have concluded with the sounding of the trumpet. There is no land on earth like Palestine to the Jew. Thousands there are who long to return to the cradle of their race; wherever they are found, east, west, north, or south—"on the banks of the Tiber or the Thames, the Jordan or the Mississippi, on the shores of the Caspian, or on the burning sands of India, the 'home sickness'—as it has been called—is heavily upon them. And in Palestine, around the ruins of Jerusalem, soon as their Sabbath dawns, grey-headed men and venerable kneel amidst the sacred dust, kiss the very stones; and then, in low, plaintive tones, which in their minor cadences, seem to breathe out their soul's deep anguish, sing,—

For the palace which is laid waste,
 For the temple which is destroyed,
 For the walls which are pulled down,
 For our majesty which is gone,
 For our great men who have been cast down,
 For the precious stones which are burnt,
 For the priests who have stumbled,
 For our kings who have despised him,
 We sit down alone and weep !

RUSSIA AND THE JEWS.

Have mercy upon Zion ;
Gather the children of Jerusalem !
Make haste, Redeemer of Zion ;
Speak to the heart of Jerusalem !
May beauty and peace surround Zion ;
Turn with Thy mercy to visit Jerusalem !
Remember the shame of Zion ;
Make new again the ruins of Jerusalem ! "

Doubtless the home-sick and weeping sons and daughters of Judah are upon the very eve of receiving the answer of God to their hearts' longing and intense desire. God is about to "arise, and have mercy upon Zion, for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is" well-nigh "come."

There can be no doubt as to the result of this new and violent persecution. A great impetus will be given to the work of colonising the Holy Land. No European country wants the Jews. The outcasts of Russia are pitifully poor, and the population of other lands dread them settling in their midst to lower wages by their competition that are already low enough, and to otherwise increase the burdens which press heavily upon the poor in large cities. What is to be done with them? Where are they to go? Where can an asylum be found for them where they may hope not to be disturbed again? These are the problems that have to be faced and that philanthropic men of their own race and statesmen are trying to solve at the present time. The whole Hebrew world is vibrating with the possible answer to these questions. *Palestine for the Jews* is the answer finding favour everywhere. Remarkable evidence of this can be adduced. First of all the telegrams from Russia tell us of hundreds of Jews departing from that country by steamer bound for Palestine. The stream runs that way. There they will stay if only land can be obtained and employment found them to keep them from starvation. There is an association of Jews called "The Chovevei Zion," the objects of which have been set forth in a letter to the *Jewish Chronicle* from Mr. Joseph Pragg, the vice-president, from which the following is an extract:—"The objects of the Chovevei Zion are clear and definite. We desire to revive the national idea in Judaism and to foster and assist well-devised schemes of colonisation in Palestine . . . It is a very hopeful sign to see the support the movement is receiving on all sides. All phases of thought in Judaism have rallied to our standard. Commenced among the very poor it has 'levelled up' gradually until we have gained the adhesion of the noblest men in English Jewry." Some of the wisest heads and most moneyed men among the Jews are busy trying to solve the problem of "What is best to be done," and are willing to lay out large sums—of which Baron Hirsch's three millions is a start—in order to carry out any well digested scheme for the restoration of their people. The re-occupation of Palestine everywhere is the one scheme that gains in favour. At Manchester the Jews of that city have held a meeting to form a Society in favour of that object, and interesting speeches were delivered advocating that course, and some able articles upon the subject appeared in the local papers. But the advocacy of this question is reaching the very highest personages in this land, and promises to

become a question in which our chief ministers of state and diplomatists will be engaged, and help to settle in the direction so much desired. At a meeting held recently at the Assembly Hall, Mile-end, at which there were present thousands of Jews, a petition was adopted to be presented to the British Government through Lord Rothschild, who was described in it as "Chief among the remnant of Israel who live under the benign sway of Her Majesty Queen Victoria." The language of the petition is most remarkable. "Many of those (it says) who are outcast from the North Country *yearn to return to the Holy Land*. They love the very stones and favour the very dust thereof; and they would deem themselves blessed indeed if they were permitted to till the sacred soil. If at this moment the ground is barren in parts, and refuses to yield its produce, we know it is the hand of man that has wrought the evil. The hand of man shall remedy it. We beseech the Governors of this land to help our afflicted and down-trodden brethren, to help them, not with the sword, but with the friendly service it is in their power to render. Let them open their mouth in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. Let them be their advocate with the Government of Russia so that it may make their departure easy, and with the Government of Turkey that it may enable them to dwell in safety, and acquire possession at a just price of parcels of land for cultivation and for the rearing of cattle *in Palestine* and the districts surrounding it. . .

"At this very moment three millions of our brethren-in-faith are plunged in the depth of misery. The waters are come in unto their soul: they sink in deep mire, where there is no standing. Their life hangs constantly in doubt before them. Every day brings its burden of fresh sorrows, so that in the morning they say 'Would it were evening,' and in the evening, 'Would it were morning.' Plague after plague smites them, and the last troubles make the former ones to be forgotten. Buffeted and reproached, they are being hunted from their habitations and the house of their fathers, where many of them have lived since their birth. They are being driven into the pale of settlement, into townships already full to overflowing with the seed of Israel, only to stumble each man over his fellow, and to perish together in hunger and thirst and nakedness and the want of all things." The petition closes with the following words:—"My lord, but let our request be granted us, and who shall say whether we may not be privileged to see with the eye of the flesh what the inspired messenger of God beheld with the eye of the spirit, that the Lord will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places and make her desert like Eden, and her wilderness like the garden of the Lord?" The meeting at which this petition was adopted was presided over by Mr. Montague, M.P., himself a Jew, and in the course of his remarks he said that "Lord Rothschild had approved of the terms of the petition, and had kindly promised to present it, and it was highly probable that some good would result from his action. If any practical plan were propounded, all the Jews of the world, and all the lovers of Israel not of the Jewish faith would assist in the gradual restoration of the Jews to Zion. The petition was the first step, and if, happily, it proved a successful one, *the colonisation of Palestine would be a*

possible and practical question." The petition was duly presented, and the following answer was returned by Lord Salisbury to Lord Rothschild: Foreign Office, June 5th, 1891.—My Lord,—The Marquis of Salisbury has read the memorial from the members and friends of the Society of the Lovers of Zion, which you communicated to his lordship on the 1st inst., soliciting the assistance of Her Majesty's Government in obtaining from the Sultan of Turkey permission for Russian and Polish Jews to settle in Palestine. Lord Salisbury directs me to inform your lordship that he will consult Her Majesty's Ambassador at the Porte as to whether the intervention of Her Majesty's Government would be likely to promote the object which the petitioners have in view, and if so, Sir William White will be authorised to bring the matter to the notice of his Majesty the Sultan.—I am, my lord, your lordships most obedient humble servant, (signed) P. W. CURRIE.

Mr. Gladstone also was written to by Mr. Montague, M.P., and his influence invoked on behalf of the poor persecuted Jews. He wrote a sympathetic letter in reply, in which he said, "I view with warm and friendly interest *any plan for the large introduction of Jews into Palestine*, and shall be very glad if the Sultan gives his support to such a measure." The Jewish Papers advocate the same view, which statement is confirmed by the following extract from the *Jewish Chronicle*;—"Facts are things which no statesman—not even if he be a Jewish philanthropist can afford to ignore. One such fact is the existence of *what may be called Palestine hunger*. Another such fact is the existence of what may be called the Jewish difficulty. All over Europe the Jew is being baited and abused. Even in England, where the already established Jew is secure and respected, the advent of the Russian emigrant is viewed with ominous disfavour. The problem is pressing. For their own sakes, as much as for ours, if they have any belief in their own apprehensions, the nations must help us to solve it. The Chovevei Zion points the way to a promising method. On the one hand Jew-hatred, on the other Palestine hunger. What can be simpler than to let these two great forces balance and neutralize one another? The unappreciative nations get rid of their Jews—the unappreciative Jews get back 'their country.' And what is the attitude of the princes of Israel? Distinctly an encouraging one and one that we can cordially commend. Mr. Montague consulted Lord Rothschild and then Baron de Hirsch, and the result of these deliberations was the decision to present a petition to Lord Rothschild, asking him to induce the British Government to use its good offices in concert with the other great powers in such a manner as would further the objects of the Chovevei Zion Society. The petition itself may be read in another column, and no Jew can read it unmoved. Even the mere lover of the picturesque must find something indescribably pathetic in the simple yet eloquent phrases, throbbing with real modern sorrow, yet vibrating with far-away echoes of Israel's suffering through the ages, and couched in a language of hoary antiquity which yet live unto this day. In the hearts of our Christian fellow-citizens the petition will touch no less tender a chord; for it is one of the happiest auguries for the success of this movement that it has been initiated in England, in a land in which all that is best and most earnest in national character is

based upon the book which Israel gave to the world; among a people for whom Zion is almost as hallowed a name as for Israel. What Lord Rothschild will have to impress on the Government is the necessity of a European recognition of this wave of immigration Palestinewards from Europe. A general concert of the powers should guarantee the protection of the emigrants both during migration and after settlement. The immigration must be conducted under official auspices and even with official co-operation; for, by their own showing, it will be to the interest of the nations that the ever-vexing ghost of 'the Jewish question' shall be laid."

Now these are the highly interesting events which are transpiring at the present time—far more interesting and important than any of the political cries which so excite the men by whom we are surrounded, and which indeed, are too insignificant to compare with events which lead up to matters that will make all mankind tremble bye-and-bye. The Jews link us with a long past, and with a glorious future. They remind us of a kingdom which was God's in ages gone by, and of a divine Kingdom to come, which we hope may appear in a little while. They verify the truth of that much abused book which foretold their rebelliousness and sin, their scattering, their persecutions, their long-continued night of sorrow, their abiding "many days without a King" or any of the marks of their national existence (Hos. iii. 4) and their rejection of Him—the Son of David—who alone can heal their wounds, and "deliver them out of the hands of their enemies," so that they may serve God "without fear" (Luke i. 74). And after the lapse of centuries, in these latter days, we behold—in fulfilment of prophecy—this remarkably preserved people actually being compelled to seek a home in the almost only land that is open to them, the land covenanted to their fathers, and there again—in that land—we see signs of life unknown for ages past, an increased population, and a line of railway actually being laid down from the port of Jaffa to Jerusalem, and though we are told that "the company which has undertaken the work does not expect to make much profit out of it at first, yet, as the population of Jerusalem is steadily increasing, they hope that eventually the traffic over the new line will be sufficient to afford a good dividend as soon as the railway is in full operation."

We said some time back that "prior to the immediate manifestation of Christ to the Jews (on his return from heaven) as their deliverer and King, the scriptures lead us to suppose that there will be a partial, re-settlement of the Jews in the land of Palestine, a gathering together of a number of the long outcast race, and a degree of prosperity and peace such as they have not known in their own land for long, weary centuries before." This aspect of the truth, appears to us to be clearly set forth in that chapter read in your hearing to night—the 38th chapter of Ezekiel—a chapter dealing specially with Russia and the Jews.* It is a prophecy relating to the "latter years" as the 8th verse informs us, and to the "mountains of Israel." The land at the time referred to has

* See this more fully dealt with in my published Lecture *Russia and Britain in the East*, advertised on the cover.

been "brought back from the sword." It is partially occupied by her people, who have been "gathered out of many nations" to a land which has for a long period been a comparative wilderness. These people are described as dwelling in defenceless cities and villages, feeling secure though their towns are unfortified. They are increasing in wealth and numbers, in cattle and goods, in silver and gold. Whilst in this condition they excite the cupidity of a mighty nation which is specially addressed in this chapter and the following one. It is a great northern power. Its prince is addressed as the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, which names are to be clearly identified with modern Russia, Moscow, and Tobolski. At the time of the fulfilment of the prophecy a number of nations are incorporated with this northern power, or in close alliance with her, for she acts as a guard or commander to them, and they are in her train. A great work of judgment is to be exercised upon the grasping, avaricious overgrown power here referred to, and the nations associated with her. She is to be visited with overwhelming destruction. And for this coming judgment there is a work of preparation now going on in accordance with the command contained in the 7th verse.—"Be thou prepared, yea, prepare thyself, thou, and all thy companies that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard (or commander) unto them." Russia is marching on to her destiny. When all the preliminary work is done, when the nations here referred to are all subjugated by or confederated with the northern power, then we may expect the complete fulfilment of this prediction. "After many days" the prophet says—addressing this power—at the 8th verse, "thou shalt be visited." *In the latter years* thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee." The sinister designs of the nation referred to are then described. The object is—see verse 12,—"To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land." Now we think there is no difficulty in the interpretation of this part of the prophecy. The land is described—"the mountains of Israel." For centuries it has been waste. But at this time there is a glimmer of day. It is "brought back from the sword." It has been ravaged for ages by Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. After them again the Persians, the Arabians, the Fatimites, the Omniades, the Turkmen soldiery, the European Crusaders, the Mamelouks of Egypt, the Tartars, and the Ottoman Turks have all fought for its territory; but that is past, the Jews are returning—gathered out of many nations, dwelling peacefully in unwallled villages "having neither bars nor gates," that is, in an undefenced condition. They acquire wealth,—cattle and goods, silver and gold. The merchant power of Tarshish, that is the power whose heraldry is the lion, the British power, who has a protectorate over the land, to whose interest it is to keep this portion of the earth from Russian aggression, fosters and protects the colonised Jews. The

northern power it is well known would like to seize Syria and Palestine, and is creeping down in that direction. The time seems to come to favour their designs. They "think an evil thought." They resolve upon aggression. They say "We will go up to the land of unwalled villages; to take a spoil and to take a prey." Like a cloud they come—many nations with them—an immense confederacy of the mighty powers of the earth, invading once more Jehovah's land, to swallow up Jehovah's people. What does it all mean? How is it all to end? Is Israel to be destroyed once more? Is Russia to be triumphant? No! No! No! There are many conflicting objects in view—human and divine. Russia would be supreme, but the Lord of Hosts says no! The time has arrived for the establishment of the Kingdom of God. The time has arrived for the enthronement of Christ. The time has arrived for Israel to be restored. It is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it (Jer. xxx. 7). It is the time to break the oppressor's yoke for ever and burst the bonds that for centuries have bound the cruelly crushed seed of Abraham. It is the time to humble the pride of nations, to bring down their high looks, to destroy their armaments, to dissolve their God-defying hosts, and scatter them to the winds. Therefore says Jehovah "I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come" (Isa. lxiii. 4,6). Therefore it is that he says through Ezekiel "my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy, and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel. . . . And I will call for a sword against him (Gog) throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone." Thus will human power be humbled that the Lord of Hosts may be magnified, and known in the eyes of many nations, even—eventually to earth's remotest bounds, for this is the commencement of that epoch during which his glory will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. There are many other particulars given, my friends, but we will not stay to analyze them now. If you love the truth search them out, and you will find that Ezekiel stands not alone, but that the burden of prophecy is the restoration and glory of Israel. The people will be restored, the land will be blest and yield her increase, the wilderness will blossom as the rose, the Gentile nations will become subservient to the Jewish, or utterly perish; the law will go forth from Zion for all peoples to obey, the temple of Ezekiel's vision,—magnificent almost beyond human conception—will be built and become the centre of the world's worship, Jerusalem will become an everlasting praise in the earth, and her people a joy, and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying, unutterable glory shall fill the land from end to end, and—in the closing words of the book of the exiled prophet, "The name of the city"—the city of Zion, "the city of the Great King,"—"from that day shall be Jehovah-Shammah—The Lord is there" (Ezek. xlvi. 35).

Why Confess to a Priest?

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→ Three Lectures ←

BY

JOSEPH BLAND

(of Kidderminster.)

Author of "WHAT THE SPIRIT SAITH UNTO THE CHURCHES," etc., etc.

Delivered in the Co-operative Hall, Kidderminster, September 11th, 18th and 21st, 1898.

With many additional notes of importance bearing upon the question.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

"The system of confession to priests is the sum of all villainies."

"We have seen with our own eyes that which would make the blood of any decent man boil within him."—REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

"Mind! the clerical principle of Ritualism is pride at the 'altar,' and lust in the confessional."—FATHER GAVAZZI, *ex-priest of Rome*.

"Where it has been in power the Church of Rome has been sensual and tyrannical. In Protestant countries where it is in opposition it wears the similitude of an angel."—J. A. FROUDE, "Short Stories," Vol. III., p. 143.

"It is" (the confessional) "alas! become a mutual repository of vice and profanation,—a mutual depravity and corruption among many."—

Rev. LAURENCE MORISSEY, *Parish priest of Oning and Templemore, Ireland.*

KIDDERMINSTER:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM HEPWORTH, BULL RING.

1898.

336.

To the Reader.

The Question of Confession and other Romish practices in the Church of England, and indeed, the whole question of Romish Teaching is to the front at the present time, and is largely occupying the minds of earnest Protestant men. We have endeavoured in the Lectures now issued (a desire having been expressed that they should appear in print) to examine—in the light of truth—this mind-enslaving practice, to look at the evils associated therewith, and to test the Scriptural evidence upon which the practice is built. In regard to the impurity associated with the Confessional, we have relied—it should be specially observed—upon the testimony of Roman Catholic writers and priests themselves, and their Ritualistic imitators. Out of their own mouths has the condemnation of the system come, and we need not say that there is much in their writings *that we dare not print*, and many revelations of atrocious iniquity that we prefer to leave outside our pages. As for Scripture evidence on behalf of the practice there is actually none to be found, but such passages as are quoted generally in proof we have examined and found to have no reference to private confession, or to that so-called “Sacrament of Penance” from which Rome derives her vast influence and power.

It should be stated that many foot notes have been added which may be useful for reference and which add, in some degree to the value of the addresses now issued.

J. B.



Why Confess to a Priest?

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LECTURE I.

SYLLABUS:—Confession the question of the hour—strong Protestant feeling in the country—dishonesty of the Ritualistic clergy—the conspiracy strong in the land—Roman Catholic claims and aims—the Dark Ages—result of Romish teaching among the nations—the Priest in the confessional—everything must be told—Canon McCormick on the subject—terrorising the human conscience—the power of the priest—"The Priest in Absolution"—the Archbishop of Canterbury on the publication—the practice at Liverpool—disgusting revelations—Rome's theological books—Nathan and David—Peter and Pentecost—effects of the confessional—"Spiritual whitewash"—Canon Eyton on the subject—effect on the mind of the priest—"Evil communications corrupt good manners"—"St" Liguori's statements and others—no priest but one, the ever-living Christ.

WHY, dear friends, why? It seems to us a very opportune time to ask this question and to examine well any answer that can be given thereto. The question of private confession to priestly men, as well as other Romish doctrines and practices, is well before the public at the present time, and many columns of *The Times*, and other newspapers, are daily filled with letters, and have been for a considerable time, protesting against, and defending, the doctrines and practices to which we refer. The fact is there is a wave of Protestant thought and feeling beating over the land. I do not think it is a bitter, intolerant, persecuting feeling against Roman Catholics, although based upon an intense repugnance to their beliefs, but it is more in the nature of righteous indignation against those wolves in sheep's clothing who are receiving Protestant pay but in reality—and most dishonestly—doing their utmost to undo Protestant work, to undermine the work of their forefathers, and to impose once more the dreadful yoke of Romanism upon a people who—for some centuries—have been free from such a curse. To my mind, and in the judgment of vast numbers of people in this land, there is nothing more dishonest, there is nothing more dishonourable, there is nothing more contemptible or more deserving of censure and reprobation, than the daily actions of those clergymen who are false to their ordination vows, and who constantly preach and practice those things they have solemnly covenanted not to teach. Who can honestly doubt that the Church of England in her Articles thoroughly condemns many of the doctrines of the Church of Rome? They are specially singled out and declared to

be unscriptural, "blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits,"* and so forth; and yet, in regard to these very doctrines, the Church and the world has the fact to contemplate, that a large number of men who have been solemnly ordained to the Church's ministry, who have seriously expressed their belief in these Articles and their adherence to them, yet teach that they are false, and proclaim the opposite to be the truth! † Can anything possibly be more dishonourable and wicked? What a hateful and detestable thing it is! Can anything be more unscrupulous and unjust? To accept the pay for teaching one thing and to falsely teach the opposite! Men who have not the uprightness to forsake the position they unfaithfully occupy and seek one more in harmony with the views they teach! Who, though the Church condemns Purgatory—proclaim it! Though it pronounces transubstantiation "repugnant to the plain words of Holy Scripture"—set it forth as true! And who are striving to introduce the practice of private confession, and have, unfortunately in many places succeeded in doing so, desiring to bud into father confessors, so that the laity (so-called) may go to them and pour into their ears all the privacies of their lives, all their secret sins, and be questioned, and cross-questioned as to all their secret acts, and then receive pardon and absolution from those who have absolutely no power whatever to bestow it on men!

And the conspiracy is strong in the land. ‡ These men are active, energetic, unscrupulous. The powers above them have almost given them a free hand. At least they have not checked them as they might have done. They are unwilling to take the necessary steps to put

* Article 31, Ch. of Eng.

† Some clergymen are exceedingly bold in their proclamation of Romish doctrine. In fact they out-Herod Herod. They cannot say things sufficiently bitter against the Protestantism they ought to defend. The Rev. N. Green Armytage, M. A., incumbent of St. Aidan's, Boston, recently preached a sermon with the object of proving "Protestantism semi-infidel!" He published a long letter also setting forth the strongest Ritualistic sentiments. The following is an extract:—"The exorcism of Protestantism from the Church of England is now only a question of a short time. But this happy result will be the more speedily attained if but priests will teach definitely Catholic truth, and will also use the Divine Scriptures to support this definite teaching. For the Bible belongs to the Church, not to Protestant semi-infidelity, which rejects the sacraments with arguments exactly similar to those of the infidel, who denies that Christ is God." The letter pleads for fearless definite teaching of sacramental truth, and argues if this had been the case "there would now be at once a fuller belief in Catholic truths, and a wider acceptance of the Scriptural idea of Catholic worship;" and the writer is a believer in Confession, the Mass, the Eucharistic Sacrifice and Presence, Prayers for the Dead, etc.

‡ "Over thirty Bishops of the Church of England and over four thousand of her clergy are helping on this scheme for restoring Papal supremacy and tyranny, together with Romish doctrines and ritual, to the Church which gained a glorious liberty 350 years ago. It is a formidable conspiracy indeed to destroy our Protestantism, which cannot be despised as something small and insignificant, let the Archbishop of Canterbury and Mr. Balfour say what they may. The English Church Union has rendered signal service to the Pope in this country. It is the great preparatory school for Rome, and has already sent more perverts to Rome than all the other organisations put together. It is in the forefront of rebellion against law and authority, and a bosom friend to most of the traitors within the fold of the Church of England."—Letter of Mr. Walter Walsh, Birmingham *Argus*, Sept. 9th, 1898.

In a petition recently presented to Lord Salisbury against the lawlessness in the Church it was stated that there were 9,000 clergymen helping on the work of Rome!

down the lawlessness in the ministry. Law expenses are heavy. Judicial decisions are uncertain. Many of the bishops are in full sympathy with the lawless clergy, and so the work of Romanising the Protestant Church proceeds apace, and from time to time sad revelations are made as to the progress of the recalcitrant clergy, of the books they read and circulate as confessors, of the filthy and suggestive questions they put to young men and maidens and wives who go to confess, and naturally enough there is protest and indignation, and a strong desire to uproot this kind of thing on the part of those who object to this insidious, underhand, dishonest kind of procedure ; and that desire at the present time is being very forcibly manifested, and quite possibly may result in some measure being introduced into Parliament next session, which, if passed, may prove more effectual than existent laws to curb and check the men who are unfaithful to their ordination vows.

We purpose to-night, and next Sunday night, and subsequently, to examine this practice, to ask a few questions about it, to look at its effects upon the people who confess, and the priest who pretends to pardon in God's name, to look at national results in the light of the confessional, and, before we have finished with the subject, to see whether there is any solid Scriptural foundation for the practice. Our desire is to take as comprehensive a view of the subject as we can in the time we have at our disposal, to view the question not merely as a dishonest practice on the part of clergymen under protestant vows, but broadly, as a practice which is upheld and defended by a great historic Church, and resorted to by millions, and supposed to be most efficacious for their salvation, strongly insisted on by the priests, and the very backbone of Roman Catholic teaching.

In doing so we have no bitterness against any one concerned in these practices. We have no feeling of enmity towards Ritualist or Romanist. We regret most heartily that they should be led astray by such false teaching, and that they should depend upon such puerilities as they do for salvation. We would gladly do them good if we had opportunity, and lead them into the purer light and truth of Christ's teaching ; but we feel it to be a solemn duty to proclaim truth and oppose error, trusting our efforts may at least preserve some from erroneous teaching, and help some to escape the snare and emerge into "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (II. Cor. iv. 4.)

The Roman Catholic Church aims to dominate the world. It claims to be the only true Church. Its priests claim to represent God in the confessional, and its head, the Pope, claims to be the vicegerent of Christ upon the earth. What would be the effect upon the world at large if these claims were allowed? Would the world be benefited? Would it be purer, freer, holier? How can we judge? We can judge by the past. The Roman Church is a Church with a history. What do we call those ages when it was at the zenith of its influence and power? Are they not called "The Dark Ages?" Were they not characterized by ignorance, superstition, gross darkness in reference to divine things? Dare any man think for himself, or read the divine word to know God's will, or utter a thought against the teaching of the all-powerful Church? It was the Church that persecuted so-called heretics to the death, and put millions of them to the sword—"drunken with the blood of the

saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Rev. xvii. 6,) that is a description which fits it admirably—the Church which established the awful and hated inquisition, and which used the confessional for its own base and persecuting ends, till the blood of thousands cried out to heaven for vengeance against those who, under the plea of zeal for God and his glory, tortured them with fiendish cruelty to induce them to recant, and after their cruel tortures burnt them to death at the stake—for the honour of God and the good of the Church !

We can read the history of these dark ages of superstition and ignorance, we can read the history of the Inquisition, and reading, we can learn something of the effects of the confessional and its value to those by whom it is frequented and by whom it has been made use of for their own purposes, and not for the glory of the Lord Most High.

And if we look at those nations at the present time which are subject to the sway of Rome, where the priest is supreme, where he holds the key of the human conscience, where the Bible is practically unread by the people, what is the condition of society ? Do we not meet with very much the same ignorance, and is not the superstition appalling ? Are not all kinds of nonsense believed in, and is it not thought that the human priests possess divine power ? Are not those nations lower down in the scale of morality and education ? Is it not a palpable fact that the nations called Protestant, where there is freedom of thought, freedom to read the word of God, where that word is scattered broadcast, and fetters are not forged for the mind, and the shadow of the priest is unfrequent, are not these nations more advanced in every good way, is there not a loftier standard of morality, a higher position among the nations of the earth ? Look at Ireland, look at Spain and her late dependencies—Cuba and the Philippines—look at Austria and other Catholic countries, and compare them with England, Germany, and America, and though wickedness, alas ! abounds in all these countries, yet owing as we believe to the circulation of the Bible, and the freedom to read and study it, and the influence it has upon the minds and consciences of men and women, the moral and intellectual condition of the people as a whole is higher, and the standard of righteousness loftier than when that word is concealed and there is not free access to it by the people at large.

In the confessional the priest stands between the professed penitent and his Maker. He claims to represent God, to act as God, in fact the person confessing is made to believe that he is not confessing to man but to God, and the Church claims on behalf of her priests "judiciary power (a judge's power) of binding or loosing, of forgiving or retaining sins" and therefore "demands of all her children,"—I quote now from a Catholic publication which has had a large circulation—"a confession of all mortal sins committed by them, both as to their nature and number, for there can be no judgment without a statement of the crime on which judgment is made. Besides the sins against the commandments of God, of Christ, and of the Church, there are the seven capital sins—*pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, sloth* ; the sins against the Holy Ghost—*presumption, despair, resisting the known truth, envy of another's spiritual good, obstinacy in sin, final impenitence* ; the sins we may have caused in, or shared, in others ; the four sins crying to heaven for vengeance—*wilful murder, the sin of Sodom, oppression of the poor,*

defrauding labourers of their wages. Before making our confession we should therefore examine our conscience to know *what sins* we have to be sorry for, and to confess. Our confession must be *humble* (our Lord intended it to be an act of humiliation, for which reason we make it kneeling;) *entire* (comprising the nature and number of every mortal sin;) *sincere* (a true revelation of conscience.)" . . . "Concealing a mortal sin in confession is a sacrilege and makes such confession null and void. Venial or smaller sins should be confessed as a matter of devotion."* Now we can quite understand persons in difficulty, burdened with a sense of sin and sorrow, pouring out their minds to others in whom they have the completest confidence, and whom they consider able to guide them and give them sound spiritual advice, and we can also imagine cases where a person so troubled might feel a great relief after unburdening his mind to another in this way, but that "is altogether a different matter" to this, as Canon McCormick wrote to the *Times* a few days ago. For, he continued "The priest sits and acts in the place of God. Sins must be numbered. For a full and proper confession questions must be asked and answered, and such questions often suggest sins hitherto unknown. Motives must be dealt with. The secrets of a life become the possession of a man, who may be good or bad, reliable or unscrupulous. Our Church" he writes—that is the Church of England—"in the Homilies condemns this proceeding altogether." †

Now you will notice that no sin of any kind is to be omitted from the catalogue when confession is made. The mind is to be ransacked and every evil thought and deed laid bare to the listening priests,—a very difficult thing to do we should think in the case of those who only go to confession once in twelve months! The most minute details of the life are to be laid bare to this mortal man, and terrible consequences are said to follow imperfect confessions, where, through shame, any one has concealed any secret sin. ‡ Instances are given by Catholic writers—a number of which might be related—where certain females who have not made complete confessions, have, at death, gone into the most dreadful torture, and—appearing in vision to others—have declared their agony, and their damnation to all eternity through not relating some sin

* *The Converts Catechism.*—Pages 32, 33.

† Letter to the *Times*, Aug. 25th, 1898.

‡ How women may be frightened to confess all their sins, and omit nothing may be seen from the following extract from Saint Liguori's "Instructions on the Commandments and Sacraments", (pages 76, 77.) In addressing female penitents, he says: "Have you committed sin? If you do not confess it you shall be damned. I would have you also to know, that unless you confess the sin you have committed, you will never have peace during your whole life. O God what a hell will that miserable woman have within herself, who departs from the confessional without having confessed her sin. She always carries within her a Viper which unceasingly rends her heart. This miserable being shall suffer a hell in this life and a hell in the next." On page 276 we read: "Tell me, my sister, if in punishment for not confessing a certain sin, you were to be burned alive in a caldron of boiling pitch; and, if after that, your sin were to be revealed to all your relatives and neighbours, would you conceal it? No indeed if you knew that by confessing it your sin would remain secret, and that you would escape being burnt alive. Now it is more than certain that, unless you confess that sin, you will have to burn in hell fire for all eternity, and that, in the day of judgment, it will be made known to the whole human race." In

which would have revealed their shame!* Thus the duty is enforced upon the minds of the living, and especially upon the female mind, that everything must be laid bare to the man to whom the knee is bent and the confession made.

I want you to realize the power the priest must possess, and which he may possibly use for evil, and has done in numberless cases. He possesses the secrets of the community. The people are largely in his power. Whatever circumstances he and his flock may meet in there is the mutual consciousness that he knows the secrets of their hearts, and whatever theory you like to set up, concerning his position in the confessional, the fact remains that he knows all the folly and the weaknesses and the vice of those who are unfortunately led to confess to him instead of to the almighty and merciful God.

Then there is that further consideration to which Canon McCormick made reference, the fact that "for a full and proper confession to be made questions must be asked and answered." It is an inquisitorial business altogether. And who can doubt but that much uncleanness is poured into the ear of the priest? And how often his questions must have reference to sins of impurity! We do not doubt for a moment that large numbers of virtuous men and women attend the confessional. We do not doubt that there are large numbers of upright and honourable priests, but we do believe that the confessional places awful temptations in the way of these celibate confessors, and we do believe that advantage has frequently been taken of the position they occupy, so that confessor and penitent have fallen into the grossest kind of sins. This we think can be abundantly proved from the writings of those who have been connected with the Church of Rome, and who have had no object in view but to reveal the truth. Why is it that such prominence is given to certain classes of sins, the sins of impurity, in these confessional books, these secret confessional books so hard to obtain, connected with both the Church of England and the Church of Rome. It is so. They are downright nasty. They are so filthy in their suggestiveness that they are not fit for general circulation. Only fit for the pureminded priest! They refer to the kind of questions to be put to little children,

the "Mirror of the Clergy," a celebrated book for priests, page 537, we are told, "It is necessary that the confessor should know everything on which he has to exercise his judgment. Let him, then, with wisdom and subtlety, interrogate the sinners on the sins which they may ignore or conceal through shame." Father Chiniquy, an ex-priest, for fifty years a member of the Romish Church writes in comment "The poor unprotected girl is thus thrown into the power of the priest, soul and body, to be examined on all the sins she may ignore, or which through shame she may conceal! On what a boundless sea of depravity the poor fragile bark is launched by the priest! Over what bottomless abysses of impurities she will have to pass and travel, in company with the priest alone, before he will have interrogated her on all 'the sins she may ignore and which she may have concealed through shame!' When the poor deluded spiritual patient comes to be treated by her so-called spiritual physician and shows him her diseases, is she not alone—shamefully alone, with him? Where are the protecting ears of the husband, father, mother, sisters, or friends? Where is the barrier interposed between this sinful, weak, tempted, and often deprived man to his victim?" See Chiniquy's "Priest, Woman, and the Confessional" (2/6), also his notable work "Fifty years in the Church of Rome."

* A number of these kind of cases may be found, quoted from the works of Roman Catholic writers, in "Romanism and Ritualism Unmasked," by John B. Schollard, P.M. and L.S., formerly a priest of the Roman Church.

and young men and maidens, and matrons, questions not fit to mention in a public meeting like this. These books have been circulated in thousands by Churchmen. A great stir is being made in the land at this very time on account of these things. When—some time ago—Lord Redesdale called attention in the House of Lords to a book entitled “The Priest in Abolution,”* which had been privately printed by and was at the disposal of an association of clergymen called the Society of the Holy Cross, for private and limited circulation among the clergy, it was shown how dangerous was the tendency of the book, and if the circulation of the book was dangerous, much more the kind of questions it advocated in the confessional. In the preface of the book this passage occurs:—“To prevent scandal arising from the curious or prurient misuse of a book which treats of spiritual diseases, it has been thought best that the sale should be confined to the clergy who desire to have at hand a sort of *vade mecum* for easy reference in discharge of their duties as confessors.” It was also stated that “in reply to one clergyman who had requested copies of the work to be forwarded to him, this reply was received:—‘I am unable to comply with your request without reference to some well-known priest of your acquaintance.’” Why this secrecy? Is it not a Bible truth that “men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil? For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved” (John iii. 19, 20.) I will not quote here to-night certain statements from this book which were quoted in the House of Lords,† but in the discussion which followed the quotations and the speech in which they were introduced, the late Archbishop of Canterbury said “The fact that such a book should be printed and circulated is to my mind a matter of very great concern. The noble Earl spared us from many details; but, at the same time, he read quite enough to show that no modest person could read the book without regret, and that *it is a disgrace to the community that such a work should be circulated under the authority of clergymen of the Established Church.*” “I cannot imagine” he said, later on in the same speech, “that any right-minded man could wish to have such questions addressed to any member of his family; and if he had any reason to suppose that any member of his family had been exposed to such an examination, I am

* Monsignor Capel, Roman Catholic, stated in the “*Times*” that this book was an adaptation of one of the Romish books on auricular confession.

† No good can be accomplished by detailing the kind of questions put to, or suggested to be put to, maids and matrons, and little children in this book for Church of England priests. They are of a very unclean and unwholesome nature, and those to whom they are put must feel their cheeks tingle with shame at being thus secretly examined by young or middle aged men, or indeed by any one. Suffice it to say that the book states that “Children may receive absolution with much spiritual benefit after seven or even five or six.” And that “the priest must be careful *not to be too reserved in questions*, lest he risk thereby the loss of a great good for the sake of the less.” The book warns priests of their own danger and shows the results of the system; how “imprudent confessors have been wrecked, who by commencing with a simple spiritual esteem, *have ended insensibly with a sensual and carnal love.*” The book refers to “the priest” in this manner:—“The Priest as a Judge.—It is in his capacity as Judge, in remitting or retaining sins, that skilful adroitness supplies him with means for bringing the sinner to a right state for receiving absolution.” Again:—“The Priest is Judge in the place of God.”

sure it would be the duty of any father of a family to remonstrate with the clergyman who had put the questions *and warn him never to approach his house again.*"

These are facts, and the thing is going on wherever Ritualism gains a footing. There is no exaggeration about them. The priests grasp after the power the confessional gives them. There appeared in the Birmingham *Argus* not many days ago a letter—reproduced from the Liverpool papers, written by the Rev. T. A. Howard, Vicar of St. Matthew's, Toxteth, Liverpool, on the confessional as practised by the Ritualistic clergy of St. Thomas, Toxteth, Liverpool. We are told that the revelations of Mr. Howard "have created a great sensation in Liverpool," "nor" says the *Argus* "need we wonder at it." I cannot quote his lengthy epistle, but he states that "Confession is habitually practised in this Church, principally, it would appear, amongst young girls and women." He then describes the manner of the confession,—the way in which it is conducted—and asserts that "Questions of appalling audacity and shamelessness are put to the girls, and the questioning, it is stated, always begins with sins of impurity." Specimens of the questions are given, and most abominable they are, and this Protestant Vicar relates a number of cases in which these questions have been put to females, everyone of which has been related to him from their own lips, and in every case he states "those concerned are fully prepared to substantiate their statements.*" He also describes the overwhelming shame they felt when they discovered the kind of questions to which they were subjected.

It is singular that the minds of men who profess the name of Christ should think it their duty to act in this manner, and really corrupt instead of ennoble and purify by their ministrations those whom they influence to attend the confessional, in the belief that they are fulfilling some Scriptural duty, and doing something that will result in spiritual good.

The theological books of the Roman Catholic Church, written especially for the instruction, and to set forth the duties, of priests, particularly in the confessional, deal largely with the same kind of sins. They contain a large amount of filth. It is contended that the priest has to be well instructed in all kinds of sins that he may know well how to probe the consciences of those who come to him to confess. That he has to examine the supposed penitent to bring his forgotten sins to the light of day, that, as a medical man frequently has to know the secrets of his patient and question him as to his past, (this argument has recently been used in the public press) so the priest, the "cure of souls" has to first of all know—from his precious Latin theological books, the "Moral Theology" of Saint Alphonsus Liguori, a canonised saint of the Roman Church,† and such like books,—the various sins that beset the paths of

* The details of the questions put to these ladies are very filthy and disgusting and a disgrace to the man who put them, and to the system that upholds such abominations.

† "It grieves me concerning the matter which contains so much filthiness, as by its name will disturb pure minds, to give a longer dissertation; but oh that its subject were not so frequent as it is in confession, that it would not behove the confessor altogether to be fully, but only briefly instructed; as besides, let the chaste reader

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men, women, and little children, and being fully acquainted with these things, his mind saturated with them, he may question those who resort to him to unburden their minds and receive the forgiveness of sins in what is called "the sacrament of penance." As a little Catholic Tract which I had sent me by a Roman Catholic some time ago, dealing specially with the confessional, in the form of a conversation between a priest and a simple minded man (very simple too,)—in which of course the simple man assents to all the priest says and the latter has it all his own way—as this priest puts it in the conversation :—"He (the confessor) asks us a question or two and drags out two or three sins which we had put away in the lumber room, and forgotten all about them. Then he puts another question or two, and off drops a grand dress we had made for some pet sin, and we see it as it is, not a man but a monkey. All those fine excuses we had been spinning, 'we couldn't help it,' and 'somebody made us,' and all the rest, they go like cobwebs; but they wouldn't go if we went down at our bedside and said we were sinners. David didn't see himself as other men saw him, till Nathan came and helped him." From this you see that private prayer to God—the going into our closet as Christ commanded, and there praying to our Father who seeth in secret, and who will reward us openly (Matt. vi. 6)—is not considered sufficient! We must have the priests help to bring sins to remembrance! Private self examination and confession to God is not enough! We must go to God through him—not direct through Christ! He must suggest things to see if we have committed them, and in doing so, must often suggest to young and innocent minds sins and impurities that they are ignorant of and innocent of, and thus the confessional becomes the means of communicating knowledge which corrupts instead of purifies the mind. Of course there are priests who are discreet and careful, and who may—quite apart from their spiritual claims, give useful advice in difficulty, but this can be done outside the confessional box—but how many have abused their position and become sources of evil to those who have sought spiritual good?

The reference to David, too, is quite beside the mark. It is a misapplication of Scripture, a twisting of the divine word to apply it in any way to the confessional. Nathan was a prophet, not a priest of Rome, or of Jerusalem either, and there was no such practice as auricular confession corresponding with that of Rome in connection with the Israelites. David was not in the habit of practising confession to either prophet or priest. Nathan was sent to him because he had committed a great crime, and his conscience for a time was seared as with a hot iron. The

pardon me if I speak largely, and enter into details which exhibit more unseemly ugliness; but, if it appear strange to any one that authors, moreover prudent and pious, should have treated largely concerning this matter and describe even minute circumstances of various cases let him hear the most illustrious Ludovicus, who vindicates the excellent work on matrimony of the most learned Thomas Sanchez from this censure, in the following words: 'although he treats concerning the matter of filthy acts, yet hell is more filthy, and if the discourse be filthy, it is more so to be corrupt in sin, as Peter Blessensis says, that author stirs up the filthy mire, for the purpose of curing the disease. If men were angels they would not need of such things.'" *Moral Theology*, "Saint" Liguori, Mechlin Edition, 1845. This "Saint" enters into most minute particulars concerning sins of impurity which "good confessors" are to "investigate," but these disgraceful particulars need not be reproduced here.

prophet went to him—specially sent by God, and by means of a parable convinced him of sin, brought home his guilt to his mind, accused him—not in the confessional—of his great sin, boldly declared—when David had pronounced sentence on the suppositious sinner—“Thou art the man,” and then, on his repentance, assured him that the Lord had put away his sin. But in connection with this sin we should remember David’s deep repentance, and we can only estimate that rightly by reading the out pourings of his heart as contained in the 51st Psalm where he confesses his sin to God—not to a priest—and pleads with God that he may be washed and cleansed and purified, that a clean heart may be granted to him, that he may be washed thoroughly from his iniquity and cleansed from his sin, and wherein he recognises that not outward sacrifice is required (the very opposite to what Rome teaches) but that God requires “truth in the inward parts,” and that “the sacrifices of God” (acceptable to God) are a broken spirit : a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” Would that our Roman Catholic friends took heed to this and could fully enter into the spirit of that Psalm. It was *the faithful ministry* of the prophet that produced repentance, and it is the preaching of truth to-day and at all times—the faithful setting forth of the divine testimony, the fearless denunciation of sin now and in all ages—that is sufficient to bring men to repentance and change of life. Paul by his faithful preaching was able to touch the conscience of Felix, and make him tremble, when he reasoned with him—before his wife Drusilla,—“of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,” and it needed not the confessional to produce this effect. It is the spirit word of God—kept back from the people by the priest—that convinces of sin, and enlightens with “the light of life,” and brings men and women to heartfelt repentance and a changed attitude towards God. This was sufficient in apostolic days. On the day of Pentecost, when Peter and the other Apostles preached the word—the death, the resurrection, the ascension of Christ, and the guilt of those who had crucified him, the multitude of people were “pricked to the heart” and cried out to the assembled Apostles “men and brethren, what shall we do ?” Peter did not tell them to do anything corresponding to the Roman Catholic doctrine of penance, he said “repent”—not confess and receive priestly absolution and do some act of penance as a satisfaction to the Almighty to make yourselves acceptable to him—No, “repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” That was his teaching, so different from that of his so-called successors, and that is just a sample of apostolic teaching. Repent, change your mind and attitude towards God and his Son, right about face, and, recognizing this Jesus whom ye have crucified and slain as God’s anointed one, the heir to David’s throne, and His gift for the salvation of the world, His method of reconciling the world to himself, recognising him as a name of salvation, as a covering for sin, to be united with whom means forgiveness and ultimate redemption, be baptized into his all-saving name for the remission of sins, and you also shall participate in the gift of the Holy Spirit and become heirs, together with us, of the grace of eternal life. No confession, no penance, none of the tom-foolery of priestcraft, but hearty repentance, change of life, belief of the truth and baptism into the

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name of the Son of the living God. And in this case, at the very commencement of the apostolic ministry, with Peter and the other Apostles as preachers, this preaching was sufficient, for we read that "they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." There was no private confession here. There was no time for it. They could not confess three thousand in one day. No! it is an invention of priests in later ages. These people heard the truth, and faith came by hearing, producing that change of thought and mind demanded, which led them to seek salvation through Christ alone, and unite themselves to his name.

But this private, secret whispering into the ears of the bachelor priests, this secret examination of the mind,—there is no comparison between that and David's acknowledgment of his sin. The one is largely formal, customary, a rite of the Church, a thing insisted on as necessary to salvation, a practice taught from childhood, and superstitiously observed; the other was from deep conviction of sin, an overwhelming sorrow for his fall, a heartfelt humiliation, leading to God as the fountain of mercy and goodness, and to a longing for that pardon which comes alone from him, and for that purity and peace which results from fellowship with the Eternal. Confession to a priest is a kind of crutch to help weak and falling men and women along. It is based upon a fallacy—the supposed power of ordained men to forgive sin. It makes forgiveness easy, and sin less hateful than it ought to be. A person can be washed white every week, or every day for the matter of that, or he can run up the score for a twelvemonth and then have the score rubbed out all at once! We are assured it does not tend to holiness of life. When you know those who are profane, and in every sense "of the world," and yet attend confession; when you know those who go to their homes drunken on the Saturday night and attend Mass on the Sunday morning, and are considered "good Catholics;" when you see thoroughly irreligious lives, all apparently condoned by an observance of the outside mummery of superstition, an attendance at Mass, occasional confession, fingering a rosary, or repeating formal prayers before certain images of dead men or women, how can you help but be struck with the vanity of a religion like this? "Spiritual whitewash" is a phrase that Lord Grimthorpe used in a vigorous letter to the *Times* the other day to describe the effect of the confessional on those who resort to it as a means of comfort and pardon. And it has been asked "If a man be taught to believe that he can be absolved from all penal consequences of sin, vice, and crime upon making confession to a priest, will not such a belief tend to weaken in his nature, the stimulus to righteousness?" "May not the prominence given to the wrong-doer's absolution from the penal consequences of his own wickedness produce a degree of moral callousness in character of coarse moral fibre?" It must act so on the many. And so it has been said by the one who asked these questions:—"The truth is that by placing the emphasis of appeal in the wrong place, that of the bad man's own escape from consequences, and not upon his deep and thorough renovation of character and change of life, the religion of the New Testament, intended to be a 'light of life,' may be used for purposes of whitewash." "The nervous and the timid" wrote Canon Eyton in this recent discussion, "will always be disposed to fly from con-

science to the confessional and to abdicate thereby their rights as children of the Father,* to shirk the real struggle. It is not by such means that grit comes into a man or the conviction that 'the Father himself loveth you.' The more men come to see the positiveness of the moral teaching of Christ, the placing of 'do' before 'don't,' the force of St. Paul's counsel, 'Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh,' the more healthy will be their views of vice, the less will they be inclined to trust to lifebelts of any kind such as confession, the more vigorous will be their Christian manhood."

Now what effect does the Confessional have upon the priest himself? In the penitent it produces false hopes, altogether unscriptural results, a belief of sins forgiven on a formal confession of them to a mortal man, and has frequently led to the corruption of those who attended it.—What of the priest? Granted, if you like that on natural grounds he is moral and upright, is it possible for his mind to be unaffected by what he hears? Does it not become a kind of sewer into which all the evil of other men's lives are poured? A daily receptacle of uncleanness and all kinds of sin? Is that beneficial for the individual? What does Paul say about "evil communications?" Does he not declare that they "corrupt good manners," and exhort us not to be deceived upon that point? (I. Cor. xv. 33.) Is the priest free from contamination because he claims to act as God in the confessional? Does he not all the same remain a mortal man, subject to like passions as other men, tempted and tried and sinning as others, and can he immediately shake from his mind the things communicated to him? Impossible. Is it not declared in the Scriptures a shame to speak of some evil things done in secret? (Eph. v. 12.) And is the priest exempt, or is his ear ever to be open to listen to the sins of others? Has it no deteriorating influence upon his character and life? What do notable men who have lived and died in the Church of Rome declare? and equally notable men who have officiated at her "altars" and left her community—what do they say? The revelations are horrible. A letter of the late Father Gavazzi, an ex-priest of Italy and a great Italian orator and reformer, was published on Friday night on "Ritualism and the confessional"—a man who had had extensive experience of the latter—and his letter closes with the words—"Mind! the clerical principle of Ritualism is pride at the 'altar,' and lust in the confessional." What did Pierce Connelly, M.A., in "a letter to the Earl of Shrewsbury" 13th edition, Pages 17—21, declare? The following is an extract:—"I have had experience in the confessional from princes downward, and out of it, such as perhaps has fallen to the lot of no other man; and my solemn conviction is, that a celibate priesthood, organized like that of Rome, is in irreconcilable hostility to all great human interests. . . . I have seen clerical inviolability made to mean nothing more than licence and impunity. I have read to the pure and simple-minded Cardinal—Prefect of the Propaganda—a narrative, written to a pious lay friend by a respected Roman priest, of such enormities of lust in his fellow-priests around him, that the reading

* If they were children of the Father, knowing and understanding his will, they would not be found at the confessional.

of them took away my breath—to be answered, *baro mio*, I know it, I know it all, and more, and worse than all; but nothing can be done." Saint Liguori to whom we made reference before says:—"Priests in the world, really good men, are rarely—not to say most rarely—to be found." And he has declared that for most men the priesthood, with the confessional and its dangers, is "almost certain damnation."—"Prax. Confessarii," vii. 93. * We should think that, from all we have read of his works, they were calculated to help the priests on the way to destruction. †

Now we could just keep you here for a long period listening to the statements made by priests and ex-priests as to the evils of the confessional, spoken or written by men who knew what they were talking about, and whose testimony is absolutely reliable, for they wrote and spoke with the authority of knowledge, and when the tendency of a system is to corrupt—why practice it? "A tree is known by its fruits," and the fruits of this tree are undoubtedly not good. Although, as we fully and frankly admit there are upright, moral, self-denying, and benevolent men in the priesthood, yet the fact remains that the confessional has been fruitful to produce evil results, and, quite apart from its moral results, it is a spiritual snare to those who trust therein. Even the professed secrecy associated with it has been violated over and over again, and there can be little doubt but that it has been used for national and political ends, and private ends, and personal ends, and in the cause of persecution by the infamous Jesuits, over and over again. It is claimed on behalf of the priests that absolute secrecy is the characteristic of the confessional, that the confidence reposed in the priest is never violated, that he can be implicitly relied upon, that he is as it were a passive instrument, like a pen you write with which is an instrument in your hand but useless of itself, so the priest claims to be to God, what

* "Oh! how many confessors have lost their own souls and those of their penitents on account of some negligence in hearing confessions of women; . . . Oh! how many priests who before were innocent on account of similar attractions which began in the spirit have lost God and their own souls." *Moral Theology*, Liguori. And he exclaims: "Would to God it were not so." In his work "Selva, the Dignity and duties of Priests," written exclusively for the instruction and spiritual devotions of priests, and of which it is said on page 5, "this book is one that has had the most success, thus giving us a high idea of the good it has effected," we read:—"The confessor also stands in need of great fortitude, and at first in hearing the confession of women. How many priests have lost their souls in hearing those confessions? We must treat in the confessional with young girls and young women, we must hear their temptations and often avowal of their falls; for they also are of flesh and blood. We have a natural affection for persons of the other sex, and this affection increases whenever they confide to us their miseries. But if these persons are pious, devoted to spirituality, says St. Thomas, the danger of an inordinate attachment is yet greater since this natural affection is still more strongly attracted; but, continues the Saint, if mutual affection increases, the attachment will also increase in the same proportion; it will assume at first the appearance of piety, and the devil will easily succeed in making 'the spiritual devotion change into carnal devotion!'"

† "Some of the treatises by Dens" it has been said—a noted Catholic writer—"and by Sanchez, the Jesuit, whose work 'De Matrimoni,' published at Genoa in 1592, with the express approbation of Pope Clement VIII., are common sewers of iniquity." That great philanthropist, the late Lord Shaftesbury, in a speech at an Anti-confessional Meeting, June 30th, 1873, said of Dens:—"Did ever you hear of a famous work, written in Latin, consisting of ten volumes, by a Canon-law writer of the name of Peter Dens? His book has on it the *imprimatur* of the late Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, . . . and if he could do so to *such a satanic book as that*, what must be the sentiments of the large mass of those who are imbued with

the pen is to you. "That" says one writer "is just the likeness of the priest. He is blind, deaf and dumb as the pen. He neither knows your sins nor can tell them. While God uses him as a pen indeed, he acts as God's pen; but when God has laid him down, he has no more to do with the sins he has just heard than the pen with the words it has just written." Then in reply to a question, "Do you mean that he has actually forgotten them?" this Catholic writer replies, "No, he could remember them if he choose. I do not mean that God works a miracle, and blots the confession supernaturally out of his mind. But if he remembers them, he knows so thoroughly that he has no longer anything to do with them, that it is just as if he had never heard them at all. To tell them would be the most terrible of sins. He dare not speak of them even to yourself, except in the confessional again. He dare not show, even by a look, that he knows any sins he has heard. Because you have told him something dreadful he does not therefore wear a look of horror; he does not shrink from you, or sigh, or look gloomy—*because he actually does not know your sins.* As a priest he knows them; *but not as a man.* As God's pen, as God's messenger, he knows them; as your fellow-man he does not know them. In the confessional he knows them; out of the confessional he knows nothing about them; knowing he still knows not." Let those believe this who can. It is an impossibility for the human mind to shake off knowledge in this way, especially the knowledge of special sins. There must, in special cases, be the consciousness, the abiding consciousness of transgressions which ought to greatly appal the mind, and while there are no doubt many upright and honourable men, who would never think of revealing confessional secrets, it is a known fact that such secrets have been revealed, and that unprincipled priests have "amidst coarse

all its doctrines and who bring its principles into practice? WHY, THIS BOOK EXAMINES AND REGULATES EVERY POSSIBLE INTERCOURSE OF MARRIED LIFE, WITH AN ACCURACY WHICH IS PERFECTLY INCONCEIVABLE, AND AS HORRIBLE AS IT IS INCONCEIVABLE. . . . Mark this, give the whole extent of meaning that you can to the word *possible* IT REVEALS WITH A HIDEOUS BESTIALITY OVER DETAILS WHICH I COULD NOT NAME, NOT MERELY HERE, BUT IN A MORE CONTRACTED SOCIETY. 'Hideous bestiality' is a very weak term—for the detail extends to almost a thousand things, to almost every sin that can be committed through the most perverted and the most horrible conception and practice—a state of things which brought down from heaven the eternal vengeance of which you read in the most awful pages of Holy Writ."

The late Mr. C. H. Spurgeon, in reviewing a book on "The Religion of Rome," written by an enlightened Roman Catholic in Italy, wrote thus in the *Sword and Trowel*:—"The system of confession to priests is the sum of all villainies. . . . We have seen with our own eyes that which would make the blood of any decent man boil within him. In the confessional boxes in Germany and Italy anybody may see for himself, exhibited in the compartment allotted to the priest, a list of the sins concerning which the confessor is to enquire. THESE INCLUDE CRIMES WHICH WE WILL NOT POLLUTE OUR PAPER BY MENTIONING; he must be a hardened profligate who would dare allude to them in the presence of a young girl. Not in the pages of a folio reserved for studious eyes did we read the degrading memoranda of which we speak, *but in the confessional itself, where every passer by may see them if he will.* True, the document is in Latin; but unfortunately, such words as *abortio, sodomia*, and the like, need no translation. But we dare not trust our hand to write more—the superstition of Rome is the worst of all the evils which have befallen our race; may the Lord arise and sweep it down to the hell from whence it arose." The views of Mr. Spurgeon and our own differ on the subject of hell, but we admire his vigorous language on the confessional, and he speaks of what he knew and had seen.

explosions of laughter, described to each other the stupid folly of their penitents" and made no secret of their sins. "I have been present in company at different times" writes a man who lived a loyal Romish priest, "when I witnessed priests revealing heinous sins sacramentally made known to them. Some priests informed me, without the least necessity, of some enormous crimes they have heard in confession perpetrated between [names withheld.] In fact several priests, vie at times amongst themselves to know which of them can relate and inform each other of the greatest and most odious sins communicated to them in the sacred confidential tribunal. They take secret pride in having it in their power to make such communications. A bishop informed me of the sins of one of his penitents, told to him in confession, who was a respectable lady, and an acquaintance of mine. He even mentioned her name. Some coolness existed between a certain priest and myself, to whom I was in the habit of going to confession previous to our misunderstanding ; in the course of some time after he revealed my sacramental confession to others in my presence. I have often been an ocular witness to the abuse, licentiousness, and improper conduct of several clergymen in the confessional, who, in place of healing and reconciling sinners, inflicted deep wounds both on their own souls and those of their patients : converting the tribunal of forgiveness and reconciliation into that of binding and ensnaring—of grief and sorrow, into that of base pleasure and filthy lucre. It is, alas ! become a mutual repository of vice and profanation—a mutual depravity and corruption among many. It is a most delicate, precarious, and dangerous adventure in any person to open his mind and disclose the secrets of his heart, and entrust his soul and eternal welfare into the hands of many priests. Shall I be more explicit ? Ah ! I shudder at the idea. I shall only say that this sacrament was considered before now as the pillar of the Roman Catholic Church, through which grace was conveyed and salvation obtained ; but now it is considered by many priests and prelates as the pillar of the Holy Inquisition, the source of genuine information for sanguinary purposes, the security of absolute and universal influence, and the extermination of heretical pravity. In former days the sacrament would not be conferred on those who should be determined to murder, plunder and defame ; but in our anarchical times they would be conferred on none else by our sacerdotal inquisitors." When such scandalous revelations as these are made on the evidence of upright, honourable, and transparently truthful men, what value is to be placed upon the assertions of the writer previously quoted, who also states that "When the power to forgive is given, *the power to hide sins in secrecy is wrapped up in it.* So that, as a matter of fact, *never has it been known since the Church began that any priest has ever told a secret whispered in confession.* There have been bad priests since the Church began, priests who have sinned all manner of sins, who have been untrue to their vows, who have lost the Faith, who have left the Church ; but not one even of them, let him have been ever so vile and bad, has committed that meanest and vilest of sins—the breaking of his honour to God by telling the secret of the confessional !" It is beyond the reach of any man's knowledge a statement of this kind. To make it with the slightest authority a man would require to know the universal history of the priesthood in every

age, to have the minutest information of every moment of their priestly life, and so be in a most remarkable manner supernaturally endowed. An assertion of that kind, so bold and sweeping, and universal in its nature, outside the actual knowledge of the writer, would have no effect upon the minds of reasoning men and women, and besides, the serious statements just quoted—from a priest evidently sincere, gives the lie to such a sweeping assertion. L. Desanctis, a converted priest, and one whom Pope Pius IX. highly esteemed and made every effort to win back to the Roman Communion makes some sad revelations on this point, as does also the Rev. Laurence Morissey, by whose pen the extract just given was written, parish priest of Oning and Templemore, Ireland,—a man who died in the Roman Communion.*

Why then—considering such facts as those adduced to-night—why confess to a priest? The Bible nowhere commands it. It is a thoroughly unscriptural practice. There are no priests but one, the great High Priest of our profession, Jesus, the anointed of God, and through him alone can we have access to the Father. He is “the way and the truth and the life, and no man cometh to the Father but by him.” This aspect of the case, and the Scriptural passages which the Catholics, and their imitators the Ritualists, depend upon to prove their position—which is a very weak one indeed—we hope to thoroughly examine on the next occasion, and prove to you that there is no Bible foundation for the practice. The Bible places no man between us and God except Jesus. “For” as Paul wrote to Timothy,—and his word has authority—“there is one God, ONE mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all” (I. Tim. ii. 5, 6.) The Pope and the priests have usurped the place of the ever-living Christ, and they have peopled earth and heaven with multitudes of mediators and intercessors, and have multiplied offerings, and offer them constantly when his one offering for the sins of men is declared to be sufficient, while they themselves are to be found sitting “in the temple of God, setting themselves forth as God” (II. Thess. ii. 4,) especially in this so-called sacrament of penance, when the priest claims to act as God, as one of them states “God takes me up and uses me, (like a pen) and then I can scratch out the sins upon a soul.” It is a false claim, but millions are deluded with the superstition.

By all means let us have self-examination, and contrition, and confession of sin, but let it be to the Almighty. Let us not in any way deceive ourselves, there must be genuine and heartfelt sorrow for sin, a sorrow leading to a new and better life in harmony with the will of God; but, repenting, and believing God's glorious promises, let us be baptized into the all saving name of Jesus, and walking henceforth in newness of life, we shall have access to the Eternal through him, who, in apostolic days was described as the “new and living way,” the High Priest who has superseded all others and appointed no successors, “who ever liveth to make intercession for us,” and who is “able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him” (Heb. vii. 25.)

* For full particulars of these assertions the reader is referred to the work of L. Desanctis: “Confession, a doctrinal essay translated from the 18th Italian Edition” by the Rev. M. H. G. Buckle. Vicar of Eddingham, 1878 (J. Kensit, 18, Paternoster Row, E.C.) Also, “The second part of the development of a cruel and dangerous Evangelistic system of the Court of Rome,” by the Rev. Laurence Morissey, parish priest.



Why Confess to a Priest?



LECTURE II.

SYLLABUS :—Brief Recapitulation—the priesthood of the New Testament—Christians “a holy priesthood”—“spiritual sacrifices”—no priest, no sacrifice—transubstantiation and the mass—teaching of the epistle to the Hebrews—oneness of the priesthood—oneness of the sacrifice—one offering once for all—one Mediator—no need for human priests—the Romish priesthood not divine—the blasphemous powers claimed—Liguori’s teaching—“an arm and a voice like God”—Paul’s prophecy—the Church the interpreter of the Bible—confession unscriptural—the passages relied upon to prove it examined—Achan—David—confession under the law—“confess your sins one to another”—confession at John’s baptism—Acts xix. 18—“power on earth to forgive sins”—what I saw at Brompton Oratory—converts to Rome, the number per month—Cardinal Vaughan’s statement—Jesuits in the Church—hold fast to the word of life.

IT is not necessary to say much to-night, dear friends, in the way of introduction. The address to be delivered this evening is a continuation of the subject upon which we addressed you last Sunday, and very little indeed need be said in recapitulation of the remarks made on that occasion. We made some reference to the wide spreading Ritualism, and the unfaithfulness of many of the clergy to their Protestant vows. We referred to the effects of the confessional upon nations and individuals, and upon the priests themselves; to the immoral and impure tendency of the books used by father confessors, and of the questions frequently put to penitents by those to whom they go in their simplicity to unburden their sins; to the false hopes raised in their minds by this so-called sacrament of penance; to the testimony of priests themselves as to the immoral effects produced as the result of the practice; and finally, but briefly, to the Scriptural truth that there are no priests but one, the great “High Priest of our profession,” Jesus Christ our Lord, “who ever liveth to make intercession for us,” who has superseded all others and left no successors; for he is invested with all power and authority, and, having been raised from the dead to die no more, has entered “into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us”—our one and only intercessor in heaven or upon earth, an all-sufficient mediator between God and men (Heb. ix. 24.)

Perhaps it will be well to take up the subject at this point, and pursue this thread of truth a little further. The New Testament religion, apart from the priesthood of Jesus the great Head of the Church, is not a priestly religion at all. The very conception is subversive of the truth taught by Christ and the Apostles. There is nothing in the whole com-

pass of the New Testament which can be adduced to support the monstrous, presumptuous, arrogant, and blasphemous claims of the priests of Rome. These we know are strong words, but they are true. It is a system which in the sight of heaven needs strong words, for its priests have as it were placed their feet upon the eternal throne and claimed power and authority which only belongs to God. We shall prove these words before we have finished our discourse to-night. It is true that the Apostle Peter recognises a spiritual priesthood in all the believers, not in a special few, not in a caste, not in any men specially set aside for the service of the truth, but in all those associated with Christ by belief of the truth and union with his name, and unto such he wrote :—"Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a *holy priesthood*, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ"—the one mediator between God and men. In the same chapter of the same epistle (I. Pet. ii. 5, 9,) he addresses these same believers in the words, "But ye are an elect race, a *royal priesthood*, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." This is the only priesthood recognised by the Apostles, a praying, interceding, holy company of men and women,—“all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. iii. 28,) offering up—not literal, not carnal sacrifices, no re-offering of the body of Christ—the sacrifice of the Mass was not invented for ages after,—but “spiritual sacrifices,” the sacrifices of praise and prayer, the sacrifices of devoted and holy lives, for we are exhorted “by the mercies of God” to “present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service” (Rom. xii. 1.) This is the only kind of priesthood established under the new covenant. All other claims are based upon error, imposture, ignorance and superstition.

The very conception of a priesthood implies that there is something to offer, a sacrifice to be laid upon the altar, and this has led to the invention of that doctrine of transubstantiation, wherein the Romish priests claim that the real body and blood of Christ is present and offered in the sacrifice of the Mass, his actual flesh and blood, the flesh and blood of him who is now “the Lord, the Spirit,” (II. Cor. iii. 17, 18) who dropped his mortal nature nearly nineteen hundred years ago, and is now—not flesh and blood, for human nature cannot inherit the kingdom of God being mortal and subject to decay (I. Cor. xv. 50)—but spirit nature, divine nature, immortal and incorruptible, “fashioned after the power of an endless life” (Heb. vii. 16,) yet the priests profess to be able to produce the actual flesh and blood of Jesus, the same Jesus who walked the streets of Galilee and Judea, every day, or every week, or as often as necessary, in every Roman Catholic Church, throughout the world ! So that, weekly, there are thousands of literal Christs, mortal flesh and blood Christs created by priestly power, and offered upon the altar, and partaken of by the adherents of the Church ! and people believe it by the million, this unscriptural and absurd theory, as they will believe any nonsense that a man will tell them who puts on airs of authority, wears—to use Carlyle's words—“some singular head gear, tulip mitre, felt coal-scuttle, or purple hat ;” and masquerades in a cassock or some other fancy gown !

Now if you read carefully the epistle to the Hebrews, you could well imagine that it was specially designed by the writer to confute—by

anticipation—the claims of that Apostate Church which superseded the true, incorporated heathen doctrine almost wholesale, and slaughtered the few who faithfully witnessed to the truth, and contended against the error of the many. It is an elaborate argument to show the superiority of the new covenant over the old, the grandeur of the priesthood of Christ over that of Aaron and the Levites, the sufficiency of his one offering for sin, and the insufficiency of the many animal sacrifices under the Mosaic economy. We cannot of course go elaborately into these topics to-night, but let us look at a few passages which, while they assert plainly enough these things, subvert, with equal plainness, the false teaching of Rome.

One thing must at once strike the reader of this epistle, and that is what we might call the *oneness* of the priesthood, and the *oneness* of the offering. There is no recognition all through the epistle of any new order of priests, of any body of priests whatever, except those who had been superseded by Christ, no hint of the establishment of any others to take their place. And the same may be said of Christ's one offering for sin, it is all sufficient, no other is needed. It is an insult to him, a dishonour to his perfect work to teach otherwise. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession" and be not led astray (Heb. iv. 14.) Christ, in ch. v. of this epistle, is declared to be "a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek" (verse 6.) Under the law, priests were human, erring, mortal; there was a period when their ministry commenced, a time when it finished, and at any time death might terminate it, and their places have to be taken by others. Christ is subject to none of these imperfections and casualties. His character was perfect to start with, and as a result of this his nature was made perfect and deathless by the Father, "and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him, the author of eternal salvation; named of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek" (ch. v. 9 10.) As such—a perfect, deathless, unerring, divinely exalted mediator, the anti-type of the Melchizedek priesthood—"he abideth a priest continually" (ch. vii. 3,) and the Apostle argues in this 7th chapter very forcibly on behalf of the perfection and perpetuity of the priesthood of Christ. That which was weak, and unprofitable, that which made nothing perfect was done away, had given place to a better order of things, had faded away before the "better hope" that was brought in; and of the priests—what do we read?—see verses 23 to 28:—"And they indeed have been made priests many in number, because that by death they are hindered from continuing: but he, because he abideth for ever, hath his priesthood unchangeable," or, as the margin reads "hath a priesthood that doth not pass to another." "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. For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners," (altogether different characteristics to many of Rome's priests,) "and made higher than the heavens: who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people:"—who needeth not to confess like the priests of Rome one to another and offer sacrifices for themselves:—"for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself. For the law" (and the Roman Church) "appointed

men high priests, having infirmity ; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, appointeth a Son, perfected for evermore." In the Catholic Church, there is retrogression, there is a going back to the "weak and beggarly elements" abolished by Christ, there is the re-establishment, of a human, fallible, erring, mortal priesthood, the consecration of many priests, the offering of many sacrifices—what need have we of any ? Here is this one perfect offering, here is this one perfect priest, what need we of more ? "One mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"—one in place of Rome's multitudes—we are content with him. We are "sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*,"—ONCE FOR ALL. "And every priest indeed standeth day by day ministering and offering often times the same sacrifices, the which can never take away sins : but he, when he had offered *one sacrifice for sins* FOR EVER, sat down on the right hand of God ; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet. For by ONE OFFERING he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 10-14.) There is nothing now for a human priest to do. There is no further offering to be made. Christ did the work long ago,—"through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God" (Heb. ix. 14.) He is the one, sole, God-appointed, glorious priest, who "ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb. vii. 25.) We can—as children of God—now approach the face of our Father in heaven in confidence and love : we can approach the undimmed splendour of the eternal throne through him, without any of the fear and dread inspired by Rome ; we can—without human priests—"draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need" (Heb. iv. 16.) This is the privilege of all God's children,—let us use it to the full. Let us go through the one mediator to the God and Father of all. Stand aside ! ye man-made priests, ye false claimants to the honour, ye who darken the light of the glorious truth, ye who obscure the glory of the Son of God, ye who usurp the authority of divinity and spiritually deceive your fellows, ye hordes of men who interpose yourselves between God and man, and block the approach to the Creator of all, and impose burdens upon the consciences of the sinner unsanctioned by heaven, and place barriers in the way of the divine mercy and grace, and claim to hear the confessions of your fellow sinners, and fill the valley of the shadow of death for your dupes with terrors inspired by the purely imaginary horrors of your mythical purgatory, and the flames that proceed from the mouth of hell, and lay penalties upon them for their sins to deliver them from this threatened doom, and pardon them in God's name without his authority—stand aside ! and let us gaze upon the glory of the exalted Son of Man, and behold the light streaming from his resplendent face, let us look upon the living Christ, and looking—live, realising that he is "the way, and the truth, and the life, and that no man cometh to the Father but by him" (John xiv. 6.) Oh ! ye priests we need you not. Our glorious high priest has passed into the heavens and stands within the veil, there to appear in the presence of God for us, and through him we can partake "of the water of life freely"—"without money and without price," and to weary, burdened, sorrowful souls he says "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. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light " (Matt. xi. 28-30.)

Now this priest theory, this marvellous system we see so remarkably developed, is not an out-growth of Christianity but of Judaism and of the heathen systems which "the Church" supplanted and whose superstitions it incorporated.* It is not apostolic as we have seen, for no priest, no intercessor, no mediator, no advocate is recognised but one (I. Tim. ii. 5 ; I. John ii. 1.) No Apostle claimed the name, no Apostle claimed the power which is supposed to belong to every priest of Rome. Let us look very briefly at the modest (!) claims of these gentlemen. In Liguori's "Selva, the Dignity, and Duties of Priests," in a translation published in 1889 in New York, Chicago, Cincinnati, London, and Dublin, pp. 9, 10, this writer says : "I am a priest, my dignity is above that of the angels," that the priest is "a mediator between God and man ;" further on (page 23,) that "the priesthood is the most sublime of all created dignities—an astounding miracle, great, immense, and infinite ;" "the priesthood should be numbered among the things of heaven ;" "the priest of God is exalted above all earthly sovereignties, and above all celestial heights ; he is inferior only to God." This is the man, remember, who has gone so particularly into the kind of questions to be put in the confessional concerning immoral actions, and who deplors the fact that so "many confessors have lost their own souls and those of their penitents on account of some negligence in hearing confessions of women!" Yet "he is inferior only to God!" Again he writes : "The priest is placed between God and man, inferior to God, but superior to man ;" "a divine man." "The gift of the sacerdotal dignity surpasses all understanding." "He who honours a priest honours Christ, and he who insults a priest insults Christ," p. 24. At page 217, the words occur, "A priest at the altar represents the very person of Jesus Christ." In regard to the power the priests exercise with reference to the Mass, we read at p. 26 that "God Himself descends on the altar, that He comes whenever they call Him, and as often as they call Him," and, having "once come, He remains entirely at their disposal!" He also tells us in this book that "the priest has the power of the keys, or the power of delivering sinners from hell, of making them worthy of Paradise, and of changing them from the slaves of Satan into the children of God" (p. 27.) In another of his works, the "Glories of Mary,"† we are told that "if we would be certain of salvation" we must "fly to the feet of Mary" (p. 19,) that she has "the power to change all hearts" (p. 43,) that she is "the certain salvation of sinners" (p. 84,) "the only advocate of sinners" (p. 95.)

* "The priest theory is an evolution, not from the Primitive Church, but from the Judaism and the Paganism against which that Church was at first the great protest. The New Testament has abundant allusions to both Jewish and heathen sacrificial priests. There is not a line in it which intimates that the Church officers of Christianity, of whatever degree, were ever, as a separated class, to bear the title or to perform the functions of the priest. And the researches of a Harnack in Germany, and of a Hatch in our own country, have effectually dissipated the Episcopal theory on which the doctrine of sacramental grace has been made to depend. The apostolic succession for which the fathers of the Primitive Churches contended was a succession from hand to hand of the deposit of apostolic truth, not of a supernatural grace mechanically transmitted." *Clericalism the Enemy*.—Article in *The Christian World*,

† Cardinal Manning's authorised edition, 1864.

that "no one is saved but through Mary" (p. 143,) that "our salvation depends upon Mary" (p. 144,) that she is "the whole hope of our salvation" (p. 148,) that she "is omnipotent to save sinners" (p. 257,) that "our salvation is in her hands" (p. 576,) that "at the command of Mary all obey, even God" (p. 155,) yet, notwithstanding these divine powers, he tells us "The power of the priest surpasses that of the blessed Virgin Mary!" We are also told that "priests are called the parents of Jesus Christ," why?—because they "can produce this great person of a man—God!" (Selva, p. 32.) "Thus the priest may in a certain manner be called the creator of his Creator." "The power of the priests is the power of the Divine Person." "Who is it that has an arm like the arm of God, and thunders with a voice like the thundering voice of God? It is the priest!" (pp. 50, 51.) Once more, "the priest is 'a God on earth'" (p. 67.) You will remember a certain prophecy of Paul concerning one who claims to be God on earth, a certain "man of sin" and "son of perdition," who "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." For his blasphemy and wickedness he is to be destroyed. "Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of his coming." The prophecy of Paul seems to have a wonderful application to Rome whether intended or not, the characteristics are there, and her priests may well dread the doom foretold (see II. Thess. ii. 3-12.)

The writings of Liguori have repeatedly had the sanction of the Church, he is a canonised saint, and the late Pope made him a "Doctor of the Church" *i.e.* "one of those whose writings are to have especial weight and authority." "In May, 1803, it was stated in a decree of the 'Sacred Congregation of Rites,' that in all the writings of Alphonso Liguori, edited and unedited, there was not a word to be found fault with. Four days later Pope Pius VII. solemnly approved and confirmed the decree."*

Now these are the lofty pretensions of the hierarchy of Rome, and it is on such grounds that they claim their power and authority in the confessional. Practically they claim to be God, they bind and loose, they pardon and absolve, they remit or retain sins, they open the doors of hell or purgatory, and they can soothe or terrorise the minds of their deluded victims, and inflict penances, or grant indulgences—for cash of course—whereby the penances may be remitted, and salvation made quite a commercial speculation.† They claim

* Letter of Rev. W. Montagu Manning in Birmingham *Argus*, from which some of the above particulars have been culled. The facts contained in the letter were not confuted by anyone.

† The following extract is from "The Converts Catechism," a Roman Catholic publication which has had a large circulation:—"Indulgences, granted by the Church, REMIT THE TEMPORAL PUNISHMENT OR TEMPORAL CONSEQUENCES OF SIN. Both are included in the power of binding and loosing. . . . An indulgence is the application to our souls of the superabundant merits of Christ and also those merits which His Blessed Mother and the Saints, through Christ's merits, have gained for themselves. The Church teaches that this temporal punishment or satisfaction due to sin, even when its guilt has been forgiven, must be paid off either by our own good works here on earth, or else hereafter in Purgatory."

"The doctrine of indulgences (says one able Protestant preacher) also has an immoral tendency. These indulgences are regarded as a kind of checks, drawn on the bank of merit, which is composed of supererogatory obedience of the

a judge's power as we showed last week, and, to act in the capacity of judges, they must know all the facts, and have all the sins of the person confessing laid bare before them before they exercise the prerogative of mercy, or punishment, as the case may be.*

This doctrine of penance, and priestly power, and divine authority to absolve from sin rests not upon the Bible but upon the authority of the Church, and to that authority Catholics have to bow. There is no private judgment allowed. You cannot interpret the Bible for yourself. You must accept the decisions and interpretations of the Church. This is how people are hoodwinked. Many of the people scarcely dare read a Protestant tract, or attend a Protestant service. A friend of mine offered a young person a small pamphlet composed almost entirely of Scriptural passages, but on no account would she accept it. If she read it, she said, "she should have to confess it to the priest, and she would be ashamed to do that!" This is a fact, and we can well see how enslaved the mind is, and how little independence there can be, and how the authority of the priest is maintained, and how mental and spiritual darkness is perpetuated, when the consciences of people are bound like this. Would that men and women would read the Bible for themselves, and not regard it as a dangerous book. That is the source of appeal. We must, as one writer has said, "get back to first principles," we must go to the word, we must test priestcraft by apostolic teaching, we must weigh it in the balances of truth, and we shall then find how little substance it has, we must look at it from the high ground of Scripture to discover how little authority it has, and to see what a vast, unscriptural

Saints and of the superabundant deserts of Jesus Christ blended together ; and these promissory notes of pardon extend not only to sins already committed, but sometimes to sins which may afterwards be committed In proof that she holds this monstrous practice, we appeal to the Creed of Pope Pius, where every Romanist is instructed to say—"I also affirm that the power of indulgences was left by Christ in the Church, and that the use of them is most wholesome to Christian people." These exemptions from purgatorial punishments are still sold by Rome! And to show you to what an extent she has carried this terrific traffic, this merchandize of sin, it is only necessary to inform you, that it appears from the table of impositions of the Chancery of Rome, published after his conversion to Protestantism, by Anthony Egane, aforetime Confessor General of Ireland, that there is a regular scale of charges for indulgences, graduated according to the supposed turpitude of the transgression to be remitted. How equitable and Scriptural the gradation, may be imagined from the single fact, that the pardon of a heretic is charged at £36 9 0, whilst the pardon for marrying a second wife, after murdering the first, is charged at £8 2 9,!! ("Townshend's Accusations of History against the Church of Rome," p. 130.) Surely this is to make the law of God of none effect—to make merchandize of souls—to rend asunder the bonds of moral obligation."—Rev. Hugh Stowell, M.A. on "The Importance of the Protestant Controversy."

• "The article which declares that the priest absolves not in a ministerial but in a judicial capacity, is a still more audacious attempt to invest the priesthood with the prerogative of the Most High—the discernment of the heart. Yet the same council which has empowered the priest to forgive sins as a judge, has pronounced that forgiveness void in cases which the Bishop or the Pope may afterwards be pleased to reserve. What then happens if the penitent shall have died before the Pope reserved his case, and the Pope shall have reserved it in ignorance of his death? Were his sins remitted at the time of his death by virtue of the priestly absolution, and is the burden of them laid again on his soul by virtue of the Papal reservation? It is painful to pursue this fiction into all its impious absurdities. St. Ambrose expressly condemns it in saying—"Men exhibit their ministry in the remission of sins, but exercise no jurisdictional powers."—Rev. B. H. Kennedy, D.D.

system has been built up on the slenderest of foundations, and as we look at it from that standpoint we are amazed that so many millions have been, and are still, deceived thereby.

This doctrine and practice of Rome,—may we not say all the doctrines of Rome—has no solid basis, no broad foundation, no substantial underlying facts and truths, it is not “built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone” (Eph. ii. 20,) it has been the growth of ages, developed like so many other doctrines by cunning, and craft, and superstition, and sophistry, until it has become a firmly rooted doctrine and practice, and of vital importance—if the priest is to retain his power. But where is the Bible authority for confession of sin in this modern fashion? Where is the plain evidence? On what does the doctrine rest? Are there any cases of confession to a priest to be found in the New Testament? Produce them. Let us examine them in the light of day. Did the Apostles confess to each other after the manner of Romish priests, and as even the Pope does to some priest in an inferior position to himself? Where is the proof? Where did Jesus command confession to a mortal man? Where did the Apostles? Did Peter? Never. Did Paul? Never. Did James or John or Jude or any of the others? Never. Did they ever profess to forgive sins themselves? Not an instance can be found. Do you find a single case where one of these ambassadors of Christ used the priestly words “I absolve thee”—“a phrase—mark! which was never heard in the Church till more than a thousand years after our Lord’s appearance in the flesh” *—not one. “Yet” says one writer “they (the priests) tell us with a bold front, that at the application of these words by the priest, the whole efficacy of the sacrament consists—and that he acts in that capacity *as absolutely and judicially* as our Lord Jesus Christ himself—so that after the words are pronounced, you can have as little doubt of your forgiveness of all your sins before God, as he to whom our Lord himself said, ‘*Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee*’” † (Catach. Trid. p. 221.) “There is not a record in the Scriptures”—wrote Canon McCormick in the *Times* the other day (Aug. 25th, 1898,)—“the supreme rule of authority—a single instance of a man forgiving sins which have been committed against God. God only can forgive such sins. The declaration of forgiveness, on certain conditions relating to character, repentance, faith, is the only absolution in such cases. The whole question resolves itself into the following statement. If a man repents and believes [and obeys] he is absolved by God, though no clergymen may declare him to be so. If he does not repent or believe he is not absolved, no matter what words of absolution are pronounced by human lips. It does not lie in the province of man to read the thoughts and intents of the heart. A judicial, human absolution may be [is] the greatest delusion and deceit.”

I have always thought the evidence adduced in support of confession extremely weak. Some time ago I wrote to a friend of mine, a Roman Catholic, and expressed my mind upon this point. I told him that their belief and practice in this matter always appeared to me to be singularly

* Rev. M. W. Foye, M.A., on *The Seven Sacraments*, formerly clergyman at St. Martin’s, Birmingham.

† Ibid. See foot note on page 27.

lacking in Bible evidence, and asked him if he could refer me to any book dealing with the subject. I received a reply in which I was recommended to have an interview with his friend the local priest, and I also received two small pamphlets bearing upon the question, though I must express surprise at any person who had a knowledge of the Scriptures being influenced by them. We will examine the passages chiefly relied upon and quoted by friends of the Roman Catholic Church in support of their belief.

You would scarcely think the Old Testament would be pressed into service to support this asserted custom of the Christian community, yet if there is a text here and there that seems to help them, they are not above using it for that purpose. So we found last week that the case of David,—whose sin was brought home to his mind by the prophet Nathan, and who acknowledged his sin to the prophet, as any other man might—was used in this way. We said quite sufficient, however, on that matter last Sunday to prove that there was no analogy between his confession and the practice now in vogue, so that nothing further need be said on this occasion. But we have known the case of Achan quoted for the same purpose. The incident will be familiar to you. The sin of this man occurred in connection with the capture of Jericho. Everything in that doomed city was accursed, or devoted to the Lord (Josh. vi. 17,) no man was to take anything for his own private use or wealth. It was a test of their faith and obedience. Achan failed to obey. He thought there was no time like the present, that "a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush," and that while he had the opportunity he would secure "a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight," (Josh. vii. 21,) and hide them in his tent, and no one would be any the wiser while he would be a considerable gainer by the transaction. The result was disaster in the next battle—the sin of one man, alas! often affects others. There was consternation in the camp from Joshua downwards, and enquiry before the Lord. The reason of the disaster was divinely communicated, and Joshua was told what to do to detect the culprit. Lots were cast, and the tribe, and then the family, and then the household of Achan was taken, and then the household man by man was brought before the Lord, and Achan, the culprit, was pointed out as the sinner. Then he was publicly exhorted by Joshua to acknowledge his sin, in these words—I wish you to note them particularly, and especially to whom the confession was to be made:—"My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and *make confession unto him*; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me." Then Achan stated what he had done, but this appears to have been a public confession, not a private one. Moreover Joshua was not a priest, he was not of the tribe of Levi, but of Ephraim. Neither does there seem to have been any absolution in this case, nor any indulgence granted either, by which "the temporal punishment or temporal consequences of sin" might be remitted, for Achan, and his spoils, and his family were taken "unto the valley of Achor," and there they were "stoned with stones, and burned with fire" (Josh. vii. 24-26,) and God's anger ceased with their destruction, and so the case fails in every way to support the Romish plea of confession, absolution, and indulgences to remit the punishment due to the sinner.—The Roman

Catholic criminal, whether he has committed the capital offence or not, can obtain absolution even though he die with a lie in his right hand !

Now for another case,—given by one of the books sent for my satisfaction. “The law of Moses” it says, “enjoins that if the children of Israel ‘shall have committed any of all the sins that men are wont to commit they shall confess their sins’” (Numb. v. 6, 7.) Now that is all the little book says about it and it is very misleading. It does not give all the particulars and what it does quote certainly does not convey an accurate idea of what is meant in the passage. This was the message of God, through Moses to the children of Israel, “When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, and do a trespass against the Lord, and that person be guilty ; then shall they confess their sin which they have done : and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed.” You see, the writer of the pamphlet did well for his case to leave that part out. It was the acknowledgment of sin by man to the man against whom he had sinned, such sins as are mentioned elsewhere (Lev. vi. 1-5,) such as things taken by violence, or given into his keeping and not restored, or something found belonging to others concerning which the finder has lied, or sworn falsely—these are the kind of sins referred to, and the sin is to be confessed and reparation made, and interest added, but here again we fail to discover anything corresponding to the secret system of the Romish Church, which, we fear, in the majority of cases does not lead to such good results as are here commanded by God.

That passage brings to mind another one quoted to prove the practice of priestly confession, but which has no more reference to such a thing than the case of David or Achan or the one to which we have just referred. I think the way the passage is referred to by the Rev. gentleman* who composed “The Convert’s Catechism” is most misleading and dishonest. “St. James” he writes, “immediately after speaking of the visitation of the sick *by the* PRIEST and the forgiveness of sins, adds,—‘Confess therefore your sins one to another,’ *evidently with a view to absolution!*” Those who never refer to Scripture to see what it says may be thus imposed upon, but they are very foolish, and the man who thus takes advantage of their ignorance is neither fair nor honest. There is in truth no mention of a priest in the passage. Priests as we have shown, have no place in the Christian economy. They are excrescences, not natural to that simple religion, that purely personal religion established by Christ and the Apostles. Let us look at the passage, free from the concealment and distortion of the priest, and we shall find it simple enough. The most microscopic examination will fail to discover the priest or the priestly absolution.—James v. 14-16. The Apostle is writing to the brethren, and he writes : “Is any sick among you ? let him call for the elders of the Church ;”—not priests but elders, (*Greek*, presbyters,) probably aged men, or men of experience, who had the oversight of the Church and the general management of its affairs and who also may have proclaimed the word of life†—“and let them

* The Rev. Francis X. Reichart.

† The word is first mentioned in Acts xi. 30.

pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord :”—(a custom, and a passage from which the priests have deduced without the slightest reason their doctrine and practice of “extreme unction”)—“And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him”—that is by God of course who would raise him up. Then come the words “confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Now how can any fair minded man extract secret, priestly confession from a passage like that? “Never was any text *less* pertinent to prove a doctrine than this passage to demonstrate that.”—(*Barnes.*) We might adopt the language of the advertisement cards and say, “Puzzle: Find the priest.” In this case it would be a useless search. The confession referred to is mutual. “Confess your faults *one to another.*” The passage seems to presuppose that the sickness had been brought about by some particular sin or sins as a punishment, and that the right thing to do was to frankly acknowledge the transgression to the person who had been sinned against. “One to another”—candour, confession of injury, mutual forgiveness, and mutual prayer—those are the lessons taught—“pray one for another, that ye may be healed.” How any one can misunderstand such a passage passes our comprehension. We can scarcely conceive that intelligent men in the Roman Catholic community can be blind to the simple teaching of the passage. If there was actually a priest in it (which there is not,) it would still be *mutual* confession and *mutual* prayer.

But we are told that “When John preached by the Jordan, the people ‘were confessing their sins’” (Matt. iii. 6.) Quite true, but this was before the public manifestation of Jesus, before the “Christian priesthood”—even according to the belief of the Romanists—was established. Besides, that this was a public confession, a public acknowledgment of sinfulness, seems perfectly clear. Do you suppose for a moment that John privately confessed all the multitudes that went out to him from “Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan?” Ridiculous. He faithfully denounced sin, there was a great awakening on the part of the people, they acknowledged their sinfulness before God, and submitted to this baptism of repentance at the hands of him who proclaimed the coming of the mightier one, the true “Lamb of God, who should take away the sin of the world” (Matt. iii. 11, 12; John i. 26-34.) But John never pretended to absolve them from sin or its penalties in any way, and so this prop fails to support those who lean upon it to sustain their faith in the confessional.

The 19th of Acts, and the 18th verse is another proof text relied upon for the same purpose “And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.” The same may be said of this case as the last. It was a public confession. You have to read into the passage the idea of the priest, the private confession, and the absolution—they are not to be found there. The incident arose out of the ministry of Paul by whose hands we are told “God wrought special miracles” (v. 11, 12.) Then a special case is referred to, the result of which was that “fear fell on them all (at Ephesus,) and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified,” and as the result “many that believed, came and confessed”—that is to their previous sorcery, magical arts, jugglery and

sleight of hand by which they had imposed upon the people—"and shewed their deeds. Many also of them which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them *before all men* : and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." (verses 17-20.) It was a great work of grace upon the hearts of men, producing wonderful moral results, an evidence indeed of the truth of a passage to be found in the Proverbs (ch. xxviii. 13.) "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper ; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy." We all agree that confession should be made, we all agree that confession in this case was made, but we find no priest, and no absolution only in the name of Jesus.

One Catholic writer endeavours to make much of the case of the man sick of the palsy who was brought to Jesus by his friends, the account of which is contained in Matt. ix. 2-8, so we will consider it for a short time. The point is that Jesus said to this man "son, be of good cheer ; thy sins be forgiven thee." That he said this in the presence of "the ignorant, uneducated, uncultivated mob." That his hearers did not conceive him to be God, but at the most a man endowed with power from God, but only a man ; and that yet he said "son be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." That because they thought him to be a mere man, "certain of the scribes said within themselves, 'This man blasphemeth'" and that Jesus rebuked them for their evil thoughts, claimed the power to forgive sins as "the Son of Man," proved his claim by healing the sick man, and that the multitudes "glorified God, which had given such power unto men," *therefore man has the power at the present time to forgive sins on earth because it has been transmitted to him by Christ!* That I believe is a fair representation of the argument. Now let us look at the case and see if it can by any possible means support the confessional. The first thing that strikes us is that there was no confession in the case. The man is brought to Jesus, he is let down through the roof, and Jesus—reading the heart of the penitent man, and knowing the faith that was manifested—addressed him at once with the words "son, be of good cheer ; thy sins be forgiven thee." Sweeter words perhaps to the man than the word of power that healed him—"thy sins be forgiven thee." Then came—as we said—the thought of the scribes and the reply of Jesus to their inward, unexpressed ideas ; "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts ? For whether is easier, to say, thy sins be forgiven thee ; or to say, arise, and walk ?" Aye, but the modern priests, who claim those divine powers we referred to, find it easier to say the one thing than the other do they not ? They can say easily enough "I absolve thee" but they cannot give the proof of their power like Christ, by saying to the weak, the palsied, the crippled, and even to the dead "arise, and walk." If they could we should be more inclined to believe them. They have claimed to work all sorts of miracles in the past, they have imposed upon a credulous people with their winking Madonnas,* and rotten bones, and teeth of supposed

* The Rev. R. W. Dixon, in his "History of the Church of England," says ;—referring to the time of Henry VIII.—"There were few religious houses which were without one or more such objects of devotion [*i.e.* relics,] celebrated in the neighbourhood as being efficacious in the case of disease, or prompt in the aid of child-birth. Besides these, which were the relics proper, there were found in many places miracu-

saints, and nails and wood said to belong to the real cross, and the very garment they claim to possess that Jesus wore, and these are venerated and have been made a splendid source of income to the Church, but the real miracles they are powerless to accomplish with all their marvellous claims ; but Jesus could say these words : " But that ye may know that the Son of Man,"—*the* Son of Man, the one foretold by Daniel, aye and the Son of God too—"hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose and departed to his house"—healed in body, and in mind, and then Mark tells us that the people were "amazed, and glorified God, saying, 'we never saw it on this fashion'" (Mark ii. 12,) while Matthew says "they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men." This is laid hold of and applied by the priests to the power of forgiving sins, given, they say, to "men," the plural word being used, but though the word "men" is used, it is evident that it had an individual application in the case under consideration, and did not apply to men generally ; moreover, Jesus—whatever the people took him to be—claimed to be the Son of God, and to exercise power that no other man had hitherto possessed. He knew the circumstances of this man, he knew his particular sins, sins which had perhaps resulted in his palsied condition ; he knew the trembling of heart which the man felt when lowered into his presence, and the heartfelt sorrow he had for his sin, and the faith in his power to bless, and he had the authority to say "thy sins be forgiven thee," but all these conditions are wanting in the case of present day priests who claim the power simply through the laying on of hands in what they suppose to be the true apostolical succession. But after all it is quite probable that the statement made of the people, refers to the miraculous power he had displayed in healing the man, they saw the man rise up immediately, cured by a word, and walk away to his house, and they "glorified God, who had given *such* power unto men." Whichever interpretation you place upon the passage, there is nothing to favour the idea of confession and priestly absolution, as claimed by Romanist and Ritualist to-day. And the same remarks apply to the case of Mary Magdalene also, to whom Jesus announced divine forgiveness, but who made no private confession of her sin.

Now there are two or three other special passages, the chief ones relied upon, which I intended to deal with to-night, but it is too late now, I will therefore reserve them for special consideration on the next occasion, when we shall be glad to see present all who are interested in these important matters. But we may urge one and all to give due consideration to these questions which affect our salvation and our knowledge of God's will. Religion is a personal matter, and no mortal man can intervene to save us. We may have individual access to the Almighty through his

lous images or figures, some of which not only wrought cures, but gave signs of sensibility to adoration. In them the actions of life were imitated by mechanical contrivances ; and the faith of the worshippers in the saint were stimulated by beholding his body move, his eyes wink, his head nod, or his arms expand. Some of these were brought to London with the rest of the spoil, and exhibited in public to justify the King's proceedings. These, there can be no doubt, were impostures for the sake of gain ; but in condemning them, it may appear to an enlightened age that the whole of the religion of the rags and bones was nothing but the invention of rascality playing on folly."

Son, without the aid of priest or canonised saint. Let no man trifle with your eternal interests, trust to no man your welfare for the time to come. This is at present the tendency,—to trust to a priest who has no power to save. Ritualism dulls the spiritual senses, administers opiates to the mind, leads away from the truth and to a trust in outward forms, leads also to idolatry and saint worship and Mariolatry, and is day by day sending numbers of converts to Rome. Only recently I saw a clergyman in Brompton Oratory kneeling with others at the altar specially dedicated to Mary, and going through his superstitious devotions with numbers of other Catholics! At the same time I witnessed a service—a performance it might be called—conducted solely by the priest and his attendant, which for its solemn mummery was perfectly amazing. The people took no part in it, except by kneeling and counting their beads, and gazing with curiosity on strangers like myself who were present at the service; there was no singing, no prayer, no praise, no Bible, nothing but an amazing performance by the priest and his assistant. I could not help but contrast all this nonsense with the simplicity of the truth, and the simple worship of the New Testament, and inwardly wonder whether the priest himself had any faith in the performance he was going through. And I cannot help but wonder what Peter and Paul would have to say at this remarkable development of that “pure and undefiled religion” which they so largely helped to establish if they could appear on the scene and witness such a service. None would be more astounded at the claim that these priests make to be their true successors and faithful representatives in the earth, and no one would utter more scathing and indignant language at the claim. A statement appeared in the press recently as to the number of converts monthly joining the Romish Church. Desiring to know accurately the truth of the matter, I addressed a letter last Monday to Cardinal Vaughan asking him to kindly furnish me with the number who were, in England, weekly or monthly joining, as converts, the Church of Rome. I received his reply yesterday morning—“About 700 a month throughout England.” This is how the clergy of the Protestant Church are doing Romish work. It is hinted that there are secret societies in the Church in favour of Ritualism or Romanism. It has been stated that there are even Jesuits in the English Church, and the Bishop of Liverpool has expressed his belief that such is the case,* though Cardinal Vaughan has written to the effect that it cannot be true, but the ways of the Jesuits are crafty, and with their order the end justifies the means, and even the Cardinal may not know of the depths of their duplicity. It is for us who know the truth to value our freedom, to hold fast to the word of life, and to hold forth that word of life to others, so that in the day of Christ’s manifestation we may not be found to have run in vain, or to have spent our strength for nought.

* Mr. John Glynn, at a meeting held in Liverpool in August, “quoted from a letter he had received about a clergyman who, on his death-bed, confessed that for years he had been a Roman Catholic, and, under a dispensation from the Pope, continued in the Church of England to further the cause of Rome. He sent that letter to the Bishop of Liverpool, who replied:—‘Dear Mr. Glynn,—I thank you very much for your kind letter. Though I was out-voted at York, I believe the majority of Low Churchmen are on my side. I note carefully what you say about fifty clergymen of the Church of England being Jesuits, and it entirely confirms my own belief.’”



Why Confess to a Priest?

LECTURE III.

SYLLABUS :—The subject continued—no command for private confession—walking in the light—Bible believers regenerated by the truth—baptismal regeneration—an awful error—confessions of a Romish priest—statements of an ex-priest—the Rev. M. W. Foye, M.A. on the evils of confession—the main props of Rome—Peter and the keys—binding and loosing—the “Royalties of Peter”—the power of the Apostles—remitting and retaining sins—“as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you”—once a priest always a priest—the source of apostolic power—the apostolic practice—“St.” Chrysostom’s testimony—“St.” Augustine’s language—brief historic references—the confessional a growth—Dr. Pusey on the dangers of the system—our duty—what the priest thrives upon—the light of truth.

SO far as we proceeded in our enquiry on the last occasion we found no justification in the Bible for the practice of auricular confession, no Scriptural reason why we should confess to a priest. In all the passages examined, quoted by Romish writers to prove their position, not one taught that such a practice was to be observed, and it should be remembered that there is no command anywhere given to that effect. If the position could first of all be established that under the new covenant there was brought into existence a distinct order of men, who were to observe vows of celibacy, a priesthood which was to take the place of the Levitical—with whom be it remembered no such vows were ever required,—and if there were some plain commands—or even one—which read :—“Thou shalt confess thy sins to these divinely appointed priests, and no single sin must be left untold, and I give unto them, in their generations—whether they are righteous or turn out wicked—power to pardon and absolve from guilt all who thus make known their iniquities ; and to them I give power to impose penances for transgression, and to grant indulgences whereby the penances may be set aside, and in all ways—in the confessional and at the altar—to act as my representatives, and judge and condemn, or absolve with my authority”—if now any such statement as that occurred it would be satisfactory, it would set the matter at rest, and it would be a vindication of the Roman Catholic position on this question at least, but this is just what is absent. There is nothing equivalent to it to be found. Human priests are abolished, no new order has been established, one sacrifice for the sins of men has been made for ever, and one priest stands before the eternal throne

whose functions pass on to no other, an abiding priest, a holy priest, a sympathetic priest, an advocate, or helper, at the right hand of God.

Confession we found commanded, confession of two kinds we can find, that is to those to whom we have done any wrong,—sometimes a humiliating but a necessary practice,—and confession to God, the fountain of all mercy and goodness, who if we comply with his conditions, will not be slow to manifest a father's love towards us. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins (to him—not to a priest) he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "My little children" wrote the Apostle John, "these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate (or helper) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (I. John i. 7-9; ii. 1, 2.) Here is a most important matter to be kept in view: the believers of the New Testament were regenerated men and women, they were "new creatures in Christ Jesus, old things had passed away and all things had become new;" the power of truth had changed their hearts towards God, and they knew that to have fellowship with him they must "walk in the light, as he was in the light," for if they walked in the darkness, if their lives were habitually sinful, their profession was a lie, and they had no union with God and his Son. But Rome's doctrine of baptismal regeneration in infancy by which it is taught that children become new creatures by undergoing that rite has introduced an awful error into the world. It is not truth but a drop of water administered by priestly hands that is supposed to regenerate the mind! and the result is that men and women grow up unregenerate, but members of the Church, with lives that are, in numberless cases, far from being in harmony with the will of God. And this accounts for the complaint as to the awful confessions that priests admit they have constantly to listen to—from those who are supposed to be Christians but are not Christians at all, never having been renewed by the power of divine truth. "Of all dreary weary jobs" writes a priest,—and this in a book defending and advocating confession—"I know none drearier and wearier" (than hearing confessions.) "Scores and hundreds of human beings coming and telling you the same stale old human sins, the same weary old human weaknesses, too much drink and too little prayer, the same old changes rung on the same old seven deadly sins week after week, month after month, year after year, the same resolutions broken, and made and broken again—mercy! it is like living in a churchyard, bones and skulls and skulls and bones, save that in the confessional, the bones and skulls come to life again and the dead souls arise." One cannot help but think what a bad lot they must be to be constantly, week after week, ringing the changes on the seven deadly sins, especially when we remember what the seven deadly sins are! * These people are not regenerated by the power of truth, but—from custom—they go to confess, and they get absolution, with perhaps some light penance to perform, † and their consciences are easy through this deceptive practice which is

* See page 8.

an insult to heaven. Here is the testimony of one who acted as a priest and confessor in the Church of Rome, but who, years ago, was deposed because he made a faithful effort to reform them. "The confessional" he says "becomes the medium of numberless abuses in the hands of the ignorant, the unexperienced, and the profligate. The doctrine of wrong is often inculcated instead of the doctrine of right. The knowledge of vice is conveyed by indelicate interrogatories—and the profligate priest makes the confessional subservient to the gratification of his unruly appetites. The crime '*sollicitatio mulieris in tribunali*,'—that is, the '*seducing of a female in the confessional*,' is not of such rare occurrence, and would be very common, but for the dread of detection. But how is the machinery of confession made to work? how is it brought into action? In the country, the poor people practice confession, for the most part, through dread of public exposure. And how do they practice it? how do they prepare for it? When they hear of the priest's arrival at the station-house, they quit their labour in the field or in the barn,—hurry to the confessor—make a compendious recital of some sins they are in the constant habit of committing; and confessing, make some sort of a promise of amendment; as a matter of routine—receive absolution—hear the Mass recited in Latin—take the blessed Sacrament—pay the confession dues—return to their labour with an obligation of repeating a number of rosaries within a given time, and think no more of the transaction. In the cities and large towns, confession is very generally neglected, except at the point of death. Alas! what improvement in public morals can be expected from such a system? Alas! let

‡ It would appear from the following that penances are much lighter than at one time they used to be, though the same authority would make it appear that they ought to be greater as "devotion" has decreased, and "the sins be far greater than ever before." "Canonical penance" says the Rev. W. G. Barker, M.A., in a sermon on Papal indulgences, "is generally considered to mean that part of the sacrament of penance, known under the name of 'satisfaction,' and consists in some penal exaction; either corporeal punishment, or more generally, ceremonial observance. An indulgence is the relaxation of this part of penance. This is the only sense in which indulgences were ever known in the ancient Church [not the Apostolic] and in this sense they were most sparingly and cautiously used. Let us hear the words of the Rhemish Commentators on this point. On the 11th verse of the 2nd chapter of the 2nd epistle to the Corinthians, 'Lest Satan should gain an advantage over us,' they have the following remarks:—'In some ages of the Church much discipline, great penance, and satisfaction was both enjoined and also willingly sustained, and then was the less pardoning, and fewer indulgences, because in that voluntary use and acceptance of punishment, and great zeal and fervour of spirit, every man fulfilled his penance, and few asked pardon. Now, in the fall of devotion, and loathsomeness that men commonly have to do great penance, though the sins be far greater than ever before, yet our Holy Mother the Church, knowin gwith the Apostle, the cogitations of Satan, how he would in this delicate age drive men either to desperation, or to forsake Christ and his Church, and all hope of salvation, rather than they would enter into the course of canonical discipline, enjoineeth small penance, and seldom useth extremity with offenders, as the Bishops of the Primitive Church did, but *condescending to the weakness of her children, pardoneth exceeding often and much, not only ALL ENJOINED PENANCE, but also ALL OR GREAT PARTS of what punishment temporal soever is due or deserved, either in this world or the next*' (Rhemish Testament, Edit. 1582, p. 475.) I entreat you, to mark well, dear brethren, the most wonderful admissions that the Church of Rome makes in this most singular passage! A remarkable defence this, of the floods of indulgences, and the lightness of modern penances in the Church of Rome! Note well this fact—the Church admits that she dare not insist on the canonical penances, lest men should leave the Church, and *therefore* they are commuted by indulgences."

facts—let Spain and Portugal, France, Italy, and Ireland answer the question.”—*O’Crolly’s Inquiry*, p. 153.

I should like here to introduce an extract from a sermon preached some years ago by a clergyman of the Church of England,* who was protesting against the errors of Rome. It is rather lengthy but sets forth just the ideas of the spiritual dangers of the confessional which I wish to convey to your minds. After referring to that unscriptural idea proclaimed in the Trent Catechism, p. 255, “*that one may make satisfaction for another, (i.e., by good works, or by indulgences) which is indeed a special property of this sacrament,*” the preacher said, “Alas! where shall we find words sufficiently strong to describe and denounce the pernicious effects and consequences of these demoralizing doctrines on the multitude! Indeed the sacrament of penance is the bane of all inward and practical Christianity. It turns the whole religion of Jesus into a mere external mechanical performance. However some may strive to explain and guard the doctrine, and fence and parry its baneful tendency, such, indubitably, are its effects on the great body of the Romish community. You require little observation and experience among them, to be but too sadly convinced, that with the great mass, sin and godliness are mere matters of debtor and creditor account with God—or, which is the same thing, with the priest, God’s vicegerent, in the tribunal of the confessional. What compunction can I have at sinning to-day, if I am persuaded I can make satisfaction to God to-morrow, or the day after, by a few extra duties, or voluntary penances? Can I have even *that imperfect sorrow* called *attrition*—while I am under the habitual impression that I can, when I will, propitiate the divine anger, by confessing to a priest, and receiving the grace of absolution, on the profession of this imperfect sorrow, and the promise of repeating the few Pater-nosters, and Ave-Marias, and of performing the few alms-deeds and abstinences, or other penances which he enjoins; and which yet I can do by another, or have recourse to the grace of an indulgence—or if all fail, leave the whole matter to be settled in purgatory?”

The bitter root of sin, remember—is within—it pollutes the whole inner man; the outward act is nothing more than the streamlet dribbling from it. This, it is true, may be more injurious to society, but it is indubitably the least part, in the sight of God; yet this part only it is, that I can confess. But the habitual idea, that I can confess my sins to man, tends in its very nature to turn my thoughts habitually away from the inward fountain to the outward act; and the supposition that all sin is removed by the sacramental absolution, lulls my conscience asleep, and leads me to repose in unawakened and dead security, while tottering on the precipice of eternal perdition. It is much easier, remember, to conform to outward rites, than to exercise repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is much easier to confess, promise and vow, gabble a form, tell beads, comply with the terms of an indulgence, exchange this food for that food, visit a shrine or a well, wear a hair shirt, be liberal to the priest, give a pittance to the poor, be zealous for the Church, or in short, do anything in which the body only is concerned—than to mortify the spirit, crucify the flesh with the affections

* The Rev. M. W. Foye, M.A.

and lusts, and be penitent and humble, spiritual and godly. Yes, all this is a very easy matter—yet, this is the religion of Popery. Explain the fact as they may, still it is an indubitable fact, that wherever the Church of Rome is in the ascendant, the routine-life of the multitude is this—sin away with a loose hand for a season, then confess and do penance for a day—this over, engage again in the same course of sin and apathy—again settle accounts with the priest,* and so on, till the final agonies come, and then when it is nearly all over with you, wind up the reckoning with the priest, and having cleared off all scores with God, in the sacrament of the dying—receive a passport and safe conduct for heaven! Alas! for the millions of souls that have thus perished in their sins, and gone down to hell [Shcol,] with a lie in their right hand!”

Now I want, according to the promise made last Sunday evening, to look at the one or two main passages upon which the Romanists rely for the maintenance of these lofty and extraordinary claims. The first one we will look at is to be found in the 16th chapter of Matthew, verses 18 and 19. The words which occur here were uttered after Peter's confes-

*“They ought not to be denied or delayed absolution who continue in habitual sins against the laws of God, nature and the Church, *though they discover not the least hope of amendment.*”—Bauny, the Jesuit, quoted in “Wylie on the Papacy,” p. 332.

A remarkable instance of the powerlessness of the confessional to cleanse the heart and to produce the new life, and of its power to deaden the conscience is to be found in the case of Queen Isabella of Spain. The *Morning Advertiser* in October, 1868, thus wrote of this Queen:—“She is married to a husband for whom she cares nothing. She has taken to herself sundry male favourites, so as to have, as the *Times* explained last week, a whole family of children, every one of whom has a different father. She has been living this life for nearly twenty years.” “This Queen is a *very religious* Queen. She is constantly in the habit of going to Mass, and of communicating. But she cannot do this without first confessing and receiving absolution. *She must have lived, then, for years in the habit of daily sin, of the most flagrant kind*; and in the habit of going from an immoral bed, day by day, to kneel before her confessor, and tell him, again and again, of her habitual transgression, and receive from him a full and free absolution and pardon; so that she rose from her knees before him (according to the Romish Church) a cleansed sinner, fit to go straight into the Church, and receive into her lips the ‘tremendous and unbloody sacrifice.’ AND ALL THIS HORRIBLE AND WICKED TRAVESTIE OF SACRED THINGS HAS BEEN TRANSACTED DAY BY DAY FOR YEARS PAST.” “These most frightful and revolting facts bring the whole Romish system before us; and, if we would understand the matter at all, we must find our way through a whole wilderness of very tangled questions. In fact, we HAVE HERE WHAT ROMANISTS AND RITUALISTS TERM THE ‘SACRAMENTAL SYSTEM’ BROUGHT TO A PRACTICAL TEST.” “Without any doubt or hesitation we say that the Romish Church has flagrantly sinned in the case of Queen Isabella. Her moral offences were known to all men, yet her confessor could ‘shrive her’ week by week, and even her ‘Holy Father the Pope’ could stoop to send her a signal token of his approbation, the Golden Rose, blest by him, and held to confer peculiar privileges.” This special token of the Pope’s favour, the Rose, “was presented to her at the altar, with words to this effect”:—“Receive, oh beloved daughter in Jesus Christ, this evidence and lasting monument which we wish to give thee of the earnest love we bear thee, as much for thy signal services towards this Apostolic See, as for the high virtues by which thou shinest among women.” Her confessor, Monsignor Claret, was notwithstanding described by Sir George Bowyer as “a most exemplary ecclesiastic . . . devoted to piety . . . universally venerated as a most devout Christian;” and by Lady Herbert as “a man remarkable for his great personal holiness and ascetic life.” If Nathan the prophet, or Paul the Apostle had had to deal with this case they would have made her tremble with their denunciations of her sins, THEY would not have “shrived her” day by day, but would not have hesitated to tell her that she was “in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.”

sion of the Messiahship of Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," a truth which had not been revealed to Peter by human authority, by "flesh and blood," but, said Jesus, by "my Father which is in heaven," "And I say unto thee," he continued, "That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell* (Gr. *Hades*, i.e. the grave) shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." This is the passage relied upon—the sole passage—for the supremacy of Peter, and the supremacy of the Pope, and vast, and astounding, and, blasphemous in the extreme, have been the claims and pretensions of the Papacy built upon this particular text. That is not our subject to-night, so we shall not go into the question of the "Royalties of Peter," amongst which the Pope claims "to have a plenitude of power, by which he can infringe any law." "To be so much superior to all other men, that none shall presume to tax his faults, or to judge of his judgment." "To possess the temporal and the spiritual sword; and in right of the spiritual sword, to be superior to all sovereigns upon earth; nay, so much so, that it is held of necessity to salvation, for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff." "To have a right to dethrone heretical princes, absolve their subjects from their allegiance, and empower Roman Catholics to exterminate them, and seize upon their lands." "To be Christ's lieutenants, whom it is so necessary to obey, that he who doth not obey them, ought to die the death." "To render void promises, vows, oaths, obligations to laws, by his dispensation." "To be the fountain of all pastoral jurisdiction and dignity," etc. These are Papal claims built upon this passage, and I believe every bishop has to swear obedience to the Pope and declare that he "will help them (the Pope and his successors) in keeping and defending—against all men—the Roman Papacy, and the *Royalties* of St. Peter." However, that monstrous claim, those "unexampled pretensions" we will leave to-night, possibly they may engage our attention on some future occasion, when it will not be difficult to prove how far removed from humility and the simplicity of little children, the chief ecclesiastics of Rome have been. The particular point is the binding and the loosing, and first of all I want you to notice that these words, these powers, were not spoken and given exclusively to Peter but to all the Apostles. This you will find by referring to Matt. xviii. 18, where Jesus, speaking to all the Apostles, said, "verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." In connection with these two passages we will refer to a third, and this also, take notice, was spoken to the whole of the Apostles, and not to Peter only, no pre-eminence was granted to him, except that he was the first one to proclaim to Jew and to Gentile "the unsearchable riches of Christ," the first to proclaim the message and the terms of salvation, and to announce pardon in Christ's name, on the conditions stated in Acts ii. 38, and Acts x. 43, 48. Thus he used "the keys of the kingdom of heaven," conveying the knowledge of how men

* See the Author's published Lecture on *The Keys of Hell*, Price 2½d. Post Free.

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might enter, opening the door of admission into the household of faith which would lead right on to the kingdom of God at the manifestation of Christ. The reference to a key is a figure of speech. Literally, a key is an instrument by which we enter a door or a house, and have access to it. But it is repeatedly referred to in the Scriptures in this figurative sense. Christ holds "the keys of Hades and death," because he has the power to raise from the dead all who are locked up in the tomb (Rev. i. 18.) He has "the key of David" denoting sovereign authority over the house of Israel, as God's anointed king, and power to restore that kingdom when the appointed time shall come (Rev. iii. 7, see also Isa. xxii. 22.) Peter had the keys given to him of the kingdom in the sense that he was made "the instrument of opening the door of faith to the world," and in common with the other Apostles was entrusted with administrative authority in the establishment and regulation of the Christian Church for which they were specially qualified by the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the all-wise God.

Now for this third passage to which we referred which occurs in the 20th ch. of John, verses 21 to 23. "Then said Jesus to them again, peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Spirit. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." On these three passages we might truly say all the lofty pretensions of the Romish clergy are based. Really there are no other passages which have a shadow of proof in behalf of their claims. The whole tenour of Scripture is right in opposition to them, enforcing a humility strangely in contrast to that power and influence which they maintain as belonging to them, and a loftier and purer religion and more spiritual than has ever resulted from the confessional and the religion of Rome.

We do not believe for a moment that these three passages mean what is claimed for them by the priests, that they are out of harmony with the general current of Scripture teaching, or that they conferred powers—such as are supposed—upon the thousands of men who profess to be successors of the Apostles, many of whom,—priests and popes—have been the greatest villains—on the confession of men within their own communion—that ever breathed the breath of life. Though we would have you remember, that however wicked a priest may be, whatever enormity he may practice, it is believed and taught that his priestly power and authority remains! Once a priest always a priest! He can still exercise the functions of his office beneficially on behalf of others, he can still pardon and absolve in virtue of his priestly power,—power transmitted to him by the bishop's hands!—fancy having your sins forgiven by some of the monsters of iniquity who have exercised priestly functions in the history of the Church!! What right have such evil men to declare Jehovah's testimonies? He would slay them with the breath of his mouth: he would sweep them from his path with the besom of destruction, as he will do when Babylon the great comes into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath (Rev. xvi. 19,) and this mighty, unchristian, nation-deceiving, God-dishonouring system is swept away into the darkness of perdition for ever and ever.

In considering these passages we have to keep in mind the unique position of the Apostles. They were ambassadors of Christ--no others can claim that title, and no others can claim their powers. They were sent out to proclaim new truths to the world, to proclaim the glad tidings of the kingdom of God and God's great gift of everlasting life to a perishing world, to announce upon what conditions men and women might attain unto the glory offered them, and how their sins might be blotted out, and they might draw near to God as his children, and worship him in spirit and in truth. They were sent to establish a new order of things in the world, to plant Churches, to organise communities wherever there were those who responded to their preaching, and believed the precious gospel of the glory of Christ. To accomplish these purposes they were endowed by Christ with special powers and with gifts which were altogether divine, and with a wisdom which was from above. It was the power of the Holy Spirit--which was the Spirit of God, and what they did by the aid of that divine spirit was of course done as it were by God himself and had his sanction and approval. It could not be otherwise. Christ breathed upon them as we have read and said to them "receive ye the Holy Spirit." On the day of Pentecost, the spirit was poured out upon them and miraculous power was the result. What they did under the influence of this divine power was registered in heaven. By it, when it was operating upon them, they were able to discern character, and motives, and could detect the influences at work in men's minds, and could judge accordingly, and what they thus decided, what they bound or loosed under this divine influence on earth, was bound or loosed in heaven, or had the authority of the great Head of the Church, and of the Almighty himself. "The phrase to *bind* and *loose*" says Albert Barnes, the Commentator, "was often used by the Jews. It meant to *prohibit* and to *permit*. To *bind* a thing was to forbid it; to *loose* it, allow it to be done. Thus they said, about gathering wood on the Sabbath day, 'The school of Shammai *binds* it'—i.e. *forbids* it; 'The School of Hillel *looses* it'—i.e. *allows* it. When Jesus gave this power to the Apostles, he meant that whatsoever they *forbid* in the Church should *have divine authority*; whatever they commanded, should *also have divine authority*; that is, should be bound or loosed in heaven, *or meet the approbation of God*." "It is to be observed that, both here and in Matt. xviii. 18, the binding and loosing are of *things*, not of persons; so that the words seem to convey a general power of government and discipline."* They had authority in regard to the altering of Jewish rites and customs such as circumcision, and the eating of things offered to idols, and strangled, and blood, and whatever alterations they made, or laws they enforced were to be regarded as of divine authority, because they spoke and acted with the authority of the Holy

* Bishop How's *Commentary on The Four Gospels*. It should be pointed out, however, that Bishop How writes on Matt. xviii. 18, as follows in addition to similar words to those quoted above:—"But inasmuch as our Lord is certainly speaking of such acts of the Church as are named in the verse before, and in that verse the casting out of the obstinate sinner is the main point, we cannot say the words have no reference to *persons*, and should therefore include in their meaning the condemning and absolving of persons"—that is in the disciplinary sense, in reference to such cases as those we have referred to in the above address further on.

Spirit. How the Romanists have taken advantage of these words for their own purposes is known to the student of ecclesiastical history. How the "power of the keys" has been used for political purposes, to bring unruly Kings to the feet of the Supreme Pontiff, and how priests refuse absolution to those who do not their bidding in all things, or who connect themselves with associations under the ban of Rome, and whose consciences are terrorised into submission, is known well to those who are acquainted with Church history. *

In each of these three passages, we would point out that *there is nothing whatever said about confession*. That is conspicuous by its absence. That is the after invention of the priest. It is not to be found in the word. They were endowed with special powers for a special work, but all the special powers are absent in regard to the men who claim to forgive sins in the confessional. We have examples in many places of their power being exercised in a disciplinary sense. In the case of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts v.) in the language addressed by Peter to Simon the sorcerer (Acts viii. 20-23,) in the case of Elymas the sorcerer and false prophet—struck with blindness by Paul (Acts xiii. 6-11,) in the case of the incestuous man in the Corinthian Church, withdrawn from under Paul's command, and readmitted to fellowship under his advice when the man repented,—these and other cases are illustrations of binding and loosing, of remitting and retaining sins, of excluding from the Church life and privileges of the Christian community, and of admitting to the same on certain recognised conditions. But in the above serious cases we must never forget the abiding presence of the Spirit in the Apostles by which they were able to detect imposture, and discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

This remitting of sin was never apparently used in the sense claimed by Rome. The wise way in dealing with such passages is to find out *how the Apostles themselves understood these promises*, how they acted upon them, how they bound and loosed, forgave or retained sins, and if we look well at, and study thoroughly their examples and methods we shall easily arrive at a proper understanding of the passages. In special cases we have seen how the authority was exercised, and to what the authority invested in them referred, but in ordinary cases they never professed to forgive sins by virtue of any power conferred upon them for the purpose. We have seen (in our first address) how they preached, and how they announced forgiveness on the day of Pentecost, and if you take every recorded case you will find that it is repentance, faith and baptism into the name of Christ, but never do they exhort the people to come to them to confess and receive absolution, and do works of penance to make "satisfaction to God" for their sins! "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" (Acts iii. 19.) "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren,

* "Can a penitent be absolved who is determined to follow an opinion contrary to that of his confessor? HE CANNOT."—Liguori.

"Let him that desires to grow in godliness give himself up to a learned confessor, and BE OBDIENT TO HIM AS TO GOD. He that thus acts is safe from having account to render of all his actions. The Lord will see to it, that his confessor leads him not astray."—St. Philip Neri.

that through this man, is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins : And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses " (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) " Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved " (Rom. x. 13.) These are the kind of words they used to the sinner. There is no restriction, there is no penance, there is no confession (but to God,) there is no priest (but the one in heaven), there is no human absolution, but there is the divine forgiveness, the blotting out of sin by the Father in heaven. There is no mediator but "the mediator of the new covenant" (Heb. ix. 15,) and, as "St." Chrysostom says : " We have no need either of a mediator, an usher, or of any other person, to 'present' us to God, according to the custom of the mighty in this world ; God is always present : always everywhere ; he hears always ; he is with us always." " What need I " says " St." Augustine—in book 10, chapter iii. of his Confessions, " What need I to lay open before men the wounds of my heart ? Have they the power of healing them, who are as careless of their own infirmities as they are mindful of those of their fellow creatures ? To thee alone, Almighty God, is it given to be present even with those who are far from thee ! O that they may be converted, and seek thee, so that thy mercy be on them as it is on all those who, having erred from thy ways, acknowledge their faults before thee, and return to thee wearied and dispirited, to beseech thy forgiveness, and weep in thy bosom. Truly hast thou dried up their tears ; but they must needs weep still for joy and happiness, since it is their Maker himself who succours and comforts them, and not man, who is but flesh and blood."

There is another clause in this passage from John's gospel which perhaps needs a word or two of explanation, for that also is seized upon by the believers in apostolical succession, and arguments deduced therefrom which it was never intended to mean. I refer to the words "as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Now as it is always best to represent an opponent fairly, to quote him honestly, and to give his real meaning, and not in any way to pervert his words ; and as you can best present his case in his own words, so I will here quote an argument upon this passage from the pen of a priest who is endeavouring to prove that confession is a Scriptural duty, and who uses this as a proof text. Quoting this passage the following is the argument :—" What I have been on earth, that you are to be. 'As My Father hath sent Me.' How did his Father send Him, and for what ? Armed in his human nature with all the power of heaven, with power to teach without chance of error, with power to interpret Scripture to the full, with power to give grace, with power to work miracles, with power to pray prayers that *must* be heard, with power to offer a Sacrifice that could not be refused, with power to forgive sins—so had his father sent him, and—'even so send I you.' Power also shall be yours to teach unerring, to interpret, to pray, to offer sacrifice, to forgive sin, and, therefore, now, 'receive ye the Holy Ghost.'" Now I do not think any man with a discerning mind, or with only a moderate acquaintance with the New Testament would be greatly impressed, and certainly not convinced with reasoning—or assertions—like that. The Apostles neither possessed all these powers themselves, nor have their "successors" possessed them in their genera-

tions. The reasoning is most fallacious, and it is not difficult to perceive this fact. And be it remembered that what was applicable to the Apostles, is not applicable to every cowed monk, or crafty Jesuit, or parish priest, or to any bishop or pope who has professed to represent Christ in subsequent times. Are *they* "armed in their human nature with all the power of heaven?" How absurd to make such a claim! Not even Christ "in his human nature" was armed with such powers. He was "anointed of God" for the great work he had to do, and by divine power worked all his wondrous works (John v. 30; Acts ii. 22; x. 38.) Has the Roman Catholic Church as a whole, or her priests as individuals, "power to teach without error?" Why then the diversity of doctrine in different ages? Council opposing council, Pope differing from Pope? and a gradual accretion of error till the Church has utterly corrupted the doctrine of the Apostles—as they predicted would be the case (I. Tim. iv. 1-3, etc.) Have they the power to confer grace?—It would be well if they would use it if they have. We should see a different state of things in the world at the present time if they could prove their claim to be true; and if they had "power to work miracles" also of the true genuine stamp the world would not remain so sceptical as to their claims but would more readily admit them to be true. If too they possessed "power to pray prayers that *must* be heard" we should soon see some wonderful results. There would be no "heretics" left in a very short time; all would acknowledge the claims of the "Sovereign Pontiff," and every dissenting Bethel, and every Anglican Church would be closed, or brought into harmony with the Roman Catholic religion. Christ was sent, we are told, "with power to offer a sacrifice that could not be refused" therefore the Apostles were sent to do the same, and therefore the "successors of the Apostles"—the priests of Rome—have divine power to do the same. But did the Apostles "offer a sacrifice" in the same way that Jesus Christ did when he offered up himself "once for all," "one sacrifice for sins for ever" (Heb. x. 10, 12,) and so—by his perfect righteousness and obedience became "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth?" (Rom. x. 4.) Did they lay down their lives as a sacrifice for sin as Jesus did? We know that they died as martyrs to the truth, but this was not as Jesus died for the sins of men that they might be redeemed from sin and from death, not even Roman Catholics would claim this, yet they should do if they are to press these words in this very literal and comprehensive manner—"As My Father hath sent Me, *even so send I you.*" The Apostles claimed no power to offer a sacrifice at all—if they did, where is the place? Let us see it that we may believe. They had no sacrifice to offer. They were not sacrificing priests. They believed in the one already offered, and they pointed only to "the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I. Pet. i. 19,) as the foundation of redemption for those "who, by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory" (I. Pet. i. 21.) They never pretended to any power to transmute a bit of bread into the real body and blood of Christ—this kind of miracle was out of their line—and then offer it as a sacrifice to God for the sins of the living and the dead,—the ordinance of "breaking of bread" was simply a memorial service with them, to

remember the Lord's death "till he come" (I. Cor. xi. 23-26,) he was *absent* not *present*, and in his absence they thus remembered him and the wondrous love he had shown in yielding up his life on their behalf—and what powers they were invested with did not rest upon those who in all after ages have professed to be their successors, while they do not their works, and teach not their truth. This is the great fallacy of the priesthood, whose assumption and presumption is altogether remarkable and astounding, but who can give no proof of their extraordinary claims. The position of the Apostles—as we have seen—was altogether unique, but the powers claimed for them by the writer we have quoted were more than they possessed, and what they did possess have not been transmitted to others. Christ sent them into the world,—not to hear confessions, not to offer sacrifices, not to grant indulgences for cash, not to preach for hire, not to lord it over the human conscience, not to corrupt society under the veil of sanctity and celibacy, not to fine, imprison, torture, and murder those who received not their word, not to establish monkeries, or nunneries, or the hateful Inquisition, not to practice statecraft and interfere in the politics of the nations, and claim power to exalt or dethrone monarchs, not to incite others to war upon so-called "heretics" whose faith differed from their own, but to preach the word of life to dying men and women, to show how—by faith in Jesus—they might escape the grave by a resurrection from the dead through him who is "the resurrection and the life" (John xi. 25,) when he shall "appear the second time without sin (without a sin offering) unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 28.) They were sent with his authority. As the Father had sent him, so he sent them to proclaim pardon in his name, to witness for his truth, to bear persecution in his cause, to make known his holy will, to turn men "from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith" in Christ (Acts xxvi. 18,) to establish companies of believers wherever they could, and to bind and loose with authority things relating to the government of these Churches. This was their mission, this is what is meant by the words. In some respects we may enter into their labours, but no living man has their power or their authority, and I think we have proved that the claim based upon these words, and the inferences drawn from them—as in all other passages we have examined—falls to the ground.

It is an utterly vain thing to try and prove the apostolic nature of the Romish confessional. It is a growth—the growth of ages. The Bishop of Southwell writing in this recent controversy says:—"The Primitive Church, to which one looks for guidance, never knew private confession at all. No new 'power of the keys' is supposed since the Apostles, and the early Church is our authority that private confession was not a Catholic custom nor implied in that form as then received, etc." (Birmingham *Argus*, Sept. 7th, 1898.) Another writer, in answer to the question "Is it Primitive?" replies as follows:—"Allow me to point out that confession was only established as a compulsory obligation by Pope Innocent III., at the Fourth Lateran Council in the year 1215 A.D.—note the date—thus not till the thirteenth century was it established as compulsory. Previously, the practice had been merely voluntary. But even then it was only to be obligatory once a year! The same Vicar

of Anti-Christ also established the bloody and brutal Inquisition at the same time, with the obligation to denounce heretics under penalty of excommunication. Thus, it is quite evident that the confessional was established to assist the fiendish 'Holy office of the Inquisition' to extirpate heresy. Is this origin of the confessional, therefore, Christian, or Anti-Christian? But in 1229 A.D., the Council of Toulouse decreed that confession must be three times a year, and expressly avows that this is to enable heresy to be more effectually destroyed!! But, even then, it was only discipline, and even as late as the fifteenth century the Pope did not apparently consider confession a sacrament, and many eminent Roman Catholic theologians expressly denied that it was a sacrament after that Lateran Council. Not till after the Pope had condemned John Wycliffe (and so indirectly asserted the contrary) was it authoritatively affirmed that it was a sacrament. Not, indeed, till the Council of Trent, in the 16th century, was the doctrine finally completed. 'After such historical changes through which the doctrine has passed, to assert that it is of Divine institution, and has always been practised in the Church, is to lie shamelessly!' So writes the late Father Desanctis, once parish priest, of Rome itself.—(Rev. W. Montagu Manning.)

Why then confess to a priest? We have seen that it is not of apostolic authority, we have seen that it is a practice having no authority in the Word of God. We have seen the sad spiritual results that follow from its adoption, and we have only to open our eyes and look at Catholic countries, and to study history, to behold the demoralizing results in the national sense wherever the religion of Rome has had unchecked power. As to the immorality associated with the confessional her own priests are her judges. We have relied upon what *they* have said who have known the inner working of the system, who have themselves been father confessors and lamented the evils which they could not cure, some of whom, have lived and died in the Roman Catholic faith, others of whom—"the eyes of their understanding being enlightened" (Eph. i. 18,)—have "come out of her, that they be not partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues" (Rev. xviii. 4.) Romanist and Ritualist books alike acknowledge the danger both to priest and penitent, and seem to regard the position of confessor as most perilous! Can such a position be Scriptural? "Can a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can a fig tree bear olive berries? Either a vine, figs? So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh" (James iii. 11, 12.) We would that men and women would face these priestly claims and assumptions, and make themselves more acquainted with the teaching of Romish and Anglican priests. The very confessions of the experienced are appalling. The warnings of those who know reveal the danger. Listen to these, at the close of these addresses, taken from the "Manual of Confessors," written by Dr. Pusey, who was the first to introduce confession again into the Established Church. These are his words: "If the ministry of a confessor is beset with dangers, even for a good man, how can one in your condition hope to escape? There is but too great danger that you will add fresh crimes to your account—by an undue indulgence to faults in others which you have not overcome in yourself, or, worst of all, being the cause of temptation to others, thereby proving yourself no spiritual

father, but rather a ravening wolf ; no minister of God, but of the devil ; no physician, but the murderer of souls." And again he writes, "Be assured that this is one of the gravest faults of our day, in the administration of the sacrament of penance (the confessional) that it is the road by which a number of Christians go down to hell."

We can only urge you in conclusion to cling to the teaching of the old Book, and to faithfully wield the sword of the Spirit. A duty lies upon all of us to proclaim truth and—as we have ability—contend against error. The error in this case is palpable, the truth is clear, and, viewed comprehensively, glorious to contemplate. Error exalts man, the truth exalts Christ. Error gives man a place, a share in our redemption the truth ascribes it all to Jesus. To him then, let us cling with a tenacity of purpose that shall prove irresistible to all separating forces, with a strength of faith and purpose that none shall overcome. And let our faith be based upon knowledge, upon an intelligent apprehension of what God has revealed for the enlightenment of mortal man. Error thrives on ignorance, ignorance is the parent of superstition, and the priest thrives on this trinity, but loses his power where the light shines and the people walk in its glory and splendour. In writing to the brethren at Corinth Paul said, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II. Cor. iv. 6.) Well will it be if that light shines into all our hearts, and if that knowledge becomes ours, for then, if we prove faithful to the truth revealed to us, and "walk worthy of God, who hath called us unto his kingdom and glory" (I. Thess. ii. 12,) we shall some day in the future join that immortal throng of redeemed ones whom John beheld in vision singing their new song of victory and praise, and our lips will swell the chorus of "Worthy is the Lamb," while the gratitude of our hearts will lead us to exclaim "unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hast made us kings and priests unto God his Father ; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (Rev. i. 5, 6, v. 9-13.)





The Assassin on the Throne.



THE eyes of all Europe—the eyes of all the civilised world—have for some time past been looking towards the East, have been fixed upon the city of Constantinople, and every human heart has been thrilling with indignation and horror at the events which have been transpiring in that ancient capital, in which sits enthroned the most hateful monarch, and the deepest-dyed assassin of modern times. At last the conscience of England, the conscience of Europe and America, has been quickened, has been awakened by the awful atrocities which have been committed, by the wholesale massacres which have been perpetrated, and is all aflame with righteous anger and an indignation which is divinely just against the butcher who, without doubt, is responsible for these gigantic crimes. We have waited long for this wrath to burst forth, for this national awakening to come. It has been slow in coming. The nations of the earth have been too long immersed in their own selfishness and money getting, in their own sins and follies, to feel as they ought to have felt for the oppression and wholesale murder of the poor Armenians. The voice of their brethren's blood has been crying loudly from the ground, and little have they heeded the cry. During the past year the doings of the pitiless Turk have been duly chronicled in the daily press. We have read of the nameless horrors practised in Armenia, of the unmentionable deeds done by the emissaries of the Sultan, of the women outraged and destroyed, of the children slain, of the tortures inflicted, and of the vast loss of human life, till, it is computed, some eighty thousand have perished in the various massacres which from time to time have been going on, and yet there has been no great uprising in this land to express the horror which such deeds ought to inspire! There has indeed been some protest; there has indeed been felt by many the terribleness of the position, and the necessity for some bold stroke of national policy being carried out so that the instigator of the crimes might be prevented from further slaughter; but the conscience of the nation has not been half awakened, and the Government has been impotent to restrain the wretch who is mainly responsible for these terrible crimes. There has been remonstrance it is true, there has been protest and warning, and there the matter has ended. The Sultan has laughed up his sleeve, has denied the plainest possible facts, and the work of extermination has gone on while England has been humiliated in the face of the European nations and before the civilised world!

But now there has happened another awful outbreak right under the noses of the European Ambassadors, who were eye-witnesses of the brutal, and beastly, and murderous work. It had every appearance of premeditation. It was without doubt a thoroughly organised piece of villany. The rising against the Armenians took place simultaneously in various parts of the city. Those taking part in it were specially armed. The soldiers and police did not interfere to stay the slaughter, but looked coolly on while the victims were bludgeoned and battered to death as though they thoroughly enjoyed the sport, until it is said the streets have run with blood, and some six or seven thousand people have fallen victims to this latest scandalous outbreak of the "inhuman ogre" who, we might truly declare is, with his Ministers, entirely responsible for this wholesale slaughter of the Armenians of his city. Can any one possibly believe to the contrary? Can any one believe that a word from him could not have prevented or immediately have stopped the slaughter? Why the impassiveness of the troops and the force responsible for the preservation of order? Why, when the Armenians were being hunted out of their homes and battered to death in the streets before these so-called guardians of law and order, did they not interfere to rescue the oppressed? It is plain that they were acting under orders and in sympathy with the assassins, and that their action was in harmony with the wishes of the Great Assassin who sits upon the throne. And so we have read of deeds of horror which have been committed, so dark and foul, so disgusting and brutal that it was not fit to describe them in the public papers; deeds that make one blush with shame to think that human nature is so base and degraded; deeds that are hideous and fiendish in their cruelty and wickedness, and which fill the heart with pity and anguish for those who suffered, but with an overwhelming indignation against the perpetrators of such monstrous wrong. We have read of the cartloads of dead being taken to be buried—one writer saw 80 cartloads being taken away—and of the horrid sights presented in the houses where slaughter had been going on, of the blood-splashed walls and floors, of the vast destruction of property, and of the looting of the houses and business places of those who, because of their faith—their faith in Jesus, however superstitious and unscriptural it may be—have fallen a prey to these Mahometan fanatics.

And the terror still continues in Constantinople and other parts of the Sultan's dominions. There is a veritable reign of terror. There has been a carnival of blood, and the thirst continues. There has been a Turkish Bartholomew's massacre, and the miscreants are not satisfied. Day by day we get news of expected risings and further massacres, and the prisons are full of Armenians suffering terribly, and vast numbers have been shipped away, as some believe only to be sent to the bottom of the sea, and all who can leave are getting away at the sacrifice of their businesses and wealth, "an exodus," as it has been stated, "of the best and most intelligent subjects of the Ottoman Empire;" but there are one hundred thousand poor Armenians who are unable to do so, and we can only imagine the constant dread they are in by day and by night lest a further and more dreadful outbreak bursts forth which will prove to be their destruction. As an example of the anxiety manifested to

escape the danger that hangs over their heads an instance was recorded of one poor man who with his wife and child called upon a Consul and begged him to send them away. "Where?" he asked. "Anywhere out of Turkey," was the pitiful reply. "Have you any money to pay your passage?" "I have no money, but I have a house full of furniture. You can have it all if you can only get us away out of this dreadful country."

And this country is aroused at last, and the demand goes forth that something must be done to stop this devil's work and drive the Turk, if possible, out of Europe. It is a common heading in the newspapers "The Great Assassin," and we are sure that if the Sultan is made acquainted with the sentiments of the people of this nation as expressed by those in high position, and of the various epithets which have lately been applied to his sacred person, he cannot feel very complimented, and must have a fairly good notion of the hatred and indignation which his dastardly work has aroused. In England there is for once a fair amount of unanimity upon the matter. All classes condemn the dastardly work. High and low, Liberal and Tory, Church and Dissent, Catholic and Jew, are united in the opinion that this kind of work must be stopped, and not a voice would be lifted up to save Abdul Hamid from the fate he so richly deserves. It has been suggested that he should be hung at the yard arm of a British vessel, and again that the fate of Haman should be his, viz., that "a gallows be made of fifty cubits high" that he might be hanged thereon, which would be a punishment far lighter than he deserves.

All this denotes a wonderful change in the opinion of this country. England will never bolster up Turkey again. The days of war to prop up this tottering power are gone by for ever. The study now is to give the Turk a decent burial, and to prevent war breaking out among the nations for the possession of the lands which he has misgoverned, and which have been blighted by his misrule. This is the great problem which baffles statesmen and holds them back from sweeping so hateful a power into destruction. All through this century his power—the power of the Sultan—has been waning. Province after province has been snatched from his grasp. The Eastern Question is ever with us. The Turk is incurable. "Gangrene," to use Lord Salisbury's term, has taken hold of that nation, and the knife of the physicians of Europe—in the absence of Christ "the desire of all nations," who comes anon to heal every national sore, and to give peace and righteousness to the whole world—will have to cut the infected part away, or, in other words, remove from the throne "the dastard who authorises slaughter from the luxurious quarters of the Yildiz Kiosk," and establish some form of government with proper safeguards for the lives and property of those who are not subject to the Mahometan faith.

The Turk has had his day. It is now drawing to a close. There comes a time in the history of nations—as of individuals—nations that have lost all touch with righteousness, nations that are lustful and impure and under whose oppressive sway the people groan for deliverance—there comes a time when the language of Scripture, the language of Jehovah to the last prince of the house of Judah is applicable, "Whose day is

come when iniquity shall have an end ;" there comes a day in the history of corrupt tyrannical dynasties, when their evil deeds reach up to heaven and cry for vengeance, and when the sword of divine justice and retribution is unsheathed and the guilty are swept away to rise no more. The command goes forth "Remove the mitre, and take off the crown, this shall be no more the same. . . . I will overturn, overturn, overturn it," and the tyrant is swept away, and the nations in whom no redeeming feature can be found perish, and the world is better and breathes more freely for their disappearance from the scene. This truth is illustrated over and over again in history. The Canaanites were executed because of their abounding depravity. Pharaoh, the oppressor, received his just punishment in the depths of the Red Sea. Many a foul dynasty in more recent times has fallen before the breath of the Lord's indignation, and the Turkish rule must and will go too. The Lord ruleth among the nations of the earth—let us not forget that fact. He sets up one and putteth down another. Often does he give them a long trial before his hand strikes them down. But the day comes when injustice can be no longer tolerated, but falls before the avenging armies of the Most High. "Shall the throne of wickedness have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by statute? They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood" (Ps. xciv. 20, 21.) It is "mercy and truth" that "preserve the king, and his throne is upholden by mercy" (Prov. xx. 28.) At present the language of the prophet Isaiah concerning ancient Babylon is exactly true of the modern oppressor. He smites "the peoples in wrath with a continual stroke ;" he rules "the nations in anger with a persecution that none restrained" (Isa. xiv. 6,) but as with this ancient tyranny—employed at one time, as the followers of Mahomet may have been, to punish his apostate people—the day comes for the staff of their power to be broken, and if to-day the power of the Sultan were destroyed by the joint action of the more humane European nations we could understand the magnificent, the sublime language of that inspired poem of the prophet exactly expressing the sentiments of those who would rejoice in their deliverance. They could take up this parable against the Sultan and say "How hath the oppressor ceased? the exactness of gold is still! The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, the sceptre of the rulers. . . . The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing ;" and then follows language unequalled in grandeur and sublimity setting forth how all nature rejoiced at the fall of the tyrant power, and at the humiliation and utter destruction that should be his.

It is a well-known and oft-quoted passage that "Whom the gods destroy they first make mad ;" certainly the work of the Sultan is the work of a madman. We all know how crippled Turkey is financially, how difficult it is for her to meet her responsibilities, and yet this criminal action, tolerated and instigated by her rulers, tends to drive from the city those who contribute most to the taxes imposed by the Government. The Turks themselves are indolent, without enterprise. The commerce of Turkey is not conducted by Turks. It is the European element and the persevering Armenians who very largely conduct the commerce of the city and country and develop its resources and wealth. The result

of such a slaughter, the unsettled state of things, the dread of further massacre, drives those away who have the power to escape, thus forcing on a financial crisis which will hasten the doom of the long threatened Turk. When Haman plotted for the destruction of the Jews throughout the Medo-Persian Empire this same fact was brought by Esther to the notice and consideration of the king. "If," she said, when pleading for her life and the life of her people, "if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen" (instead of to be slain and perish), "I had held my peace, although the adversary could not have compensated for the king's damage," that is, in the great loss of revenue that would have resulted from their withdrawal from commercial pursuits. There will be a corresponding loss in Turkey. Surely God hath, for his own purposes, confounded their wisdom. So he did with ancient Egypt. He gave them a cruel lord and a fierce king for their destruction. He made their princes fools, and the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh brutish. He mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof till Egypt was caused to err in every work until *his* counsel—the counsel of the Lord of Hosts—which he had determined against it, was fully carried out (Isa. xix. 4, 11.) The wise men of Turkey, and the Sultan himself, may be likewise confounded to their own destruction to carry out the purpose of the Lord.

So far but little has been accomplished by the united efforts of the European Ambassadors. A Collective Note was presented to the Porte by the representatives of the six great powers calling attention to the organised character of the mob which attacked the Armenians and committed the massacres at Constantinople, setting forth a number of facts which clearly proved official connection with the outbreak, and to this a defiant reply has been received practically denying what the Ambassadors alleged. And now we appear to be at a standstill. The Sultan presumes upon the known jealousies of all European powers and defies their mild rebukes. Shame upon the so-called Christian powers that for a single day such a state of things should be permitted to triumph and defy the humane sentiments of the civilised world. "The great Powers of Europe," writes Canon MacColl, "seem to be in a state of moral paralysis, and to have cast off not only their Christianity, but their conscience. I do not think the history of Europe supplies anything so disgraceful as the attitude of Christendom towards this miscreant, who cowers and massacres at his pleasure, a cruel coward and a wholesale assassin."

The important question is—What is to be done? It might be asked in reply, "What has it to do with us? It does not affect our interests; we are far away from the scene, let us hold aloof." This is the language of selfishness. This is the language of Cain. "No man liveth to himself," and no nation either. It is not for us, however, to indicate the national policy except in a general way. It is for Englishmen everywhere to demand that a remedy must be found, and to insist that there must be no recurrence of these gigantic crimes. It is for the nation to have a clear conscience in the matter and to stimulate her rulers to put an end once for all to the crimes of a miscreant not fit to live much less fit to rule, and to a despotism which has slaughtered thousands, and gloats over what it has done. It is the duty of the Governments of Europe, and of our own particularly, to find a remedy. They are the

physicians for this kind of work. Here is a sore spot in the body politic—let them cut it out. Here is a festering sore—let the doctors deal with it firmly, and wisely, and well. The madman who procures a knife and rushes about in all directions, indiscriminately attacking whomsoever he meets, has to be forcibly restrained—let the European policemen restrain this madman on the throne. Too long the atrocities of the Turk have been tolerated in Europe, the day ought now to have come when the outraged feelings of the more enlightened nations will tolerate him no longer as a ruling power, but insist upon such changes as will result in the better government of those parts of the world under his despotic sway. From all parts of England there seems to be agreement in this one proposition, to use the words of the *Daily Chronicle*—“Abdul Hamid must be forcibly deposed, and an European Commission appointed to choose his successor.” It is for the people of England to urge the Government thus far at least, and to show a thoroughly united front upon the matter, so that Lord Salisbury may act with the nation united behind him, and then, as a London editor writes, “Our work is done when we have convinced the Government that behind them stands no faltering folk, but the single might of a people unmatched in ardour to pursue, in patience to attain, in pitilessness to trample down the evil-doer.”

It has been thought, perhaps with some reason, that England has not done her duty in the past in reference to these atrocities, that our policy has not been bold enough, that we ought to have ceased to reason and send remonstrances, and act with more decision; and men have been sighing for an hour of Cromwell, whom Lord Bulwer Lytton described as the greatest man, with one exception, who ever rose to a throne—the great ruler who, when the Protestants were being persecuted to the death in the valleys of Piedmont by the Catholic forces, addressed letters to every potentate in Europe to let them know that he intended to make the cause of the persecuted Protestants his own. The position is an exceedingly critical one. A great responsibility rests upon the Foreign Minister. It is no light thing to plunge this nation into war single-handed, and with other European powers hostile. Yet ministers and clergymen of great influence do not hesitate to urge that it should be done. Those who read the earnest, fiery, eloquent appeals that were uttered from the pulpits last Sunday and the speeches at the Birmingham meeting on Friday night found no hesitation on this score. Preaching in Dr. Clifford's Chapel, the Rev. C. F. Aked, of Liverpool, said that “he rejoiced with all his heart that at last the people of this country were speaking their mind about ‘Abdul the Damned.’ He hoped that within a few days or weeks they would be speaking with shotted guns. . . . If conscience and judgment and God were not figments of a superstitious imagination then some Englishmen would be damned for the massacres in Constantinople and on the blood-stained hills of Armenia. A criminal lunatic, with homicidal instincts, was the supreme arbiter of the destinies of Europe. A monster reigned in Turkey, a monster whose fangs were red with the blood of the most helpless human creatures on God's earth. When he smiled a nation knew that he had hatched another hellish crime. When he slept a million people trembled lest, waking, he woke

to massacre again. When the blood lust was hot upon him he tortured and killed until the whole wide world sickened at the slaughter. Yet the deposition of this assassin was not enough. That was only a temporary expedient. It was Turkey, the Turkish Empire, that had to be destroyed. Still the deposition of the Sultan was a practical thing, and it would unquestionably lead to more. The immediate thing was to stop outrage, torture, and massacre. The next thing was to make outrage, torture, and massacre for ever impossible again under Turkish rule. That was their demand of Lord Salisbury, and the nation was prepared to follow, at any hazard and at any cost, wherever it might lead. If it led to the annexation of Armenia by Russia, why not? Great Britain wanted none of the sick man's goods. If it led to the total destruction of the Turkish Empire and the division of the territory which she had failed to rule into free States where the people were fit for freedom, and where they were not its division amongst the different European Powers that would suit them best, why not? Let our fleet bombard Constantinople and lay it in ashes, if nothing else would serve."

Now while this terrible condition of things is existing in the East, and while men are sighing and crying for a strong arm to put it down and trample the oppressor in the dust, the minds of those who are instructed in the Bible predictions cannot help looking forward to the fulfilment of God's word, and to the rule—the glorious rule—of that man whom he hath ordained to judge the world in righteousness in a day he hath appointed, assurance of which fact he hath given in raising Jesus from the dead (Acts xvii. 31.) Oh! for an hour with Jesus! Oh! that his glorious and world-wide dominion might at once be inaugurated! Oh! that the heavens which have so long concealed him from the gaze of men might conceal him no longer, but that in all his divine power and majesty and might, as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," as the "Branch" of the house of David, as the glorious and immortal Son of the Most High God, "Whom he hath appointed heir of all things" (Heb. i. 2) he might appear to take the reins of universal government in his hands, smite every oppressor the wide world through, champion the cause of the oppressed, and establish peace, righteousness, and justice in the earth—this is the cry of those who look for the fulfilment of Bible promises; for this is what they are led to expect by the plainest utterances of those holy men of old who spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

What a contrast is presented to such scenes and such oppression as that which has engaged our attention to-night, by those pictures of the future to which our minds are so frequently directed in the Word of Truth! The rule of one divinely prepared—divinely ordained for the purpose! With the might and the wisdom of Jehovah embodied in him! Qualified by Omnipotence and Omniscience! Ruling with a Sceptre the power of which shall be felt to earth's remotest bounds! Ruling, as the prophet Micah states, "in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God . . . for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth" (Micah v. 4) This is written of him who was born in Bethlehem-Ephrathah, out of which place he was to come forth that was to be ruler in Israel, a prophecy which the chief priests and scribes applied to the Messiah when the tyrant Herod demanded of them where

he was to be born. We have amongst other places one of these pictures in the 11th chapter of Isaiah, commencing at the 1st verse, "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord: and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." Isn't it a magnificent prospect for the world—the promise of a ruler like that? What splendid characteristics! Clothed with the divine Spirit. Result:—Wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and the fear of God. Swift discernment: immediate detection of imposture: no possibility of being imposed upon: power to read men through and through and to know their every act. Righteous judgment for the poor, perfect equity for the meek ones of the earth; the sternest justice for the oppressor, swift destruction for the wicked. Himself absolutely righteous and faithful, unswervingly just, inflexibly upright, unerringly wise and true—the only absolutely infallible ruler the world has ever seen. This is the character of the promised king. These are the features of the coming ruler. He will settle the Turkish and every other question that needs settlement when he comes. No man will defy him with impunity. There will be no waiting for Collective Notes, no counter-plotting of various Powers, no clashing of rival national interests, no defiance of every feeling of humanity, no wholesale torture and massacre—"he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (Isa. xi. 4.) "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one" (Zech. xiv. 9.)

That's the man who appeared upon the earth some eighteen centuries ago preaching the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God! That's the man who delivered the Sermon on the Mount—so little observed to-day! That's the man who went about doing good, healing the sick, curing all manner of diseases, and raising the dead; who was rejected by his own nation, scorned and derided, and treated with contumely, and hung upon the cross to die. That's the man over whose head the superscription was written: "This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews." That's the man who came forth from the tomb to die no more, who gave many infallible proofs of his resurrection from the dead, who ascended to the right hand of the Father, of whom the angels said to the disciples as they stood gazing up into heaven, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11,) and for whom the disciples waited long, and watched for his glorious appearing, and sought the glory, and honour and incorruptibility which was to be associated with the Kingdom he was coming to establish on the earth. That's the man who is coming to wrest the land of the Jew from the hand of the Turk, or whoever

may succeed him in the possession of those fair provinces covenanted to Abraham and his seed,—the “King of kings, and Lord of lords,” of whom the prophet Jeremiah wrote, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness” (Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.)

This great truth concerning the Kingdom of God is largely obscured from the eyes of our fellows, and has been since the belief in the immortality of the soul gained almost universal acceptance among religious people. The minds of most people are mystified concerning it. They have no clear views as to what it is, or where it is, or where it will be. From different people you get different answers. Sometimes you are led to believe it is within you, sometimes that you are within it! Sometimes that it is on earth, again that it is in heaven, and again that it is part here and part yonder! Few people have any intelligible apprehension of what God's promised Kingdom means, and of what Christ's reign signifies. This ignorance is sad and depressing and certainly dangerous, for it is an ignorance of the very gospel Christ proclaimed, and manifests a lack of understanding of vital and important truth relating to the reward of the righteous and the very salvation designed by God for the individual, and for the redemption of the world from its multitudinous ills. The real cause of the mystification is that to which we have referred—the belief in the immortality of the soul. This one belief—not revealed in the Bible,—never once taught upon its pages—borrowed from heathen philosophers—is the foundation of nearly every error, and the source of the disarrangement of nearly all doctrinal truth. It gives to men false views of their own nature and value and of the salvation offered them in the Bible. It leads them to expect reward at death instead of at the resurrection (Luke xiv. 14.) It leads them to believe that they go to Christ instead of to wait for him to come to them (I. Thess. i. 10.) It leads them to assert that they are immortal independent of Christ the great life-giver, instead of to seek immortality, or eternal life, which is “the free gift of God through Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. ii. 7; vi. 23.) It leads them to expect to go to heaven when the reward of the righteous is promised upon the earth (Ps. xxxvii. 9, 11, 27, 29; cxv. 16-18; Matt. v. 5.) It leads them to spiritualize the plainest words of the Bible and give them a doctrinal twist right about face, so that language of the plainest kind is made to mean the exact opposite to what it was intended to convey, and then with singular perversity to explain literally some of the most symbolic language the Bible contains! It leads to the belief in infant sprinkling—instead of believer's baptism—for the regeneration of the imaginary soul; to the acceptance of the awful doctrine of endless life in agony inconceivable; to the Roman Catholic doctrine of the purification of souls in Purgatorial fire, and to the establishment of masses to help them out—to cut short the purifying process!—a scandalous doctrine which has helped to fill the coffers of the priests and make salvation from fire a matter of pounds, shillings and pence—a most profitable view to hold—for the priests, but

in every sense a demoralizing belief, and like nearly all Rome's doctrines, utterly unlike everything taught in the Word of God. And then it leads—this belief in natural immortality—to those misconceptions concerning the Kingdom of God to which we have referred, which lead people to look away from the earth to a reward—not promised—in heaven, whereas all the promises of reward, of eternal life, of eternal glory, centre in this earth, which God hath “established for ever,” and in which his purpose will be worked out until all sorrow and sin, and pain and death are finally banished, and God is universally adored throughout the universe, and the earth is peopled with an immortal throng, redeemed through Jesus, and brought in every way into complete harmony with the Eternal.

The grand instrumentality by which this is to be accomplished is the Kingdom of God—the Kingdom that we pray for when we use the words “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matt. vi. 10.) Of course those who do not know the truth concerning this Kingdom do not follow the political events which are transpiring with that interest, and with the same thoughts in their minds as those who do. If they had the promises of God as the foundation of their belief they would know full well that a portion of Turkish territory—the land of Palestine—was covenanted to Abraham and to his seed for ever, and that the Apostle Paul declares that the “seed” referred to was not the nation of Israel after the flesh, but the Lord Jesus himself, and all who are Christ's by belief in him, and baptism into his all-saving name. This is plainly set forth in the 3rd chapter of the epistle to the Galatians, which should be carefully read by all who have any doubt upon the matter. Reading from the 16th verse you will find these important words:—“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, *And to thy seed, which is Christ.* And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. *For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise*” “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ And if ye be Christ's, *then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*” (verses 16-18, 27-29.) Thus you see the promise of the land was made to Abraham, to Jesus, and to all who belong to Jesus. They are to inherit the land for ever. The Jews inherited it for a time under the law of Moses but not under the promise here referred to. They were cast out and scattered because of their iniquities, but the true heir is Christ, and they who believe in him are joint-heirs with him, if they suffer with him, they will also be glorified together (Rom. viii. 17.)

The land of Canaan is therefore of special interest to God's people, so also are the scattered people of Israel. Neither they nor their land have passed out of the divine scheme. The land will cease to belong to the Turk and pass again into the hands of the Jews. All God's promises will be performed. None of his predictions will fail to be accomplished. There will be “a restoration of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts iii. 21,)—a restoration of the Jews, a restoration of the land, a restoration of the

faithful dead, who will be raised to life and immortality and rulership in this divine kingdom which God is about to establish in the earth, with Palestine for its centre, and Jerusalem for its capital, from whence the whole world will be ruled in righteousness, and all peoples be subdued to the sceptre of the Son of Man

The present hope of God's people is the appearance of Jesus to establish this glorious kingdom. Everything depends upon his appearing. There is no reward till then. People hope for it in vain. They die—often enough—with a lie in their right hand, hoping, expecting to go to heaven immediately, but it is a vain hope. The righteous fall asleep in him. They sleep till he awakes them. Till then they are unconscious for "the dead know not anything" (Eccles. ix. 5.) Reward time is at his appearing. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. xxii. 12.) Then is the judgment time and then will the glory be revealed. This truth stands out on every page nearly of the New Testament—how can people be so blind to so plain a truth? It was the Apostolic hope in life and in death. "Henceforth" (wrote Paul to Timothy when expecting to be shortly executed) there is *laid up for me* a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me *at that day* (the day mentioned in verse 1,) and not to me only, *but unto all them also that love his appearing*" (II. Tim. iv. 8.) When Christ returns, his first work will be to raise and judge and reward the dead according to their works. He will then interfere on behalf of his ancient people the Jews who at this time will be partially regathered to their own land but in dire necessity as shown by the prophets (see Ezekiel xxxviii.; Zech. xiv. 1-11) from the invasion of their land by the hosts of the great northern power, and the many nations that came with him.* The power of the oppressor will be broken to shivers, the divine kingdom will be established, and the power of the Son of David, to whom David's throne was long since covenanted, will be made known in the earth. "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever: and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i. 32, 33.) It was the angel's message at his birth to his mother, and who dare say it will not come to pass? It has never been fulfilled yet. Jesus has never sat upon David's throne, or reigned over the house of Jacob. When he was on earth they despised and crucified him, he must needs come again that God's word through the angel may be fulfilled. In accordance with the many predictions of the prophets the long scattered people of Israel will be restored, and the nations of the earth will be summoned to submit to the King of kings whose throne is established in Zion. We are only summarising the truths revealed in the Bible as they cannot be gone into at length now, but then will commence that reign of unparalleled glory and power which will eclipse the glory of the greatest of all earthly dynasties which the world has seen before, a kingdom founded for the glory of God and the well being of universal man.

* See *Russia and Britain in the East*, and *Russia and the Jews*, 2½d. each, POST FREE, by the Author.

And friends, peace, and rest, and righteousness, will follow the establishment of his most glorious reign. War, lust, crime, impurity, oppression will cease to blight the world as it does now. "He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. . . . He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul (or life) from deceit and violence : and precious shall their blood be in his sight. . . . His name shall endure for ever : His name shall be continued as long as the sun : and men shall be blessed in him : all nations shall call him blessed " (Psalm lxxii.)

This is the King of the future who is to be God's true Vicegerent upon the earth, and replace the Popes, and Sultans, and Patriarchs, and Commanders of the faithful, and false prophets of every kind, and kings and emperors, and all the high and mighty mortals who have ruled over the nations for their own aggrandisement and lust of power, and not for the good of men, nor the glory of God. Who will rule with him? He requires co-adjutors, those to whom—after proving faithful—he "will give power over the nations that they may rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. ii. 26, 27,) not for their destruction after the manner of the Sultan, but for their perpetual good. The invitation to his kingdom and glory comes to you to-night, but if you would reign you must be prepared to suffer. You must enter the narrow gate, and walk in the narrow way that leads unto life. You must accept him as your righteousness, your covering for past transgression, and endeavour also to live the righteous life according to the precepts of the truth, and then, when he is revealed, when he comes in his mighty power, and all the holy angels with him, you may expect to be confessed by him before that vast and imposing throng, and to enter into his exceeding and everlasting joy.



The Words of Jesus :

THEIR SURPASSING EXCELLENCY AND POWER.—

“NEVER MAN SPAKE

LIKE THIS MAN.”

A LECTURE
BY
JOSEPH BLAND
(OF KIDDERMINSTER.)

Author of *“What the Spirit saith unto the Churches,”* &c., &c.

DELIVERED IN NOTTINGAM, NOVEMBER 11th, 1901.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

“The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”
—JOHN vi. 63.

“Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”
—JOHN vi. 68.

“No one ever outgrows Scripture; the book widens and deepens with our years.”

KIDDERMINSTER :

PRINTED BY WILLIAM HEPPORTH, BULL RING.

1901.



SPECIAL NOTICE.

AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD.

**FIFTY-TWO
SUNDAY MORNING ADDRESSES.**

Dealing with the practical side of the Truth and calculated to stimulate to righteousness of life.

The above Work—it is hoped—will be in the Printers' hands shortly. When published, it is estimated that they will make a Book about the same size as *What the Spirit saith unto the Churches*, (i.e., between 200 and 300 pages) but containing very much more matter, as the type and style will be different. The Book, however, will be issued, bound in cloth, as near as possible in the same style, and in the same quality of binding as the above mentioned work. The price at which it will be published is—for the limited quantity that would be issued—about Two Shillings, Postage extra. If a member of each ecclesia will kindly gather up the orders, and forward them to 115, Coventry Street, Kidderminster, the Author will be grateful.





THE WORDS OF JESUS :

THEIR SURPASSING EXCELLENCY AND POWER.—

‘Never man spake like this man.’



MOST people, that is most religious people, are familiar with the Bible words which occur in the title of our address just announced to you which we have selected as the basis of our discourse this evening, and have heard them doubtless repeatedly applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. They were uttered in connection with one of the great feasts of the Jews which all the male portion of the community were expected, and indeed commanded to attend. We have an account of the circumstances connected with this particular feast in the 7th chapter of the gospel of John. Just before the commencement of the feast we find that Jesus was in Galilee, and the reason given why he absented himself from Judea is that “the Jews sought to kill him.” In order for him to completely fulfil the law of God, which he came to do, it was necessary for him to be present at the approaching feast. He had already acquired fame as a public teacher, as a worker of many miracles, as a preacher of righteousness, and he had not failed to denounce the character of his contemporaries, and especially, in the most scathing language, the gross hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees—the religious guides of the people to whom he was sent. Hence their hatred of him: hence their desire to put him to death. They were jealous of his growing influence, and they knew that what he said of them was perfectly true.

As the time of the feast drew near, we read in the opening verses of the chapter, that some of Christ's own brethren came to him, and urged him to go into Judea, in order to show his disciples the works that he did, “For,” said they, “there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, show thyself to the world.” And then the significant words are added “For neither did his brethren believe in him.” There is nothing to be wondered at particularly in that. It often happens that a man's foes are they of his own household. That a man is quite alone in the midst of his family. That there are none around him who can understand his mission, or the spirituality of his life, or enter into the lofty motives that

impel him to a certain course of conduct, or who have the slightest sympathy with the earnestness of his life. Thousands have shared an experience of this kind, and Jesus himself was not exempt from the trial, "neither did *his* brethren believe in *him*." Jesus however, preferred to choose his own time to go up to the feast. They could go at once, for there was no danger in their case. They were too much of the world themselves to be hated by it, for the world always loves it own. It will always pronounce him a jolly good fellow—be he clergyman or layman—who mixes up in, and panders to, its frivolities, and gives it a good word and pats it upon the back as opportunity offers; but it will have no sympathy with those who hold aloof from its folly and sin, and who are not slow to condemn its vanities and lusts. "The world cannot hate you" said Jesus; "but me it hateth, because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil." Jesus remained therefore a little while longer in Galilee, but after his brethren had gone, "then went he also up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret."

In Jerusalem, where there would be multitudes of Jews assembled from all parts, there was great anxiety manifested to see him. All men seemed to be on the tip-toe of expectation to behold the man concerning whom so many reports were prevalent. The utmost curiosity might be observed on every hand, and it was evident that he filled the minds of the majority of those who had come up to the feast.

"WHERE IS HE?"

was a question that passed from one to another, the personality of the "He" being perfectly well understood, and on all hands excited groups could be seen talking concerning him, some saying "He is a good man" only to be immediately contradicted by others who said "Nay; but he deceiveth the people." "About the middle of the feast" we are told that "Jesus went up into the temple and taught." How eagerly he was listened to! What varied comments were made upon what he said! How great was the contempt of some towards him when they exclaimed—after he had asked the question "Why go ye about to kill me?"—"Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?" How greatly surprised were others, who, after hearing his discourse, said "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" How others marvelled at his fearlessness and outspoken manner and exclaimed "Is not this he whom they seek to kill? But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?" Some were so incensed against him that they sought to take him, yet they were afraid to lay hands upon him, they were mysteriously kept in check, for his hour had not yet come; and others among his auditory were so impressed by what he said and by his manner of saying it that they believed upon him, and asked the question "When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" These various ideas respecting him,—and the sensation he was causing—were reported to the Pharisees, and—influenced probably by the fact that many were sympathetically listening to his words—they, together with the chief priests, despatched some officers to arrest him. When they went they found—in all probability—Jesus in the midst of a throng

which he was addressing, and the officers themselves were compelled to listen to his words. What he then said provoked further discussion, some emphatically declaring "Of a truth this is the Prophet," others insisting that he was the promised Christ, while others again insisted that that could not be the case, and the men who were sent to take him were so restrained that they could not fulfil their mission. They therefore returned to the priests and Pharisees, who said to them "Why have ye not brought him?" The only answer to which question they received was "Never man spake like this man," to which reply the Pharisees indignantly retorted "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed." There was one fair-minded man among them named Nicodemus, who had himself sought an interview with Jesus by night, and he wisely reminded them of the provisions of their law by asking the question "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" This question provoked an angry retort but led to the breaking up of their meeting, and every one of them—some of them disappointed enough—went away to his own home.

Now these words of the officers sent to take Jesus, though in no sense a divine utterance concerning Jesus, though expressing no more than the wonderment occasioned in the minds of the men as the result of listening to the extraordinary words of Jesus, which may perhaps have had a convincing effect upon them, yet assert a truth which it will be our endeavour to enforce and prove to-night, for it is indeed a fact that no man ever spoke as he did, no man ever uttered truth so momentous, and none have ever left such an ineffaceable mark upon the world. It is a sweeping statement to make after nearly nineteen centuries more of human history has been added to those that preceded the coming of Christ, centuries, too, filled with the names of great men, mighty warriors, powerful statesmen, and men mighty with the tongue. The world has not lacked men with eloquent tongues from the time of Demosthenes, the greatest of Grecian orators, to the time of Bright or Gladstone. All through the ages there have been men who have been able to move the deepest passions of their fellows by the power of speech. Love and hatred; liberality and sordidness; laughter and tears; have been produced, and appealed to, and affected, by those with eloquent tongues. Noble deeds, deeds of the loftiest and grandest heroism men and women have been stirred to accomplish under the inspiration of those gifted with a rare faculty of speech, and deeds too of cruelty, and revenge, and villany, and unspeakable horror have all been instigated in a like manner. But among all the lists of names of men who have enthralled, it may be, their contemporaries, where can you pick out one to in any way compare with him whom the Jews sought to kill, and whom they did at last get nailed to the cross? We must judge of a man's words and work by the effect they have not only upon his contemporaries but upon succeeding generations, and judging by this test can anyone be placed in comparison with Christ? How quickly men, ordinary men, ay, and extraordinary men, and their work, fade from remembrance. An occasional lecture concerning them, or brief references to them now and then—that is all. To this rule there may be a few exceptions. The works of a great

writer—if popular, may have an extensive circulation, his novels—if attractive, may be widely read, but have they a constant and abiding influence upon the lives of those who read them? The works of a master mind like that of Shakespeare may be extolled, and doubtless manifest a vast insight into human character on the part of their author, but how comparatively few are they who read his works compared with those who read the works of Jesus! Is it not, too, the play house with all its attractive scenery, and the fascination of the stage which tends to keep his name before the world? In how many houses in Nottingham could the works of Shakespeare be found? How few are the houses comparatively where the words of Christ are absent?

In the case of many human speakers and writers, too, there is another consideration to which I would draw your attention.

THE TORCH OF THEIR ELOQUENCE HAS BEEN LIT

at the fire Christ kindled, and has burned brighter because fed with the oil of the Spirit he gave. A large part of human eloquence has been inspired by the man who evoked the admiration of the officers sent to take him, and the world has been filled with books, and the printing presses still pour forth innumerable volumes, all inspired by his profound utterances and based upon, or professedly based upon, his sublime teaching, while a great many of the noble deeds which the histories of mankind contain, and much of the moral heroism manifested,—sometimes in obscure lives of which the world knows nothing nor cares, as well as in those more public lives where the light cannot be hid,—have been inspired by the nobility of his life, and by the sublime truths expounded by him. Christ is indeed the light of the world. He himself declared it. It was one of the utterances of his of which it can be said “Never man spake as this man.” “I am the light of the world.” What a presumptuous speech for any man to make who could not give some marvellous proof, some wonderful substantiation of his words! The word, however, is true. The world is in darkness apart from Christ. In all these problems affecting the future, relating to life beyond the grave, and of the prospect before the race, man is naturally in the dark. Philosophy throws no light upon the dark screen that veils our vision. An impenetrable cloud hangs before us, and none can pierce its density. There may be, as there has been, abundant speculation, but the cloud does not lift. We wander in the dark apart from some one who has authority to lift the veil and make known those secrets the thoughtful in all ages have so desired to know. This is what Christ has done as we hope to show before we close. He has lightened our darkness. He has flashed a light into the tomb. He has come to the valley of the shadow of death and dissipated its awful gloom. He has scattered the cloud that naturally obscures all future things from our view. He has thrown a light upon the screen and revealed glories which eye had not previously seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived. He is “the light of the world.” He reveals “the light of life.” He has “brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel.” He has filled millions of hearts with joy that before were dark and desolate and sad, and his words to-day, spoken though they were nearly nineteen centuries

ago, exercise a wider influence than ever they did, and are thought about, and prayed about, and written about, and preached about every day in the year, all the year round, and all the century through in every civilized land under the whole heaven. Of whose utterances can this be said but his? Must there not be something remarkable about them to produce such an effect? The greatest man who ever lived is but as the rush light to the sun compared with him, and perhaps borrowed the light he had from his superior flame. How marvellous must be the words of Christ to bear constant reading by the same people, constant expounding year after year to the same ears, in the same communities, and yet not to pall upon the ear! How remarkable that their fulness cannot be exhausted, that their beauty never diminishes, that their power never fades away! The words of this teacher of Galilee and Judea are an inexhaustible mine. From generation to generation, men, and women too, have been employed in the task of digging, and exploring, and bringing up to the surface its unsurpassed riches, but its wealth is unexhausted, and inexhaustible. Age after age only reveals its magnificent resources and abundant wealth. While many are made rich thereby it remains unimpoverished. Other literary mines are soon worked out and closed up and forgotten, but this one supplies the demands of all, and its mind imparting wealth can be obtained without money and without price.

The meaning of the words of Jesus is not fully realized at one reading. There is far more in them than often appears upon the surface. They will stand earnest thought and prolonged study.

THEY HAVE BEEN CALLED “GERMINAL WORDS.”

“They are full of the seeds of richest thought. They unfold living principles. The thought is often the deepest when the form is the simplest. Hence the necessity of attention and study, to be able to appreciate the evidence which his words furnish of his divine mission.”* This fact is specially observable in his wonderful parables. How simple, yet how sublime. Full of the profoundest thought yet apparently inspired by the natural imagery around him at the time they were uttered. Yet there are no parables in the world to be compared with his.

“Think, too,” says one writer, the author of *Rock versus Sand*, referring to the evidences of the truth of Christ's mission to be found in his utterances, “think, too, how easily these words of wisdom fall from him. He does not retire to his study (study he seems to have had none) and read what the philosophers before him had written, and painfully think out a system of truth. He stands on the grassy plain or in the little boat beside the shore, or anywhere, and pours out without the slightest effort, though only turned thirty, such words of heavenly wisdom, as the greatest of the philosophers, after a long life given to study and meditation, or even all the philosophers of the world together, after all their labour, had never been able to equal. Does not, this too, correspond with his claim [to be the sent of God]? He needs no stimulus of an appreciative audience even to draw out his powers. When he speaks to an obscure woman, who has come to draw water at the well,

* *Rock versus Sand*. By John Monro Gibson, D. D. Page 63.

where he is resting in the heat of the day, his words are as full of thought and heavenly wisdom as when the great multitudes are thronging around him. In fact, every time he opens his mouth, he gives new evidence that he is what he claims to be.

“Every intelligent person knows that this test of words is a most searching one. When a spiritualist circle succeeds in calling from the vasty deep the spirit of Shakespeare, prudence would dictate that he should not be allowed to open his mouth; for if he should, it is more than likely to be too apparent that his residence in the spirit world has not added to his intellectual force! The moment the attempt is made to put words into the mouth of a Shakespeare or a Milton, the fraud becomes apparent. How certainly then must failure have been stamped on any attempt to put words into the mouth of one who was to stand, not only to the people of the time, but to generations yet unborn, for the Son of God. In the pages of the evangelists on the other hand we are sensible of a decided elevation whenever we pass from their own simple story to the wonderful words, reported by them as words of Christ. This thought has been so eloquently expressed by Dr. Peter Bayne that I take the liberty of quoting a sentence: ‘The evangelists write as truth-loving, plain-minded, ordinary men; they give us no gleams of insight into nature’s beauty, no apt and beautiful parables, no profound and far-reaching truths; but once Jesus opens his lips, the page is illumined with colours of fairest poetry, enlivened by most exquisite apologue, radiant with keenest truth; the lilies of the field beam out in a beauty eternally fresh; the companies of virgins, wise and foolish, advance with their lamps; . . . and truths which, after thousands of years, are the guiding stars of spiritual civilization, break upon the intellectual vision.’”*

WHAT IS THE SECRET OF THIS WONDERFUL POWER

and influence attaching to the words of Jesus? For that there is a superiority about him and his words none can truly deny. What was the source of his power? Was he an ordinary man in every mental and physical sense only more highly gifted than his fellows? No, the secret is not here. Jesus was the Son of the Most High God. His wisdom was divine. He came to reveal the Father and the Father’s love. God was in him and was the source of his wisdom and power. This is the only explanation of the fact that he spake as never man spake before or since. There have been many false claimants to this honour, false prophets and priests have abounded from the ancient priests of Bel down to the prophets of Mormonism, the emissaries of which false system are often so busy in our towns and cities, and the history of which is one of deceit, polygamy, crime and falsehood, but Christ is the real revealer of God, and we require no other. His very manner of teaching impressed his auditory “For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Matt. vii. 28, 29). You may remember the passage of scripture he quoted and applied to himself in the synagogue at Nazareth one sabbath day soon after his ministry was commenced. It is recorded in the 4th chapter of Luke’s history, verses 18 and 19, “The Spirit or the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel

to the poor ; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." This divine spirit we are elsewhere told was given him "without measure" (John iii. 34). Jehovah thus tabernacled in him, and by divine power he wrought his mighty works and spoke his wondrous words. Thus it could be said God hath in these last days "spoken to us in his Son" (Heb. i. 2). He was indeed the very Word of God embodied in human flesh, and therefore authoritatively made known the Father. This is what Jesus declared of himself, and thus in the true sense "spake as never man spake." Let us prove this. In the 5th chapter of John, verse 43, he declared to the unbelieving Jews to whom he spoke "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not." In my Father's name. Invested with his authority. Commissioned by him to do the work he had to do. In the 7th chapter, at verse 16, we find him saying "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me," and again at verses 28 and 29 he declared "I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him : for I am from him, and he hath sent me." "I and the Father that sent me" are words that occur at the 16th verse of the 8th chapter, and at the 18th verse we read "I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me," and again at verse 47 his words read thus, "He that is of God heareth God's words : ye, therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."

There was thus a distinct claim set forth to speak the words of God, can we wonder at the power and depth and sublimity and lasting influence of his words? Not be it remembered that he was God. Do not confound his doctrine and person with the Trinitarian view. There is but one God, Jesus—"the man Christ Jesus"—was his Son, divinely begotten by him and qualified by his Spirit to say and do what he did. As Peter stated to Cornelius—Acts x. 38—"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil ; for God was with him." Such language is entirely inexplicable upon the supposition that Trinitarian views are correct. In the 12th chapter of John, there is more teaching to the same effect as that we have adduced. At the 49th verse he is reported to have said, "I have not spoken of myself"—that is on my own authority ; "but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is (results in) life everlasting : whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." Now there is more evidence of this kind, but this is sufficient. It shows us the source of his marvellous speech. He was the manifestation of God. Referring to him in the 1st chapter of his 1st epistle to the Corinthians, verse 24, Paul speaks of him as "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God," and when we remember that in God are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and that out of his fulness Christ received, then we have a full and satisfactory explanation of the reason of his pre-eminence in the world of thought, we see why he is so much higher than the greatest besides, why his personality stands out in bolder relief, why

his life was so exalted, and his words so forceful and comprehensive, "the one exhibiting" to use the words of a living writer, "a character beyond the range of human virtue, the other a wisdom beyond the range of human genius."

There are many ways in which it can truly be said that "Never man spake like this man."

LOOK AT THE ETHICAL TEACHING OF CHRIST.

Can you find a code of morals anywhere that in any way approaches that code which he gave to the world? You cannot. No man, guided solely by the light of nature, has ever promulgated laws so pure, so elevated, so sublime as he. You may ransack the literature of the world and you will fail to find any system of morality to be compared with his. Study his Sermon on the Mount and ask the question if this man could be the deceiver he has been thought by some to be. The superiority, the surpassing excellence of his teaching even the most learned unbelievers acknowledge, and they scarcely know how to explain it on the hypothesis of a merely human origin. The late J. S. Mill in his celebrated Essay on Revelation simply remarks "We cannot have conclusive reason for believing that the human faculties were incompetent to find out moral doctrines of which the human faculties can perceive and recognize the excellence." There is an admission of the excellence of Christ's moral teaching, and after all it only expresses the bare possibility that humanity might possibly rise to such excellence as the words of Christ reveal. And it has been pointed out that "in that one sentence he makes a statement which sets aside the well-known and obvious facts that the human mind is so constituted that its powers of appreciation very largely exceed its powers of origination." The very men who hate the Bible most, and scorn its teaching, owe to a large extent the morality they possess, and much that makes life tolerable to that teaching of Christ which to some extent at least has permeated society and somewhat raised the standard of morality around us. And if the precepts of Christ were universally acted upon the world would be completely transformed. Paradise would be restored, as it is destined yet to be. What purity would reign, what peace and goodwill! What gentleness and kindness and brotherly love would be everywhere manifested! How wars would cease to the end of the earth, and hatred be buried in an eternal grave, and lust and crime be banished the wide world through. What righteousness would be manifested in the lives of all men in all the relationships of life. No tyranny, no oppression, no dishonesty, no overreaching in business, no avarice, no endless grasping after money and hoarding it up to rust and rot while the poor are starving and dying, and dependents are kept well-nigh penniless, and the cry of misery daily ascends to heaven, touching no chord of sympathy in the hearts of the miserly rich, as is constantly the case now. Truth would be spoken on every hand in place of the abounding lying we are all compelled to listen to now; hypocrisy would hide its hateful head, men would be actuated by nobler feelings, and a loftier morality than that which permits them to live out of the vices, and debased habits contracted by their fellow men, and there would be glory to God in the Highest, instead of the

pandering to, and glorifying of, men who do no deeds worthy of honour, but who, notwithstanding, in this present age get exalted to power and authority, and abuse—alas! too often—the gifts and the wealth that the circumstances of their birth or business has conferred upon them. Christ’s words are pure and good and holy and exalting, and the lives and habits of those who are regulated thereby are pure and true and generous and exalted likewise, and though they who follow him may be poor and humble now, the time is coming when they will be exalted to the high places of the earth, while the ungodly rich—those who have no fear of God before their eyes—will be sent empty away.

It is one of the greatest testimonies to the power of Christ’s words—which were the words of God—that wherever they are heartily received they transform the life.

THEY ARE POTENT WITH LIFE.

They possess power to re-create the natural man. It is Paul’s assertion—proved in the experience of men and women in thousands of cases—that “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation, old things have passed away, behold all things have become new” (II. Cor. v. 17). A new creation in Christ Jesus! Begotten by the power of divine truth, the spirit words of the Deity. I believe that wherever the gospel of Christ is received in the heart it has this wonderful transforming effect. It weans from the world. It destroys the power of evil. It will save men from the influence of the ale house and the liquor shop, from the contamination of evil companions, and from the uncleanness of tobacco smoking and tobacco chewing,—habits which no man ever contracted under the inspiration of divine truth,—it will teach them to “put off the old man and put on the new,” to be honest and truthful in all business transactions and in the intercourse of daily life, pure in conversation, righteous in life, and to bear “the fruit of the Spirit” which is “love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,” for “they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal. v. 22-24.) Whenever these results are not produced in those who are nominally connected with the name of Christ it is because his words are not allowed to operate, because they are not allowed full play, because the flesh predominates over the spirit, because the old man is stronger than the new. But in thousands of cases Christ’s words have so operated for goodness and purity, and in this great moral result we have a marvellous evidence of their wondrous potency and power.

Christ “spake as no other man” ever did, or ever truthfully can in regard to his own personal righteousness. It was a life such as no other man lived. His was a perfect character. It was not merely that he was a better man than his fellows—he was absolutely sinless.

THERE WAS NO FLAW IN HIS LIFE.

It was without sin. This is claimed for him by the New Testament writers. “In him was no sin.” The redemption of man needed a perfect, sinless, unspotted being, and God produced such an one in Christ. Though bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, though tried and tempted as we are, yet he sinned not, and was obedient to his Father’s

will when it meant the scourging, and buffeting, and mockery, and the crown of thorns, and all the indignity that was heaped upon him, and though it meant at the last to have the nails driven through his quivering flesh and to be raised upon the cross to suffer and die, yet with the meekness of a lamb he bore it all, and died we might almost say with the prayer for his murderers upon his lips—"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Christ himself claimed to be sinless, and none of us are ever surprised at the claim. We have never supposed it to be a self-righteous boast. When we have read his statement in the 29th verse of the 8th chapter of John, "He that hath sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him," we have never been struck with the unseemliness of his words, or concluded they were not literally true. And it would seem from what follows that some of his hearers were not so impressed either for we read that "As he spake these words, many believed on him." When we read his question "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John viii. 46) we feel assured that none could successfully take up the challenge and truthfully charge him with unrighteousness, and we have the testimony of the Father, confirmatory of his word, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." It was because of his complete sinlessness, and his entire conformity to God's will that he was raised from the dead, exalted to the Father's right hand, made the Redeemer of men, and offered to repentant sinners as their "Righteousness, wisdom, sanctification and redemption," so that by being united to him by rendering obedience in baptism, they might stand approved before God, their past sins blotted out, and their natural nakedness covered by the garment of the righteousness of Christ.

Christ "spake as never man spake" in words of power to the sick, the palsied, the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the dying, and the dead. Power, the power of healing, the power of the creative and all sustaining and invigorating Spirit of God accompanied his words. The crippled were made straight and strong, the deaf had their ears unstopped, the tongue of the dumb was loosened; the groping blind—even those blind from their birth, had sight given to them, and "since the world began," as one who received his mercy once said "was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind" (John ix. 32); the palsied were invigorated with new life; the idiotic, and the raving lunatic had their reason restored; the flush of fever vanished at his touch, the out-cast lepers were cleansed by a word of his of his of their loathsome disease; the very hem of his garment was filled with healing virtue; and the dead, whose eyes were shut from beholding the loving faces of their friends, and their ears from hearing their loving voices; whose pulse was still, and their heart throb silent, and their thoughts perished, these were quickened again at his commanding word, and restored to the loving embraces of those who wept their tears of agony at their bed-side, or at their grave.

It may be said that others have worked miracles besides Jesus. That the Apostles did marvellous works. True. But they did them in his name, by his power, or by God's power given through him. With them it was "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk"

(Acts iii. 6), or, "Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise and make thy bed" (Acts ix. 34), but, when he said "Lazarus come forth" he said also "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die"—and never man spake like that besides.

Think too of the extent of his mighty works! The Apostle John at the close of the 20th chapter of his history says (verses 30 and 31), "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name;" and again he says, at the 25th verse of the next chapter (xxi.) "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

We refer now to another portion of the work of Christ in which the words of the officers sent to take him are applicable, viz., to his doctrinal teaching, or to the truths he taught relating to the future which centre in himself. Those of you who are in the least degree acquainted with the four gospels as they are called, must be aware of the fact that Jesus went about preaching certain

"GLAD TIDINGS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

If you have not noticed it a reference to the 23rd verse of the 4th chapter of Matthew will show you that such was the case, for we there read that "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." There are constant references to this kingdom of God in his teaching. Nearly all his parables refer to some aspect of the truth relating to it, and we find that his disciples were sent out also to make announcement concerning this kingdom. The coming of this divine dominion is spoken of as the reward time, and inheritance in it as the reward of those who rendered obedience to Christ's commands then, and who do so now, for the kingdom of God has not yet come. Now the kingdom of God is a great theme to talk about and we can only very briefly allude to it at this time, but for a long time prior to the appearance of Jesus there had been many prophetic announcements relating to a glorious dominion which the Almighty intended to establish upon the earth, the territory of which should be the land of Palestine, the capital—Jerusalem; the subjects—the Jews; the rulers—the saints of every age; the king—a descendant of David, with whom God had made a covenant to this effect; and we are further informed of his majesty and glory of this dominion which was to be world-wide in its influence, to which all nations were to be subject, which was to fill the earth with righteousness and peace, and be the grand instrumentality of reconciling the world to God. Jesus came preaching concerning this kingdom. The angel announced him as the king, and said to Mary, his mother, "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i. 32, 33). When Jesus was about to commence his ministry John the Baptist directed attention to

him as the Christ, or the Anointed, as the word means. He himself claimed throughout his ministry to be the expected Messiah, the Son of David, the long promised King, the one in whom centred all God's gracious purposes towards the human race. The appearance of this man, his wonderful wisdom, his mighty works, and his tone of authority—it was these things that so excited his contemporaries. They wanted their doubts satisfied as to whether he was the one who was to come. Some as we have seen were convinced and said "This is the Christ" (John vii. 41). Others would not accept him. His lowly character, and humble manners offended them. He was despised and rejected of men. It was pre-ordained that this was to be the case. Yet notwithstanding he was the King of the predicted glorious dominion, and constantly used the words "I am he" or words of similar import when speaking to the Jews. They made this the foundation of their accusation against him at last, and he shrank not before Pilate from a confession of the truth, but, when asked by that governor "Art thou a King?" He replied "Thou sayest that I am a King, or thou sayest it, I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (John xviii. 37). The superscription over his cross proclaimed his Messiahship, and his resurrection from the dead was the grand final proof of the truth of his claim. His miracles, or signs, were wrought in confirmation of his mission, and prove that in asserting his claim he spake as none other ever did. We know there have been many men who have falsely claimed to be the Messiah, but they lacked the miracle-working proof, and when they died they failed to rise again and who knows anything about them now? But Jesus lives. His words are potent to-day, and his power will be felt again in the earth by and bye, for God will fulfil his wondrous purpose, and establish in the earth yet a kingdom of unparalleled grandeur and inconceivable glory, at the head of which will be He who was once described as a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, the Lion of Judah's tribe, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, the Son of the great and everlasting God.

There is another important and most vital matter to me and to you upon which Jesus spake as never man spake and that is on the question of immortality.

WHAT BECOMES OF US AT DEATH?

Is endless life a dream? Is the future a blank? Does death end all? Ah! how these thoughts have perplexed the greatest of mankind. The poet has said

" One question more than others all
From thoughtful minds demands reply ;
It is—as breathed from star and pall,
What fate awaits us when we die?"

It has been a speculation among philosophers in all ages. Unenlightened men have groped and guessed in the dark and tried to pierce the future and assure their minds of an existence apart from the environments of the flesh, but they have all lacked authority and perhaps sighed for some one to speak who could lift the veil and make known to them things to come.

That one has spoken. That one is the Lord Jesus. He has spoken as none ever has, or can, or dare. He has brought life and incorruptibility to light as we said at the start. He has proclaimed himself the life-giver, the bestower of immortality upon all who shall finally be acceptable to him. He has said that the Almighty God, the source of all existence, the fountain of life, the being out of whom are all things has "given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life, or immortality, to as many as the Father hath given him" (John xvii. 2), and no other man dare say that. He has said "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John x. 28) and no other man can utter such words as those. He has said—glorious words—"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of Hades (the grave) and of death," and "never man spake like that man." Alive for ever—think of it, and have the keys of the grave, which he is going to unlock by and bye and bring forth his sleeping saints, and fashion them, too, after the power of an endless life, and transform their poor mortal nature into the glorious incorruptible nature which for eighteen centuries has been his. This is his mission. These are his promises and know you any like them? Have you heard of another who can so speak, who can so act? Who can say "I am the way, and the truth, and the life, no man cometh to the Father except by me?" Who can say "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation" (John v. 29)? Who can say of every individual who believes in him "I will raise him up at the last day?" "I am the bread of life . . . This is that bread that came down from heaven: . . . he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever?" (John viii. 39, 40, 44, 48, 58.) Know you of one who can give living water for the thirsty to drink, water that shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life (John iv. 14; vii. 38)? Christ has no rival here. He stands alone in the world, and we are dependent for life everlasting upon him. If we ever come out of the grave it will be by his power, for there is no other life-giver appointed for the race. And, friends, had we not better seek speedily his friendship and aid, for it is an undeniable fact that we are one and all speedily hastening to the final rest. The grave is just before each one of us—how near we cannot tell. Disease lurks everywhere to mark its prey. The very methods adopted to purify and make healthful our towns and cities may convey to us the infection which will quickly hurry us to the cemetery. Our food—taken to sustain life—may have hidden within it the poison germs that will destroy. At any rate there is no immunity from death. There are a thousand ways of dying, but no human way of living for ever. No earthly being has authority or power to prolong our life except it be for a very little while. The grave-yard is an institution absolutely necessary in this age as in all the ages that are passed. And how quickly they get filled.

Some ten years ago, I remember, a friend of mine told me that Witton Cemetery—only one of the burying places of Birmingham, opened 20 years before—then contained the mouldering bodies of 150,000 dead!

Your turn will come by and bye—and mine. These frail tenements will soon dissolve. The spark of life will soon fly, and we shall cease to be. Ye lovers of pleasure will be taken from it in a little while. Ye lovers of money—those griping hands will soon loose their hold of the money bags, and if you have made no friend of Christ, you will never rise to the glory of the life to come, or enter into the unspeakable joy and honour of the kingdom of God.

There are other matters we might refer to in which Christ spoke as none other did or can. He proclaimed himself the judge of men, the one to whom all judgment was committed. He revealed the Father's love to mankind, his yearning desire to save a perishing race from destruction. He offered pardon to those who sought his forgiving love, and he could say to the sinner "Thy sins are forgiven thee" and "never man" besides him had authority to speak like that. We know that priests—falsely so called—claim this divine power, and thousands believe they possess it, but what a vast imposture it is! Christ alone has had this power delegated to him, and he offers forgiveness, friends, to you,—will you accept it at his hands? Will you turn from your sins and live? Will you waken up to a little earnestness upon the most momentous subject of your salvation? Will you forsake folly, and conquer selfishness and pride, and render obedience to Christ? Will you deny yourselves, and take up your cross and follow him? Oh! he calls you to follow him—will you do so? Shall he say to you "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life?" Or will you listen to his invitation to seek the rest he only can give—"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. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light?" (Matt. xi. 28-30). Let this be your unchangeable decision, and throughout eternity you will rejoice in him, and glory in his great salvation.





DO THE RULERS KNOW INDEED THAT THIS IS THE VERY CHRIST?

IT was a number of Jews of Jerusalem who asked the question which forms the basis of our address to you this evening. The place where they were congregated was the temple. There were a large number of Jews assembled in the city and in the temple at the time, for one of the great feasts of the Jews was being held—the Feast of Tabernacles, or the feast of tents. Josephus and Philo call it the *greatest* of Jewish feasts, and it was one of the three at which the command of the Most High required every male among the Israelites to attend. It lasted for eight days, and the eighth or last day was the most important, the most distinguished of all, called in verse 37 of the 7th chapter of John “the *great day* of the feast.” On this day they were commanded to hold “a solemn assembly: to do no servile work,” and to offer a number of sacrifices the particulars of which are given in their law (Numb. xxix. 35-40; Lev. xxiii. 36). The commencement of this feast was upon the 15th day of the month Tisri, answering to the last half of our month September, and the first half of October. The design of the feast was to commemorate their dwelling in tents during their wilderness wanderings, and doubtless to afford them an opportunity for rest, for recreation, for reflection, for worship, and for the cultivation of gratitude and reverence towards that Being who had separated them from the nations to be a peculiar people for Himself, and who was the author and the bestower of every good and perfect gift upon them. They were required to dwell in booths or tents during this feast, and these they erected in and about Jerusalem, and there can be little doubt but that this festival was looked forward to as a time of general rejoicing and of great joy.

At the time when the question was put to which we have referred, and for some little time before, there was a considerable amount of excitement in the minds of the Jews owing to the appearance of one in

their midst who made claim to be a teacher divinely sent, and who certainly was believed by many to perform very wonderful works. What added to the excitement of the nation at this time through the appearance of this man, and his reported mighty deeds, and profound and marvellous sayings, was the fact that the Jews as a nation were in bondage to the Romans, that they were a vassal people, that they were not the powerful, independent nation they once were, that—being a high-spirited people with a marvellous history, and looking upon themselves as the chosen of heaven and upon Gentile people as strangers to the privileges they shared—they were yet subject to the hated alien, and that, rightly or wrongly, through the study of their ancient Scriptures, they expected, about this time, one to appear in their midst who should break the yoke of Gentile power from their necks, restore and increase a thousand-fold their ancient prestige and privileges, exalt them as a nation to the pinnacle of power, extend their dominion on every hand, and satisfy their political ambition and national pride by for ever freeing them from outside tyranny and making them the head of the nations of the earth. The being through whom they hoped and expected these things to be accomplished, they believed would come in the line of David, would descend from that mighty and heaven-favoured king, would possess marvellous power so that no nation under heaven would be able to resist his will, and would be endowed with endless life. This we say was the kind of being the Jews were looking for, this was the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed King whom they expected as a Deliverer from all the national evils by which they had been overtaken, and under which they had so long dwelt.

Now was "the very Christ" promised by Jehovah through the prophets to fulfil in any way these expectations, or was their's an altogether mistaken view? Had they read the prophets wrongly and formed a view entirely antagonistic to what the prophets revealed, or was there anything predicted which could in any way inspire such hopes as these? If not, on what were they based? Well now, let us—by glancing at some of the things predicted concerning this expected being see what ground they had upon which to base such anticipations, and let me state at once that we believe that—apart from their own carnal notions and ambitions and expectations in reference to this looked for dominion—there was a very great deal written by their prophets to induce such expectations, and that we believe it is impossible—by any fair mode of interpretation—to come to any other conclusion than that he who should come would be a mighty earthly potentate, ruling in the strength of the Lord, upon the throne of David, in Mount Zion, in connection with the house of Israel.

Now the evidence from the Prophets is simply overwhelming in favour of this view. We could indeed prove much of it from the first book in the Bible in connection with the promises made unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which promises contain the germ of all subsequent revelation; for all that comes after is but an amplification, an unfolding,

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an expanding of the covenant made with the fathers of Israel, which, in its realization, means the ultimate blessing of all the families of the earth.

Let us, however, to-night, deal with the evidence of a later period. We come down to the time in the history of the Jewish nation when they are settled in their own land, and when—after a considerable experience of lawlessness, of “every man doing what is right in his own eyes,” after much forgetfulness of God and consequent punishment and captivity, and repentance on their part and consequent deliverance by the hand of judges raised up for their salvation,—we come down to a time when a more settled state of things existed. They had asked for a king and obtained one. Saul however proved disobedient and was removed. His house, or kingdom, was not established. It was not continued to his children. God had a man in reserve whom He was about to set over His people and upon His throne,—for the throne of Israel was the throne of the Lord. The land was His. The people were His. The laws were His. The throne was His (1 Chron. xxix. 23). It was a divine kingdom—God’s kingdom upon earth. David was prepared by a long series of trials and almost overwhelming calamities for the glory of rulership over the twelve tribes of Israel. The cross in his case lay in the way of the crown, and a heavy cross it was too, as many of his poetic compositions show. Eventually, however, he was the acknowledged king over the whole house of Israel, and the kingdom was consolidated, and grew in strength and power, and surrounding enemies were subjugated, and David—the Lord’s anointed, the Lord’s Christ—was feared by every foe. Great was his prosperity and great was his gratitude to the Most High. He sat—on one occasion “in his house” and pondered over the many blessings the Lord had conferred upon him, of the rest He had given him from all his enemies round about, and how he—once a shepherd boy—dwelt now in “an house of cedar” with every conceivable comfort, and everything to make life happy, and he conceived the idea of building an house—a magnificent temple—in which the ark of the Lord, which hitherto had dwelt in the tabernacle—might be placed, and the worship of the Most High conducted. His desire was at once communicated to Nathan the prophet, who, not unnaturally—as a zealous servant of God—fell in with the suggestion, until he received a communication from God that the proposal was not acceptable. The intention of David was, however, pleasing to Jehovah, and He sent Nathan with a message to the king containing promises affecting him and his dynasty “for a long time to come,” even “for ever.” These promises are contained in the 7th chapter of the 2nd book of Samuel. In them Jehovah solemnly assured David that He would “appoint a place for His people Israel, and would plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither should the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime” . . . “Also,” said the prophet, “the Lord telleth thee that He will make thee an house”—or family, or line of descendants

with royal authority exercised by His appointment—"And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house to my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee, thy throne shall be established for ever." Now here is a most remarkable promise made to king David in reference to his family, his house, his kingdom and his people. Who can say in the light of history, in the light of subsequent prophecy, and in the light of the New Testament, that it was fulfilled in Solomon? We grant that there was a primary application of some portions of it to him. But he was only the type, the shadow of a greater one to come, in whom, to its fullest extent and in the most complete manner, the promise should be realized. And the proof lies here, that running through the Prophets is a constant reference to this covenant and to one to come who was expected to fulfil it *long after Solomon the type was dead*, and also the fact that in the New Testament there is a constant insistence upon the truth that Jesus was "the Son of David according to the flesh" (Acts ii. 30; 2 Tim. ii. 8), and a frequent application to him of the very words employed in this covenant. The Seed promised here was to be a true descendant of David and yet a Son of God. "I will be his father, and he shall be my son"—a promise applied in the New Testament to Jesus (Heb. i. 5). He was to build an house for Jehovah's name, and his kingdom was to be established for ever in the presence of his father David, thus guaranteeing to David an endless life, and leading him subsequently to speak of the realization of this covenant as all his salvation and all his desire, the proof of which you will find in the 23rd chapter of the 2nd book of Samuel.

Now we say this covenant cannot be broken, unless you can prove the word and the oath of God unreliable. This of course is impossible. Yea, let God be true, though every man be a liar. "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne" (Ps. cxxxii. 11). Yea, in the dark hours of their history, when trouble had overtaken the nation, this covenant was appealed to as the ground of their hope and faith. Thus in the 89th Psalm we find the writer referring back to God's covenant with David, even though He had apparently "cast off and abhorred" His people, and "been wroth with his anointed." "For," he says, commencing at verse 18, "the Lord is our defence; and the holy one of Israel is our king. Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: with whom my hand shall be established:

mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven" . . . (v. 34) "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven." In regard to this covenant with David I wish to draw your attention to another prediction contained in the 33rd chapter of the book of Jeremiah, uttered, be it remembered, when the cup of iniquity of the house of Judah was about full, and the displeasure of the Lord was about to be manifested against them by bringing Nebuchadnezzar into their land and by permitting them to be carried captive. Though this lay immediately before them yet the prophet was inspired to speak of days of glory to be revealed in fulfilment of that very covenant to which we have referred. Let us commence at verse 14.—It is to many a dry process this "reasoning out of the Scriptures," but it is because their ears have been accustomed to be tickled with nice little tales, death-bed stories, and other matters not in harmony with the word of God. Do not grumble at us if we imitate Paul.—Now for the 14th verse of the 33rd chapter of Jeremiah, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgement and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness. For thus saith the Lord; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel" . . . "If"—verse 20, "if ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me."

Now I think from these testimonies, and a great many more that might be quoted, you will perceive that the covenant made with David was of a far-reaching nature, evidently going a long way beyond Solomon, and referring to a righteous Branch that, in the course of time, should

shoot forth from his roots, upon whom, according to the word of Isaiah, contained in the 11th chapter, "the spirit of the Lord should rest, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;" which, says the prophet, "shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears," that is, he will not be imposed upon by false appearances, nor by false pretences, nor will it be necessary for him to listen to and carefully weigh evidence, and come to the best conclusion possible under the circumstances, as fallible men do now, but, being endowed with the spirit of God, and consequently knowing all things, "with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." The prophet then refers to the glorious results that will follow from the reign of such a righteous monarch, intimating that the Gentiles should repair to his ensign, and find—after the wars and commotions and oppressions of the ages past—his resting-place glorious, and announcing also the fact that "They shall not hunt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." It is further announced by Isaiah in the 7th chapter, of "the very Christ," at the 14th verse, that "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," that is "God with us," and of this virgin-born son the prophet—anticipating his birth and what should result from it, says—at the 6th and 7th verses of the 9th chapter, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor (some omit the comma between these two words and make it Wonderful Counsellor), Mighty God, The Everlasting Father (or, the Father of the future Age), The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, *upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom*, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." Now without fear of contradiction we may say that, from the time these words were uttered by the prophet to the present, no fulfilment of them has taken place. No son of David has sat upon his throne with these characteristics. None have occupied it "of the increase of whose government" it could be said "there was no end," and peace!—why the last king who occupied the throne was ignominiously defeated and carried captive as the result of defeat in war. No wise, powerful, mighty king, burning with a sense of justice and desiring to establish judgment in the land, and possessing power to enforce righteous decrees, and doing so perpetually, has yet occupied this position; yet thus—according to the prophet, it was to be. David's throne and sceptre are in the dust. "The tabernacle of David" has fallen and is in ruins. The glory has departed. The kingdom has

been overturned, and Ezekiel the prophet said should remain so for a time, "It shall be no more, *untill he come whose right it is ; and I will give it him*" (Ezek. xxi. 25-27).

Yes! the man lives as we hope to prove who shall fulfil all the requirements of the case. "The very Christ" predicted by the prophets, who will yet "raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof: raise up his ruins, and build it as in the days of old" (Amos ix. 11). Not by mere human power will this be accomplished, but, as Isaiah said, "the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." For His own name's sake He will do it. For His truth's sake, for His oath's sake it will be accomplished. To fulfil His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the oath He swore unto David will it be performed. To vindicate His name, to manifest His glory, to justify His creative work, to flood the earth with righteousness will the word be fulfilled. To banish pain and sorrow and all evil, to extirpate death itself, to exalt the once rejected Jesus, and to redeem the world from every curse will these promises be fulfilled. Oh! they are pregnant with blessing for the human race. They overflow with the love of God to mankind. "The very Christ" of the Old Testament promises is the manifestation of God upon earth to fulfil the highest aspirations of mortal men. Justice will attend his throne. Wisdom will mark all his decrees. Power will accompany all his commands. The sceptre of his kingdom will be a right sceptre; and of him it is said "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. . . Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth: the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight. And he shall live"—*live*, not die, *LIVE*—"His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed" (Heb. i. 8; Ps. lxxii.). That is "the very Christ" promised, that is "the very Christ" wanted upon the earth now to scatter the sons of pride, to stand up on behalf of the oppressed, to abolish oppression and tyranny the wide world through, and to bless universal man. Many other particulars were uttered concerning him. He was—according to Micah—to be born in Bethlehem, he was to "stand and feed (or rule) in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God:" he was to be "great unto the ends of the earth," he was "to be the peace" of the nation, and of the world; all nations were to resort to Jerusalem for worship and instruction, and the arts of war were to be forgotten under his most righteous and beneficent rule (Micah iv. 5). Zion was to be exalted, the Israelites were to be gathered

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from the lands of their captivity, united in one kingdom, and made the head of the nations of the earth, and never again was the oppressor to triumph over them. This is the Christ promised the nation of Israel. A Son of David—a Son of God. David's offspring and yet David's ruler or Lord. His descendant and yet his king. A wise, just, powerful, administrator of human affairs. A representative of God and man, under whom Judah should be saved and Israel dwell safely. Whose life should be an endless one, and who—upon the throne of David—should dispense blessings to all mankind. These are "the sure mercies of David"—not open to question and cavil, but *sure*, as sure as the regularity of day and night, as sure as the regularity of the seasons of the year, as sure as they can be made by the word and the oath of the immutable God.

Now we turn to the New Testament and we find the records of the most wonderful life that was ever lived. The opening verse of Matthew's gospel tells us that it is "The book of the generation (or genealogy) of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Let me here say a word about the designation "Christ." It is quoted by many, and it reads in the New Testament as though it was a name. As though "Jesus" was what we call the christian, and "Christ" the surname. This is quite a mistake. Jesus is a name meaning Saviour, and he was called that because he came to save men from their sins, and from death the consequences of sin. Christ is not a name, but a Greek word which signifies "Anointed." The Hebrew word which signifies the same thing is "Messiah." Properly rendered in English it should be "Anointed." In many, though not in all cases in the Greek of the New Testament where we read Jesus Christ it is Jesus *the* Christ. Or where we read of Christ Jesus it is *the* Christ Jesus. Jesus the Anointed, or, the Anointed Jesus, or, as it often reads, "the Anointed." If the word was thus translated, and the prefix placed before it, it would be more intelligible and more suggestive. Many possibly would ask for what object he was anointed, and so be led to perceive that he was consecrated of God, set apart by Him, and anointed by Him as the King of Israel. Well now we find from the records of these New Testament histories relating to his birth a wonderful confirmation of the prophecies of the Old Testament. We find him born of a virgin of the house of David,—“the seed of David according to the flesh”—but the Son of God by direct Spirit begettal. “That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. i. 20). The flesh was human flesh but the begetting power was divine. The message of the angel to Mary was “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the son of God.” That was *why* he was thus designated. Not for any previously existing reason, but because God was his Father. He was the Word made flesh. That Word or Spirit by which all things were originated, which in the beginning was with God, and was God, because it has its root in

Him and proceeds from Him. He was thus begotten in a manner different from any other human being—"not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 1, 3, 13, 18). He was "the *only* begotten" Son of God—not begotten before all worlds as the Athanasian Creed declares, but begotten of the Virgin Mary some eighteen hundred and ninety years ago thereabouts. So in a very special manner the promise to David was fulfilled "I will be his father, and he shall be my son."

A number of very remarkable circumstances happened just before and just after this only begotten Son of God was born. There was the birth under special circumstances of John the Baptist. There was the recognition—by his mother Elizabeth—of Mary, by the inspiration of the Spirit—as the "Mother of her Lord" (Luke i. 43). There was the reply of Mary—often chanted at Church—in which she recognised in transpiring events the initiation of Jehovah's purpose to fulfil the ancient covenants, for, speaking prophetically she said "He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever" (Luke i. 51-55). There was the promise of the angel to Mary concerning the child to be born:—"He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him *the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever*; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i. 31-33), thus identifying him with the promise made to David, proving him to be the seed of the covenant, and establishing the Israelitish nature of the kingdom over which he was to rule. Following upon these events was the inspired utterance of Zacharias contained in Luke i. 68-79, spoken at the birth of John, after his power of utterance which had been suspended had returned to him, in which he exclaimed "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel: for he hath visited and redeemed his people, *and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David*; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." These are evidently the words of one who recognised in the child about to be born "the very Christ." Then came the birth of Jesus "in the city of David, which is called Bethlehem" (Luke ii. 4), thus literally fulfilling the prophecy of Micah uttered something like 700 years before. To the shepherds in the valleys or on the hill sides this event was announced

by the angel of the Lord, who calmed their fears at the sudden manifestation of the glory of the Lord, with the words "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord,"—*which* is CHRIST THE LORD (Luke ii. 8-11). Following upon this event, when Jesus was presented to the Lord in the temple, and the rites imposed by the law upon his mother were complied with, was the utterance of the aged Simeon, "a just and devout" man who was "waiting for the consolation of Israel," to whom it had been "revealed by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ,"—the Lord's anointed,—who, being led at this time by the Spirit into the temple, at once was influenced by the Spirit to recognise Jesus as "the very Christ," and taking "him up in his arms" he "blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke ii. 25-32). At the same time Anna, the aged prophetess "coming in at that very hour, she gave thanks unto God, and spake of him to all them" (as the Revised Version renders it) "that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." Then we have also the record of the visit of the wise men—who were led in a remarkable manner from the East—and who came to Jerusalem asking the question which so disturbed the mind of Herod "Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we saw his star in the East, and are come to worship him." You remember what the troubled king did. He gathered together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, men who were well acquainted with the writings of Moses and the prophets, and "he enquired of them where the Christ should be born," their reply being at once given—"In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah, art in no wise least among the princes of Judah: For out of thee shall come forth a governor, which shall be shepherd of my people Israel" (Matt. ii. 1-6). What a most wonderful series of events were these all clustering around the birth of Jesus! Well might his mother treasure up the various things she heard of a son the paternity of whom was known only to her and her reputed husband. Well might "fear come on all that dwelt round about" as "all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judæa" (Luke i. 65).

But now we pass over thirty years of the life of this son of David. Of that period we know but little. He has grown in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man (Luke ii. 52). He has been distinguished for piety and study of the law of God. He has worked in all probability at the bench of his supposed father—Joseph. Then there comes a great religious awakening among the people leading to considerable excitement and expectation. A bold, austere, rugged man appears preaching in the wilderness of Judæa. His raiment is of camel's

hair; a leathern girdle is about his loins; his meat is locusts and wild honey. He mixes not with society, he drinks neither wine nor strong drink, yet notwithstanding his manner there is something intrinsically great and grand about his character and simplicity. He fearlessly denounces sin; he hesitates not to use the most scathing language to the religious leaders of the nation; he calls upon the people to repent of their transgressions; he announces that the "the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; he baptizes vast numbers of the people in the Jordan, who are greatly awakened by his burning eloquence and stirring appeals, and confess their sins as they submit to the ordinance; and he announces that a mightier one than he is coming, whose shoes he was not worthy to bear: who should baptize them with the Holy Spirit, and with fire, whose fan was in his hand, who would thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire (Matt. iii. 1-12). The excitement spreads. Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan go out to hear this singular man and are impressed by his earnestness and power. Who is he? From whence has he come? What is his object? Is he the Christ? Has the hope of the nation appeared? Men's minds are full of agitation and suspense. "The people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ; or not" (Luke iii. 15). As the excitement increases the Jews in authority appoint a deputation of priests and Levites from Jerusalem to wait upon him to ascertain his claims, and they come to him and put the question "Who art thou?" "And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, *I am not the Christ.*" "What then is thy claim? Art thou Elias returned?" "I am not." "Art thou then 'that prophet' foretold by Moses?" "No." "Who art thou then? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?"—"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah." "Why baptizest thou then, if thou art not the Christ, neither Elijah, neither the prophet?" The answer was "I baptize in water: in the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not, even he that cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose" (John i. 19-28). After this interview with the deputation from the Jews "the very Christ" was manifested. Jesus came to be baptized. A voice came from the Father in heaven and owned him as his son. The Spirit of God rested upon him. He was marked out by Jehovah as His anointed one. "Behold the Lamb of God," exclaimed John, "which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing in water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not (that is as the Messiah): but he that sent me to baptize in water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth in the Holy Spirit. And I

saw, and bear record, that this is the son of God" (John i. 29-34). Thus the man Jesus, begotten by the Father's Spirit power, was publicly designated, publicly marked out as His only begotten Son, and the long promised heir to the throne of David, to use the words of Nathaniel recorded in John i. 49, "the son of God; the king of Israel."

Endowed with spirit power Jesus went throughout all the land preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God, inviting those who listened to share its honours and its glory, and announcing the fact that eternal life could be had through him alone, by which they would be qualified to live and reign with him in the coming Kingdom of which he was the supreme head. He healed also the sick, gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb; cured the paralysed, restored to reason the insane, cleansed the lepers, miraculously fed the multitudes, and raised to life the dead. He distinctly set forth that he was the Christ, the Anointed of God; the works he did established his claim, and his fame spread abroad, so that on one occasion the people wanted to take him by force and proclaim him king (John vi. 15). His disciples were so completely convinced of his claims, that Peter only spoke the feelings of their hearts when,—on an occasion when many turned from Jesus and forsook him, and he had appealed to them with the question (as recorded in John vi. 67) "Will ye also go away"—Peter replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the son of the living God" (R.V. "thou art the holy one of God").

Nevertheless opinion was very much divided among the people, and seemed to fluctuate very much. At one time they seemed with him, at another against. They could not help feeling excited and they discussed the matter, we can imagine, in groups on public occasions. So at the feast to which we referred at the commencement, you might—had you been there—have seen them seeking for him, and anxiously asking the question of each other "Where is he?" He was undoubtedly the first thought in their minds, the absorbing topic of conversation and thought. See! there is an excited group of people arguing together and evidently not all of one mind. You can hear them murmuring at each other in undertones—they are afraid to speak their minds openly for fear of their leaders—as they warmly discuss together. Draw nigh and listen! "He is a good man," some of them say, but they are immediately contradicted by others who reply "Nay; but he deceiveth the people." After a while Jesus appeared at the feast and taught. His teaching was so wise that some said "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" Jesus referred to his doctrine as not of his origin, but of the Father's, and he asked "Why go ye about to kill me?" Then they said "Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?" Jesus appealed to the miracle he had wrought, and appealed to them to "judge righteous judgment." "Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he whom they seek to kill? But, lo, he speaketh boldly,

and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?" (R.V. "Can it be that the rulers indeed know that this is the very Christ?"). It appears from this question that—because he was permitted to speak on this occasion without interference and molestation, and because they knew that the authorities had attempted to kill him, they thought they must have been convinced now that he was indeed the Messiah, but they at once expressed *their* unbelief, for they added "Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when the Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." Then, after the pharisees and chief priests had sent officers to take him, and he had again spoken solemnly to the people, there was a further division of opinion regarding him, for many who listened, said, "Of a truth this is the Prophet," while "others said, This is the Christ." But in reply to these, the ignorant and the unconvinced said, "Shall the Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him."

Their very objection confirmed his claims, but because he had dwelt in Nazareth they concluded that he was born there and not in the city of which Micah spoke.

This great fact of the Messiahship of Jesus runs through the whole of the gospel of John. In fact, the book was written to give prominence to this great truth. This is declared by the apostle to be the object he had in view in narrating the miracles he had recorded. "These are written" he states, "that ye might believe THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (ch. xx. 31). All through the history you will find this truth to the front. "I am He," "I am He," are words we constantly meet with in the gospel of John, the "He" meaning that Messiah for whom they were hoping but failed to recognise in him, and, he said to the carping, unbelieving, boastful, fleshly-descended children of Abraham, who, however, altogether lacked their father's faithfulness, "if ye believe not that *I am He*, ye shall die in your sins," and "whither I go ye cannot come" (John viii. 21, 24). Some of the apostles early recognised the truth concerning his exalted rank. Andrew, one of John the Baptist's disciples, who left him to follow Jesus because directed to him by John as "the Lamb of God," almost immediately found his brother Peter, and said unto him "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ" (John i. 41). Similar intelligence was conveyed to Nathaniel by Philip (v. 45), and, although he was sceptical of the truth of the communication, yet, after a personal interview with Jesus he was led to exclaim, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; *thou art the king of Israel*" (v. 49). In the interview with the woman of Samaria at the well at Sychar, after conversing with her for a time, and directing her to seek of him, "living water"—water of life (ch. iv. 10-14), and directing her mind to the kind of worship that

was acceptable to the Most High, she said "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things." To which remark he replied "*I that speak unto thee am He*" (verses 25, 26). And when many other of the inhabitants of her city—led through her word to seek an interview with him—had heard his words during a period of two days that he stayed with them, they were so enlightened by his teaching and convinced of his claims, that they gave utterance to the words "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, *and know that this is indeed the Christ*, the Saviour of the world" (v. 42). The same truth was recognised and confessed by Martha, the sister of Lazarus, for when he appealed to her to know if she believed his declaration concerning the resurrection, she replied "Yea, Lord: I believe *that thou art the Christ*, the Son of God, which should come into the world" (John xi. 27), that is, the Christ of the prophets, the long predicted one for whom they as a nation had hoped, who should "swallow up death in victory," who should "take away the rebuke of his people from off all the earth" (Isa. xxv. 8), upon whose shoulders the government of the nations should rest, who should "judge the poor with righteousness, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth" (Isa. xi. 4), who should "come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth," who should "have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth," and whose reign should result in such universal well-being to man and glory to God that "all nations should call him blessed" and rejoice in the gladness and glory that should be revealed through him (Ps. lxxii).

And so upon every page of this gospel the evidence may be found that Jesus is the real king of the Jews right from the beginning to the end, when we find him challenged by Pilate upon this very subject, and the question is put to him by the Roman ruler, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" (John xviii. 33). How did Jesus reply? Did he shrink from a full avowal of the whole truth in relation to his position and claim? No. The Apostle Paul tells us, in his 1st epistle to Timothy, ch. vi. 13—when urging his young son in the truth to "Fight the good fight" and "lay hold on eternal life," that Christ witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate," and this we find to have been the case from the record of John and the writings of the other evangelists. The answer to Pilate's question was in the affirmative. He was the king of the Jews. And when the governor again put the question to him "Art thou a king? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king," or, in plain English, "Thou sayest the truth, I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice"—a solemn sentence to which all should give heed (John xviii. 37). It is true that in this interview with Pilate Jesus said "My kingdom is not of this world," not of this *kosmos* or order of things, but that does not necessarily mean that it would not be *in* this world.

Jesus himself was not *of* this world, but he was in it nevertheless; and his disciples and followers were not and are not of this world, but they were and are in it, and he prayed that they should not be taken out of it, so it cannot be proved from these words of Jesus that his kingdom would have nothing to do with the earth. The passage must be interpreted in the light of others and not in opposition to them. His kingdom was not of the order of things then existing, but was heavenly in its origin, superior in every respect, of a higher and more glorious character; it would be based upon divine principles and would have divine aims in view, the glory—not of mortal man, but of the great and wise and holy and everlasting God. His kingdom too, he said, was not to come into existence then. "But *now* is my kingdom not from hence." No! it was in the future. He was going into a "far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return" (Luke xix. 12). When he returns, "having received the kingdom," he will "reign in Mount Zion gloriously." "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God: we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. For in this mountain [Zion] shall the hand of the Lord rest" (Isa. xxiv. 23; xxv. 9, 10).

It was because of his claim to be the Messiah that Jesus was at last crucified. When Pilate was disposed to release him, and even sought to do so, it was through the political aspect of the claims of Jesus being pressed upon him, and the consequent danger to his own position if representations were made to the Roman Emperor that he yielded to the clamour of the Jewish rulers. "If thou let this man go" they cried out, "thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." It was "when Pilate heard *that* saying" that he was influenced to gratify their wishes. Then he brought Jesus forth, sat down in the judgment seat, and said unto the Jews "Behold your king! Shall I crucify your king?" Possibly there was sarcasm in this. His exclamation was mingled with contempt. "Behold, in this poor, friendless, forsaken man, your king!" Yes! the position of Jesus was indeed one of humiliation and extreme sadness. Truly "he was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." Truly we may exclaim with the prophet "Many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." Yet also it is true that "he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high," and shall yet "sprinkle many nations" with judgment: and "kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them" by their religious guides and ecclesiastical authorities "shall they see: and that which they had not heard" from the lips of their clergy "shall they consider" (Isa. lii. 13-15; liii. 7, 12). In reply to the exclamation and question of Pilate the chief priests of the Jews answered "We have no king but Cæsar," and so the Son of Man was

rejected by them and delivered into their hands to be crucified. Pilate then wrote a title to be placed upon the cross, and what he wrote is significant. The writing was this: "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." It was a terrible annoyance to the chief priests to read this title over the head of the crucified one, written as it was in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin, but they could not help it. They tried to alter it but in vain. They went to Pilate and said "Write not, The King of the Jews; but that *he said*, I am King of the Jews." But Pilate heeded them not, and only replied "What I have written I have written"—and that writing expressed the truth.

All through the Acts of the Apostles the same truth is to the front—a constant insistence that Jesus, the one who had been crucified, was nevertheless "the very Christ" predicted by the prophets, and that his suffering and death was in accordance with prophetic utterance also. In the temple, before the priests and Sadducees, at Samaria, in the desert to the eunuch, and to the centurion the same facts were made known as any one may find by looking up the passages (Acts iii. ; iv. ; vii. 5, 12, 35 ; x. 36). Saul when enlightened and baptized commenced at once to preach the same truth. "Straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God" (Acts ix. 20), and we are informed that "he increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, *proving that this is THE VERY CHRIST*" (v. 22). This was the great theme of his ministry afterwards. From place to place he went, suffering trial, persecutions, reproach and necessity, reasoning with men out of the Scriptures, "opening and alleging that the Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom (he said) I preach unto you, is the Christ" (Acts xvii. 3), his testimony leading his foes to exclaim of him and his associates, "These all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, *saying that there is another king, one Jesus*" (v. 7). This saying of his foes gives us light as to the nature of the truth he taught about Jesus. It was something which conveyed to the minds of the people the idea of kingship, rulership. Not the rule of a merely spiritual sovereign from heaven,—this would not have brought them into clash with the decrees of Cæsar; but the coming dominion of one who would dispossess all occupants of earthly thrones, humble their pride in the dust, wrest the sceptre from their grasp, and be himself exalted in their place the righteous and the immortal ruler of all mankind.

Well now we have seen what the expectation of the Jewish rulers was, and we have seen upon what that expectation was based. We have seen also how that Jesus is indeed the true Messiah, the real heir to David's throne. What then was the attitude of the Jewish rulers towards him? Well this is generally known and has already been briefly referred to. They did not know, they were, with few exceptions, blind to the fact that he was "the very Christ" of God. They rejected his claims, they despised his offers, they scorned his invitations, they

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said "We will not have this man to reign over us." They were culpably ignorant concerning him. The evidence in his favour was clear and convincing, but their hearts were stubborn, their prejudices were strong, and they would not be convinced. So they, and the nation incited by them, rejected their Messiah, and put him to death. "Brethren," said Peter to the people in the temple, as recorded in the 17th verse of the 3rd chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, "I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." They were ignorant of the whole purpose of God, or, as Paul writes, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. ii. 8). Yet in rejecting him they fulfilled the pre-determined council of God and manifested his foreknowledge. The fact is they only knew part of the Scriptures in regard to the Lord's Anointed, and that part imperfectly. They expected a mighty potentate to appear and were offended at the lowly origin, and humble character and surroundings of Jesus. He did not meet their preconceived ideas which were not based upon the whole truth, and they hid their faces from him, and treated him shamefully, and esteemed him not. He was to them a stone of stumbling, and they fell over him and were broken. A vail was upon their hearts. They searched the Scriptures,—the original word of John v. 39 conveys the idea that they searched most diligently the Scriptures,—"because" said Jesus, "ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which testify, or bear witness of me," and yet, he added, "Ye will not come to me that ye may have life." What a singular thing—Bible readers and Bible believers stumbling over the things revealed! Seekers after eternal life rejecting the only means of obtaining it! Scripture searchers to whom, and of whom, he said "Ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he sent, him ye believe not" (John v. 38, 39). What was the cause of this blindness, perversity and ignorance? Why did they fall short of the grace of God? How was it they so missed the mark as to reject the Messiah when he came? I think we get an answer in the chapter from which we have just quoted. There was a moral reason. This chapter is a revelation of character—the character of Jesus, and the character of those to whom he spoke. There is a vast contrast between the two. In the one we have humility, meekness and self-abasement. Of Jesus it is testified that he "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant," that he "made himself of no reputation," that he "humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 6-8). "I receive not glory from men" he said, "I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John v. 30, 41), even though that will meant Calvary and the cross. On the other hand pride, haughtiness, self-seeking, were the characteristics of the men to whom he spoke, and their eyes were blinded to the perfection of his character and the glory of his mission through these detestable features which so swayed their actions. They were fatal to their hopes of life, fatal to their reception of him. "I know you," said Jesus, "that ye have not the love of God in yourselves. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall

come in his own name, him ye will receive." Then comes the real cause of their stumbling—"How can ye believe," he asks, "which receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?" That was the secret of their unbelief and hardness of heart. They sought the praise of men. They desired to be thought well of by their fellows. All their works they did with this object in view—to be seen of men. It would not do for God then,—it will not do for Him now. No man can go in for pleasing the world and God at the same time—at least he will miserably fail if he does. So you need not expect to influence those whose aim and determination is to obtain honour one from another. It is a moral impossibility for men to receive the truth in this condition. "*How CAN ye believe,*" asks Christ? A man must climb down if he would be acceptable to God. He must empty himself of himself so to speak. God reveals truth and has respect to humble-minded men. Though Jehovah is so great that he exclaims "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool," and, beholding all things in heaven above and earth beneath can say "All these things hath mine hand made," yet he also says, "But to this man will I look, even to him that is humble"—not necessarily "poor," as the Authorised Version has it—"humble, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word" (Isa. lxvi. 2). The Jews lacked this humility. They were ostentatious and proud. They desired to be highly esteemed of men. They sought not the honour that cometh from the only God. You can't have both. The men we see around us so intensely anxious for town council and parliamentary honours are poor material for the truth to operate upon as a rule. Of course there are exceptions. But those who seek the worldly honour find it very difficult to forsake the positions they attain unto by currying favour with the masses for "the narrow way that leadeth unto life" which so few find, and the two ways cannot well be trodden at the same time. And how marked is this characteristic of "seeking honour one of another" in our day! At all the banquets and upon all public occasions what patting of one another upon the back there is, even when there is—as is indeed often the case—intense hatred and jealousy in the heart. Don't be surprised that such men reject truth—reject Christ. "How can ye believe?" It is impossible.

So because Jesus came in humility, because he did not meet their pre-conceived and one-sided notion of the truth, they failed to appreciate his character and work, and did all they could to put out the light of his life. They could not rise to the loftiness of his character and the purity and unselfishness of his life and aims. And so they stumbled over him and fell. He was the stone which the ecclesiastical builders of the nation rejected, yet, for all that, intended to occupy the chief place in Jehovah's wonderful scheme for the redemption of man, and the highest position on earth in the Kingdom of God. By "wicked hands" he was "crucified and slain" (Acts ii. 23), but God raised him from dead to die no more, and exalted him to his own right hand, in harmony

with what the prophet David had said concerning him, for "knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up the Christ to sit upon his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not left in the grave, neither did his flesh see corruption" . . . "Therefore," said Peter in his Pentecostal address to the Jews, "let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts ii. 22-36). The death of Jesus was only a development in Jehovah's plan of redemption. He came first to die, he comes again to reign. He came then to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and to make it possible for mortal men and women to attain—through his death and resurrection and perfect righteousness—a qualification for inheritance in his glorious Kingdom; he comes anon to establish that Kingdom in the earth, and to bring about the fulfilment of the angels' song the music of which floated sweetly over the plains of Bethlehem the night he was born—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." This is "the very Christ" of the Bible. May we not ask in our day of the ecclesiastical luminaries of our land and of other lands, "Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?" This is not the Christ they preach. This is not the Christ of Trinitarians, no, nor of Unitarians either. This is not the Christ of the utterly bewildering and utterly unscriptural Athanasian Creed. And do they believe that their Christ will ever sit upon David's throne and reign over the house of Jacob for ever? Not they. What! not when the angel said so and many inspired men besides? No, the vast majority of them do not. *Their* reason is higher than the angel's word! *Their* preconceived ideas lead them to subvert the plain utterances of writers divinely inspired! *Their* prejudices lead them to reject the Messiah of the prophets and the New Testament! Their education unfits them to grasp the truth concerning the Kingdom of God. Talk to them of Christ coming to reign upon the earth upon the throne of David, and they will tell you it is a carnal Jewish notion not in accordance with the truth! Carnal! Is it carnal to believe that "the kingdoms of this world" will become "the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his anointed"? Then why do we read it in the book? Is it carnal to believe that God will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, assurance of which fact he has given by raising him from the dead? Then why did Paul so teach the men of Athens? Is it carnal to believe that Israel will be restored, and the Apostles reign over the twelve tribes, and Jesus be their glorious King, and the unrighteousness of the nation disappear for ever? Then why did the prophets and Jesus so plainly teach these facts? Is it carnal to believe that the Kingdom of God will supersede all the oppressive, and unjust, and tyrannical, and hateful, and God-dishonouring kingdoms of men, and establish righteousness and justice in the earth, and weed out the incorrigibly wicked, and exalt the righteous, and beautify the meek, and clothe with garments of praise the humble, and wipe away tears from off

all faces, and banish pain, and ultimately abolish death for ever, and people the earth with righteous and immortal men and women—this carnal?—Carnal that every curse shall cease and, ultimately, God be all in all! Oh! they had need begin to read their Bibles again. They had need commence at the very alphabet of divine truth, that they may learn something of the revelation of God. They had need throw aside their College wisdom and learn of *him* "the true Light" that came into the world, who alone can enlighten them with "the light of life."

And to you who listen we say consider well these things. Search and see if they are not true. There is much more that might be said, that we should like to say, but we will not try your patience more. With the Apostle John we may say as a final word that these things are written and uttered by us, in the hope that, by earnest and prayerful study of the word, "Ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John xix. 31).



THREE LECTURES
ON
Present-day Teaching
OF THE
Church of England,

BY
JOSEPH BLAND
(*of Kidderminster.*)

- I.
Ritualism—The Highway to Rome.
- II.
The Imposition of the Clergy.
- III.
Who Established the Church of England?

PRICE FOURPENCE.

“The priest theory is an evolution, not from the primitive Church, but from the Judaism and the paganism against which that Church was at first the great protest. The New Testament has abundant allusions to both Jewish and heathen sacrificing priests. There is not a line in it which intimates that the Church officers of Christianity, of whatever degree, were ever, as a separated class, to bear the title or to perform the functions of the priest. And the researches of a Harnack in Germany, and of a Hatch in our own country, have effectually dissipated the Episcopal theory on which the doctrine of sacramental grace has been made to depend. The Apostolic succession for which the fathers of the primitive Churches contended was a succession from hand to hand of the deposit of Apostolic truth, not of a supernatural grace mechanically transmitted.” “*Clericalism the Enemy.*”—Article in *The Christian World.*

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THESE LECTURES were given at different times during the last few years. If they had no bearing upon matters of present importance in the religious or political world they would not now be issued. But they deal with errors that are prevalent and that are spreading far and wide through the influence of the Ritualistic teachers in the Church of England. These teachers are the predominant party in the National Church (so called,) and they are doing their utmost to re-establish those doctrines of Rome from which England was once very largely freed. There is nothing so completely opposed to the whole spirit of the New Testament than the Sacerdotalism which is so steadily and surely taking root among the people of the Established Church, and which is fostered to so great an extent by the clergy, whose power and influence is so much increased by the acknowledgement of these priestly claims and functions. It is the duty of all who know the truth to proclaim it, and to preach against error which blinds the eyes to a perception of those glorious truths which enlighten the mind with "the light of life." In the hope that these lectures will prove useful to others, and be the means, with the Divine blessing, of saving some from the influence of the priestly claims and assumptions which have no warrant in Scripture but which are now made on every hand, they are issued to a wider audience than those to whom they were first delivered. If a little repetition should be noticed in the various Lectures, the reader will please remember that they were delivered at different times and quite independently of each other.

J. B.

RITUALISM—

THE HIGHWAY TO ROME.



"This man (Jesus) because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood."—*Heb. vii. 24.*

"Nothing has so effectually thrown contempt upon a regular succession of the ministry as the calling no succession regular but what was uninterrupted; and the making the eternal salvation of Christians to depend upon that uninterrupted succession, of which the most learned must have the least assurance, and the unlearned can have no notion but through ignorance and credulity."—*Bishop Hoadley.*

THE fifth of November* is by no means an inappropriate day to refer to anything relating to Popery. The act contemplated on that day in the year 1605 does not reflect credit upon Roman Catholicism. We have no less an authority than the present Bishop of Liverpool in a tract published by him that Ritualism is the high road to Rome, the fountain head of that religious system which has hatched and carried out many an act as wicked as the one generally remembered upon this day. We scarcely needed the word of this Protestant bishop to point out so self-evident a fact. Ritualism is an imitation of Romanism and prepares candidates for communion with that apostate church. That it is spreading and becoming predominant in the Church of England every observant eye can see. You have had an exhibition of its power recently in Birmingham at the Congress just held, as well as an exhibition of its Millinery—its vestments, and ornaments and altar furniture—by which it seeks to impose upon the minds of weak minded and ignorant people. You have seen—through reports in the press—that the Ritualists were by far the stronger party present, and you have been made acquainted with the fact that because one of the best of the Bishops—the Bishop of Worcester—ventured to express himself somewhat favourably towards Nonconformists, he was hissed and scorned and "greeted alternately with laughter, howls of derision, cries of 'shame' and 'traitor' and other tokens of disrespect," and so great was the uproar that order could not be secured for the Right Rev. Chairman to be heard! One of your daily papers summed up the results of the Congress thus:—"What is the upshot of the flood of clerical and lay opinion with which we have been deluged this week? If we put the question to the Anglican priest he will tell us that the Congress of 1893 will be remembered from the fact that it saw Ritualism aggressive and triumphant in the very seat, as it was supposed, of Evangelical strength That in the very household of the Evangelicals the High Church party should have demonstrated their overwhelming strength, and, indeed, captured the Congress, is naturally counted their most brilliant achievement. The Broad Churchman, for his part, discovers in the proceedings much that is of a gratifying tendency, though he cannot hide from himself the amazing growth of Ritualistic feeling and activity."—*Daily Argus*, Oct. 7th, 1893.

* This Lecture was delivered in Birmingham Nov. 5th, 1893.

Not long ago the walls of various towns in Worcestershire were placarded with bills announcing a meeting to be held at Worcester promoted by members of the Church of England, and supported by a number of clergymen and laymen of that church, to protest against Romish practices now so very prevalent, and Romish doctrines now so widely and unblushingly taught in the same church to which they belong. It is a very singular thing this division and antagonism and completely opposing doctrines in a church which proclaims its unity, and continuity of teaching from Apostolic days; nevertheless, no one can be blind to the fact of its existence, and the men who promoted the meeting to which we have referred are not blind to the peril that exists, and the grave evils that are spreading very fast in the English Church in connection with the practices of the Ritualists, which threaten to stamp out all the protestantism of the Established Church and once more hand over the people of this country—all who can be influenced by them—to the abominable practices, and the unbiblical and corrupt doctrines of the church whose head quarters is the seven hilled city of Rome.

And in truth the peril is greater than many people imagine. On every hand Ritualism—a system which appeals—not to the reason, nor yet to the Bible—is spreading. The vast majority of the clergy seem to be imbued with it. About eleven years ago when Dr. Pusey—one of the authors and promulgators of modern Ritualism—died, the *Daily News*, in a Review of his life and work said, "If we turn from Oxford to the Church of England we shall find that Dr. Pusey's doctrines have triumphed all along the line. Where is the Low Church? and where is the Broad Church? Where are the followers of Simeon, and where are the disciples of Maurice? In a few remote country parsonages there may be remnants of the creed [that is the Evangelical or Low Church] which Cardinal Newman once held, and from which Dr. Pusey himself was, in his youth, not averse. One or two popular preachers in large towns may edify or amuse their congregations by explaining how doctrines can be at once true and false, and how valuable moral lessons are to be drawn from facts which never occurred. But speaking generally, the English clergy have gone over, bag and baggage, to Tractarianism"—or Ritualism, or we might say Romanism, for the doctrines they preach, and the practices they observe are practically the same as those of the Romish Church. There is something which appeals so much to the outward senses in what they introduce into the public worship of the Church, and there is so much that appeals to the carnal mind and to the vanity of the young men who go to college with a view to the ministry of the English Church, that it cannot be greatly wondered at—in the absence of any deep convictions of their own, and in the absence of that knowledge of the Bible which is a notable feature of young curates fresh from college—(which knowledge is the one chief qualification for preaching to others)—that so many are carried away by the less spiritual forms and practices indulged in by those who thus have a form of godliness, but know little or nothing of the great spiritual truths of the Bible. At any rate it has spread and is spreading rapidly. Everywhere, in large towns and country villages the young "priests" of the English Church are stealthily and insidiously introducing doctrines which come from

Rome, and which are as decidedly opposed to the gospel of Christ and the truth of the Bible as anything taught in the Roman Catholic Church. And they have almost a free hand in the matter. The people generally look up—as they are taught to do—with the greatest reverence to their clergy, and with an amount of superstitious awe which is fostered by their pastors, but which is entirely unwarranted. If changes are introduced into the service by a fresh comer to which they have not been accustomed, if the cross is introduced upon the altar, and candles are lighted when the sun shines brightly overhead, and processions are introduced, and doctrines promulgated of a distinctly Romish character, who is there bold enough to attack the clergymen of the parish? The people generally know so little about doctrine that the so-called “priest” has it most frequently his own way. Occasionally he is opposed at first, but there are few who like to make themselves prominent in this manner, and the law has decided so much in favour of the innovator, that, if he is determined, he can generally carry his position and beat down the opposition brought to bear against him. So error spreads and triumphs in a church connected with the state and subject to the decisions of courts of justice.

Forty years ago when this movement was creating considerable excitement, Dr. Campbell—a very earnest opponent of the movement—wrote, “The bulk of the Puseyites are in a state to enter at once the Romish Church, and actual transitions are events of daily occurrence. . . . Were the Government to-morrow, by Act of Parliament, to change the religion of the country, as by law established, making the Protestant to give place to the Papal, the majority, perhaps, of the clergy of the Church of England would be found, so far as doctrine and ritual are concerned, quite ready to conform.” If that could be written, with any amount of truth, forty years ago, what might be said at the present time, after all these years of labour by the most energetic party in the Church, after the distinct advantages they have gained from time to time in the law courts, and the many things that have told in their favour? Well we have seen the estimate of the position taken by the *Daily News* a few years ago—the Ritualists “have triumphed all along the line.” They have largely gained the position. And there is no essential difference between the Anglican and the Roman Churches, except perhaps it be the acknowledgement of the Pope as the infallible spiritual head of all. Ritualism is the highway to the rankest Romanism. It has sent thousands of converts to the Papal Church and is sending them constantly. It is the great preparation ground for Rome. There is little more to learn when a man has swallowed all that some Ritualistic Father Confessor has indoctrinated him with, another step or two and he gets what he conceives to be the genuine article. Ritualism “is merely Popery unripened; it is Popery in the ear, and that ear almost full.” If you require proof we need only refer to the two men who in late years have stood out so prominently in the Roman community, the two princes of the Church—Cardinal Manning and Cardinal Newman, both of whom travelled along this highway until they reached their destination, and found rest in the bosom of the so-called Holy Roman Catholic Church.

Let us look back a few centuries in the history of England, and of religion here, and upon the Continent. We travel back in thought and

imagination beyond the period of the Reformation when Luther made the Pope shake in his shoes, and so mightily exposed the iniquities of the Church, and gave its doctrines and practices such a shaking that it has not recovered yet. Beyond his time, and what, for some six or seven centuries, are the ages called?—The Dark Ages. That is a true description of them. Popery was supreme—and darkness was the result. None scarcely dared breathe a word against the Papacy. Those who did so were bitterly persecuted. Do not suppose however, that there were absolutely none through these dark ages who did not plead for the reading of the Bible, and protest against the errors of this great Anti-Christian system. There were many in the aggregate, though very few comparatively, who did so, under various names; men and women who courageously maintained what they believed to be the truth, but the cruel power of Rome crushed them. There was no pity shown them. Like the Waldenses on the slopes of the Dauphinese Alps they were chased into caverns, woods, and clefts of the rocks, and slaughtered without the slightest mercy. In the case of the Waldenses in the fifteenth century this was done by the command and by the emissaries of Pope Innocent the Eighth, "that infamous Pope" as he has been called, "whom the inhabitants of Rome derisively styled 'Father of the Romans' because he had seven or eight sons by different mothers." Then you know that at last the terrible Inquisition was established by this "Most Holy Church" to stamp out all heresy, and horrible indeed was its career of cruelty for a number of years. If there was the slightest suspicion against any individual he could be seized and cast into the dungeons of the Inquisition, put to the torture in order to extract some confession from him, and his life taken away in some cruel manner after many indignities had been heaped upon him, and of course all his property confiscated for the good of the Church! It is asserted that the atrocious Torquemada, one of the inquisitors-general, put nearly 9,000 persons to death by fire, condemned 90,000 to perpetual imprisonment and other severe punishments, and banished about 80,000 Jews from Spain, and the total number tortured and burnt in various places must have been vast indeed. Dark indeed was the period when none dare challenge the power of the Pope. The Bible was almost an unknown book, and would be still if Rome yet reigned, for therein is condemned her practices and doctrines, therein is to be found the antidote to all her presumption and inquiry. "In the sepulchres of our own island slumber the dust of millions, who lived in the long night of Papal darkness, and died without ever seeing a Bible!" Think of this you who are so highly privileged, who live in this age of light and freedom, who can buy the book for a few coppers, but who have never read it in your lives, who perhaps have a copy on an old dusty shelf, or covered over in your best room with an antimacassar, but who never take it down to know God's mind or will concerning you, and who have never studied for one half hour his glorious plan of redemption—what do you think of yourselves? You think, some of you, there is no need to make a fuss about the matter, and that you will slip into heaven, or the kingdom of God by and bye, but I can tell you you won't. Do not suppose you can treat the Almighty and his word with contempt, and yet inherit all the glory of his coming kingdom, or possess

that endless life which is the reward of patient well-doing. No! those who value not their privileges, who love not the truth, who seek not the life, who walk not in the narrow way that leads to it, will not inherit the glory at the last. You may succeed in earthly matters, you may be smart business men and women, you may amass wealth and make all your surroundings comfortable, but the hand of death will one day cut you down, and you will never come forth from the grave to live for ever, though you may be brought forth for punishment for neglecting those great privileges you have so lightly esteemed.

It is said that in the tenth century so great was the prevailing ignorance that probably not a single working man in all Europe could read or write, and very few of the gentry or nobles either! In spiritual matters the darkness and superstition was terrible. "Men went on long and laborious journeys"—to use the language of Thomas Cooper—"to the distant shrines of saints—such as our Lady of Loretto, and St. James of Compostella—to merit the pardon of sin, or to undergo penance for it; and others went to the Holy Land, or at least they said they had been there when they returned to Europe, wearing palmer's weeds, that is to say, a long garment and a leathern girdle, a slouched hat, on which an scallop shell was sewn, and a long staff to support their steps. These pilgrims from the Holy Land had precious relics to shew; bits of the true wood of the holy cross, and nails and pieces of the nails of the holy cross! And men, as they gazed on these 'holy relics,' knelt in awe, and crossed themselves, and repeated their paternosters and aves. And very soon men began to weigh out pounds' weight of gold to give for a bit of the true wood of the cross, even if it did not weigh a quarter of an ounce; and stones' weight of silver to give for a bit of a nail of the holy cross. And such was the passion for the traffic, that in the lapse of two centuries it was computed so much of the true wood of the holy cross was brought into Europe that a first-rate ship of war might have been made out of it, and as many nails and pieces of the true nails of the cross were brought into Europe as might have furnished all the iron-work for a first-rate ship of war! A rare trade—a roaring trade—it seemed to have been, the trade in holy relics. . . . And as the demand increased, there was plenty of supply. The pilgrims and their monkish agents soon began to have other holy relics to sell. 'Pigge's bones,' and 'shepe's bones,' as Chaucer spells the relics, and oxen's bones. But whether it were a 'pigge's bone,' or a 'shepe's bone,' that this relic monger or the other had to sell, he would swear it was the forefinger of St. Peter, or the little finger of St. John, or the great toe of St. Paul, or a rib of St. Bartholemew. One relic monger had got a tin box full of the teeth of St. James; and he went about rattling them in the ears of crowds that fell down on their knees and crossed themselves in ecstasy, to think they had heard such a soul-saving sound! Others had got locks of the hair of the Virgin Mary's head, and many had got bottles full of her milk, to sell at an immense price, and to swell the gratitude of the gazing crowd. The toe of St. Paul was a precious possession to Glastonbury Abbey—for it brought great grist to the monk's mill; and in the crypt of old Exeter Cathedral there were more wondrous relics: a piece of the manger in which our Lord had laid; and, above all, a piece of the burning bush that Moses saw in the wilderness!"

Now among the Roman Catholics of to-day this very same kind of superstition exists. Do not suppose that all this ignorance has passed away. They have still faith in charms and holy water, and any bit of rubbish blessed by the priest. I was spending a few hours one day at New Brighton when the boys belonging to a Roman Catholic School were brought down by the teachers to bathe. Every one of those boys, and every one of those teachers had charms hung round their necks, bits of old tin or bone or some other rubbish, which had been blessed by the priest, and were worn with the belief no doubt that some efficacy attended them, and that they were thus preserved from the influence of evil spirits or from harm generally. Nothing in the heathen world can surpass the corruption and superstition that has been taught and sanctioned in the Church of Rome, and it has been a very fount of iniquity in the ages to which we refer. "Who can picture"—one able protestant writer asks—* "the condition of the Catholic Church in the ninth century, and onward till the Reformation! The whole series of Popes were the very worst of human kind! The wide world seems to have been searched, and human nature sifted, for the very purpose of supplying Men of Sin, Sons of Perdition! They were not only void of piety, but of decency; they had no regard either to the character they sustained, or the place they filled. Not fewer than fifty Popes, in succession, were a reproach, not only to religion, but to reasonable humanity! Rome, above all other places, became a sink of impiety and iniquity. The world stood amazed and aghast at its enormities. It became a fountain of impiety, which overflowed all the West, and sent forth its baleful streams over the whole of the Roman world. Knowledge decayed apace. Faith failed; and there was no fear of God among men! Justice had perished; and violence, having overcome iniquity, ruled the nations! Virtue, in every shape, gave way, and was neglected as a thing out of date; while wickedness supplied its place! . . . All sorts of wickedness was perpetrated, with as much boldness and publicity as if they had been lawful actions; there was no virtue to excite a blush, no authority to inflict punishment; while in all evil the Bishops and the clergy set the example and led the way! † The bulk of these functionaries could not even read! Their chief employment called for no such qualification; for it was mad sport, and vile debauchery! Even those who were advanced to the Pontifical dignity were utterly unacquainted with the Scriptures; few had done more than touch the cover of the Bible. ‡ If a partial exception arose among the clergy, he was an object of pity or contempt, and, according to Bernard, pronounced 'unfit to be a priest? This same 'venerable' Bernard, who is responsible for some of the facts just given bears also the following testimony, which every lover of tradition should consider:—"The study of the Scriptures' he writes, 'together with the professors of it, was turned into laughter and scorn by all; but (which is prodigious) especially by the Popes, who prefer their own traditions many degrees before the commands of God.'"§

• J. Campbell, D.D.

† Bell. Sacr. lib. I., c. 8; *BERNARD*. Convers. Pauli, Ser. I.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid.

Now the Roman Catholic priests claim to have descended officially from these "spiritual ancestors." They are the ancestors also of the clergy of the Church of England. Both Catholics and Ritualists alike make much of the doctrine or belief of the true Apostolic succession. They claim to be able to trace their pedigree right back to the Apostolic age. For our part we say they are welcome to their pedigree. We wonder they are not ashamed to claim any relationship to so foul an ancestry. Fine spiritual ancestors are they not? Who would not wish to be untainted by such a polluted stream that had any true knowledge of God and his word? What true man could feel gratified that the hands of such monsters had been laid upon their heads and that they had been consecrated by such Bishops as Rome has possessed? We could tell you of the crimes and the abominations of Popes that would transfix you with astonishment. Even Baronius, himself a Cardinal, and said to be "one of the greatest of men," referring to the ninth century, exclaims, "Oh! what was then the face of the Holy Roman Church? How filthy, when the vilest and most powerful harlots ruled in the court of Rome!—by whose arbitrary sway dioceses were made and unmade, Bishops were consecrated, and, horrible to be mentioned, *false Popes*, their paramours, were thrust into the *chair of Peter*, who, in being numbered as Popes, serve no purpose except to fill up the catalogue of the Popes of Rome! For who can say, that persons thrust into the Popedom, without any law, by harlots of this sort, were legitimate Popes of Rome? In these elections no mention is made of the acts of the clergy, either by their choosing the Pope, at the time of his election, or their consent afterwards. All the canons were suppressed into silence,—the voice of the decrees of former Pontiffs was not allowed to be heard,—ancient traditions were prescribed,—the customs formerly practised in electing the Pope, with the sacred rites and pristine usages, were all extinguished. In this manner, lust, supported by secular power, excited to frenzy in the rage for domination, ruled in all things." That is a Cardinal's testimony and it is rather a hard nut for the believers in Apostolic succession to crack. To us the claim is so utterly absurd that we are amazed at it being made. If the Vicar of the parish, or the priests of St. Chad's Cathedral, could in the most indubitable manner trace their spiritual pedigree right back to Apostolic days we would not give a fig for what their claim is worth. We know they cannot do this, but what is more we know they are not Apostolic in their belief and practices. We know there were no ordinations, and no order of ministers in the Apostolic days such as exist in either the Church of England or the Roman Church now. They cannot, however, prove the first link in the chain. They cannot adduce any evidence that Peter was ever at Rome. The Bible is absolutely silent about the matter, though it affords much evidence that he could not have been there. There is no contemporary evidence that he was ever there. For a century after his alleged Pontificate, history is silent! Not one utterance can be found concerning it! "The immediate disciples, friends, and companions of the Apostles, Barnabas, Clement, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp, all are silent" upon the question of Peter's presence at Rome. It was not till the end of the second century that the fiction of his Popeship arose, and once started it soon

gained ground, but there is no reliable evidence whatever to prove the assertion. There is an uncertainty also as to who was really the second bishop or overseer of the Church of Rome. This is a question we will not enter into to-night, but it is admitted by scholars that it is uncertain who were the seven first bishops of the church in the capital of the ancient Roman Empire.*

We have referred to the "Dark Ages" to show what society was under the Church in the zenith of her power; to show what, in England, we have largely been delivered from; to show what the Romanizers in the Church would lead us back to, inasmuch as their principles and doctrines, as we shall yet see, are the same. Upon this intense darkness light broke at last, and it came from the old book. The Psalmist said "The entrance of thy word giveth light," and it did so to those who got hold of it in the days of darkness, ignorance, and superstition, to which we have referred. The name of John Wycliffe stands out prominently in England as one who, in the fourteenth century, protested against Papal tyranny, and who endeavoured to give the people the Bible in their own language. He did not hesitate to call the Pope "Anti-Christ." In his day there were two rival Popes. They denounced and anathematized one another, but he classed them both as Anti-Christ. You know how the spite of the Romanists was manifested against him. He died a natural death, but between forty and fifty years later a bishop of Rome had his bones dug up at Lutterworth and burned! It shows the spirit of the system. If they cannot burn a heretic alive, they will even condescend to dig up his poor bones and put them into the fire! Tyndale who was burnt to death as a heretic followed Wycliffe, gave the people a more perfect translation of the Scriptures, and thus in a large measure prepared the way for the great Reformation of the sixteenth century. No name stands out more prominently associated with this great work than that of Martin Luther, the monk of Germany. A marvellous man was Luther, and a marvellous work he accomplished. Entering a monastery with the idea of cultivating holiness he soon discovered the irreligion of his surroundings. He became, at length, thoroughly dissatisfied with his own position, realised his own sinfulness, and longed and prayed for deliverance. Then at length he came across a Bible and began to study its pages with intense earnestness. It soon revealed to him the abomination of that religion with which he was connected. The doctrines of the Church he found to be false. He could find nothing about purgatory, nothing about masses for the souls of the dead, nothing about the adoration of the Virgin Mary, nothing about numberless mediators between God and men, but only mention of one—the Lord Jesus Christ. Light dawned upon his mind. He saw the iniquity of

* "It is a very precarious and uncomfortable foundation for Christian hope, which is laid in the doctrine of an uninterrupted succession of Bishops, and which makes the validity of the administration of Christian ministers depend upon such a succession, since there is so great a darkness upon many parts of Ecclesiastical History, in so much that it is not agreed who were the seven first Bishops of the Church of Rome; and Eusebius himself, from whom the greatest patrons of this doctrine have made their catalogues, expressly owns, that it is no easy matter to tell who succeeded the Apostles in the government of the Churches, excepting such as may be collected from Paul's own words."—*Dr. Doddridge.*

granting indulgences for sins, past or future, and the shocking superstition of his Church became apparent to his vigorous mind. Still he thought and prayed before any action was taken. At length the opportunity came for the enlightened monk to speak and to denounce with no mealy-mouth the iniquities of the Pope. Leo X. was Pope at the time, one of the proudest that ever occupied the Papal chair. He came of a haughty aristocratic family and we are told that he conceived the desire "to transform the Church of St. Peter, at Rome, into the grandest Christian temple in the world." The difficulty was to raise the money. Supplies were short, people were tired of continually sending cash to Rome, how was his scheme to be carried out? He decided at last upon a plan. He would raise money by the sale of indulgences. Two men were sent forth, Sampson the monk into Switzerland, and Tetzel the Dominican friar into Germany. They pursued their scandalous traffic with success. For a few copper pieces by which their "bits of rotten parchment" were purchased, a poor sinner procured—he was assured—the pardon of all the sins he had ever committed! It was not by repentance, and faith, and baptism into the name of Christ, but by virtue of the Holy father's indulgences! And more strange to state, if the sinner gave silver instead of copper, he procured not only the pardon of all past sins, but of all he would ever commit during his life! What a license that gave them to commit evil! Do you think the Church is any more enlightened now? Not a bit of it. I went into Brompton Oratory not many months ago, the head church of the Catholics in London, and, beside the statue of Peter holding a golden key, was a printed card, assuring all who knelt before that image, and said a prayer, that they had fifty days indulgence granted them, or that they could remit it to any soul in Purgatory! The said soul would thus get out we presume fifty days earlier through a prayer offered before that block of marble! I don't know who would get the benefit if the soul were already out. You see they can never give you any assurance upon this matter. You may pay money for this object and the soul may not be in all the while! So prayers and money are wasted. But some souls must be retained a long while according to the imagination of the clergy. A Church of England clergyman was only the other day praying for the repose of the soul of John Wesley, a hundred years after his death! Imagine John Wesley's "soul" suffering torment all this while! If he were alive how he would denounce the doctrine of the man and show how unscriptural his belief was. Well the mind of Martin Luther was fired with indignation at this abominable mode of raising money by the Pope, and he denounced the wickedness with all the energy at his command. Thus his great work commenced. He mightily convinced the people too. There was no mincing matters with him. He knew the system he attacked and with all his might he hammered at it, and the marks of his blows still remain. "I wish" he said "I could breathe thunderclaps against the Pope, and Popery; and that every word was a thunderbolt! . . . The kingdom of Christ is a kingdom of mercy, grace and goodness: the kingdom of the Pope is a kingdom of lies and damnation."

The Reformation followed. In England the Reformation principles were embraced. The Church was reformed. There was an abandon-

ment of much of the old doctrine of Rome, though much remained. The Prayer-book is the proof of this compromise. Yet there is sufficient there to condemn many of the beliefs and practices of the Ritualists. Read the Thirty-nine Articles. To these Articles every clergyman assents when he is ordained. It is a shocking scandal, and most dishonest the way that many of them afterwards proclaim doctrines the very opposite. These articles proclaim the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures—apart from tradition—to enlighten men in the way of salvation ; that works of supererogation are impious—that is, the doctrine that man can do more good works than are necessary ; that the Church of Rome has erred in Faith and practice ; that “ the Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration, as well of Images as of Reliques, and also Invocation of Saints, is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God ;” that five of the seven Sacraments of Rome are not Sacraments ; that transubstantiation “ cannot be proved by the word of God ;” that the cup is not to be denied the laity as is the case among the Catholics ; and that ministers are not forbidden to marry, as is done by the law of Rome in direct opposition to the New Testament. Now notwithstanding these Articles of the Church of England to which all her ministers have pledged themselves we find at the present time there are thousands who entirely repudiate them, and while accepting Church of England pay, preach the heresies of Rome. Shame upon them I say. They are not honest men, or they would abandon a position which they cannot honourably retain. The late Cardinal Newman, before he left the Church of England, in the celebrated Tract No. 90, which caused such a sensation when it appeared, pleaded that most of the dogmas of the Papal Church could be held consistently with subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles ! Thus a man can repudiate Purgatory as false and yet preach it, and the same with the other Romish doctrines condemned by the Articles to which we have referred !

Ritualism and Popery are both based upon tradition, not the Bible. The Reformation gave the people The Book, but these systems would take it from them again. They can only live in the darkness. The hatred of Rome to the Bible is well known. Go and stand in any Catholic town in Ireland at a street corner, with an open Bible, and preach Christ to the people, and the chances are that you will suffer in such a manner from the priest-ridden populace, that you will not soon forget your temerity. These systems place the Church between a man and the Bible. They are both alike. The private individual cannot interpret the book for himself, the Church must do it for him, and the Church is guided by written and unwritten laws, by the book and by tradition. “ The Catholic Rule of Faith ” says Milner, “ is not merely the written word of God, but the whole word of God both written and unwritten ; in other words, Scripture and tradition, and these propounded and explained by the Catholic Church. This implies, that we may have a two-fold rule, or law, and that we have an interpreter, or judge, to explain it, and decide upon it in all doubtful points.”* That extract is from a Catholic, now I quote from a Ritualist. “ In the sense in which

* Milner, Letter X.

it is commonly understood at this day, Scripture is *not*, on Anglican principles, the Rule of Faith." * Another writer says, "We do not make Scripture the Rule of our Faith, but that other things in their kind are rulers; likewise in such sort that it is not *safe*, without respect had unto them, to judge things by the Scripture." † Another writes thus:—"Scripture and tradition, taken together, are the joint rule of faith." ‡ A fourth says, "Catholic tradition is a divine informant on religious matters; it is the unwritten word: these two, the Bible and Catholic tradition, form together a united Rule of Faith." (D'Aubigne's Geneva and Oxford, p. 10.) Now these sentiments you perceive are quite antagonistic to that Article of the Church of England, which asserts that the Bible *is* sufficient, how dishonest therefore of those who promulgate such views in the Church, and you can see at once the identity of the teaching of Rome and the Ritualists. It is entirely anti-scriptural. "The law of the Lord is perfect," there is no flaw about it, and it requires no additions of man. Rome has smothered the Bible under her traditions, and her people never breathe in the pure atmosphere of divine truth. The Jews had done the same in the time of Christ. Their position was similar to that of the Catholics, and Jesus did not spare them. His words to them are applicable equally to those in our day who plead for tradition, who forsake the pure stream of the water of life, for the foul stream that flows through the dirty channels and sewer pipes of Rome. He constantly condemned the Jews for not attending to Moses and the Prophets. Their traditions prevented them accepting him as the Messiah, and when in their punctiliousness they charged his disciples with "transgressing the traditions of the elders" it exposed them to the retort from Christ "Why do ye also transgress the commandments of God by your traditions?" (Matt. xv. 3.) He never mentioned tradition except to denounce it. "Full well" said he "ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition;" and, on another occasion, "In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark vii. 9; Matt. xv. 9.) Let none present be misled by this cry of tradition. Keep to the old book. Take Paul's advice to the converted Jews in his day. "Take heed" says he, "lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. ii. 8.) In *him* we are made full, not in the Church. *He* is the head, not the Archbishop, nor the Queen, nor the Pope, nor Peter,—but Christ—"in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9;) if we are in him we are safe, though the Church excommunicate and anathematize us, and if we take to ourselves "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," we shall be able to withstand all those who exalt and oppose themselves against God.

The Romish and Ritualistic clergy are one also as regards their sacerdotal claims and assumptions. We have referred to their united claim to an uninterrupted succession from the apostles, a claim disputed by men of such marked ability in the same Church as the latter, as Archbishop Whately, Bishop Hoadley, Stillingfleet and others, but be-

* Tract 90, P. 11. † Field, in Tract 90, P. 11.
‡ Tract No. 3, in Keble's Tradition.

sides this claim,—which, if they could prove, is worth nothing,—they assume functions altogether inconsistent and out of harmony with the whole system of Christianity. They call themselves “priests;” as priests they must have their offering, and they have invented one, and the doctrine concerning that one is as blasphemous and preposterous as can well be conceived. What truths are there that stand out more clearly in the New Testament than that Christ is the one high priest who has entered into heaven itself to appear in the presence of God on behalf of his people; that his was the one great sacrifice that abolished all others, that perfects for ever them that are sanctified; that he is the one mediator between God and men and that there are no others; that confession must be made to God alone and forgiveness be asked from him for sins committed, except for those wrongs that may be committed one against another, for which full, frank confession must be made and forgiveness sought and granted? Popery and Ritualism alike reverse all these grand truths. They thrust a number of priests between man and his maker, they have peopled heaven with mediators innumerable, chief among whom is the Virgin Mary whom they have exalted to divine honours and placed higher than the Son of God! They teach their dupes that confession must be made to a priest, and thousands of abominations have been practised through the confessional. Do not suppose this sort of thing is not taught in the Church of England. We could give you abundant proof if time permitted. It is not so long ago that the circulation of a book called “The Priest in Absolution” was brought to light, circulated by clergymen of the Society of the Holy Cross. There was a discussion in the House of Lords about it, and extracts were given showing that even to children from five years of age, and to married women the most indelicate and suggestive questions were to be put. The Archbishop of Canterbury himself, who spoke of the Roman Catholic Church as a branch of the Church of Christ, and referred in respectful terms to their use of the Confessional, said of this book—circulated mind you by Church of England ministers—that “no modest person could read the book without regret, and that it was a disgrace to the community that such a work should be circulated under the authority of clergymen of the Established Church.” He further said “I cannot imagine that any right-minded man could wish to have such questions addressed to any members of his family; and if he had any reason to suppose that any member of his family had been exposed to such an examination, I am sure it would be the duty of any father of a family to remonstrate with the clergyman who had put the questions and warn him never to approach his house again.”

The one sacrifice of Christ for the sins of men they proclaim not to be sufficient, for they have their doctrine of penance, and extreme unction, and after these purgatory, where the soul has still to be purged of its defilements by suffering no one knows how long or how much, but of which suffering they may be relieved by the payment of money to the priest to offer the sacrifice of the Mass for the repose or deliverance of the soul thus in torment. How different all this to the Bible! The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s son, cleanseth us from all sin. He is made unto the believer “righteousness, wisdom, sanctification, and redemption” (I Col. i. 30.)

Seek union with him if you would be saved. Let no one but him come between you and the Eternal Father. Scorn the offers of these would-be priests to ply their trade on your account ; repent, believe, and obey the gospel, and you will be saved.

As priests they claim that the holy water of baptism regenerates the babies, though experience universally falsifies the claim. By confirmation they pretend that the Holy Spirit is conferred so that the candidates are made "strong and perfect Christians, and soldiers of Jesus Christ," whereas it is a mere formal, unscriptural ceremony, often gone through without the slightest seriousness on the part of those who engage in the act.

Perhaps, however, the doctrine of transubstantiation is the most stupendous miracle they profess to work and the most shocking evidence of their departure from the truth. Every Sunday this miracle is supposed to be worked in all the Catholic Churches in the world. The water and the wine in the consecration service are said to become the actual flesh and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the same flesh and blood that once walked the streets of Judea! It tastes the same of course after consecration as before, you would not distinguish any difference, because there is none, but yet it is declared to be his actual flesh and blood. Thus, every Sunday, Christ is created in the flesh, in every Catholic Church in the world, and the Christ thus created, that bit of a wafer, is adored and worshipped as the Eternal God! What gross idolatry! What shocking blasphemy! Then, because Christ's one offering is not sufficient, he is weekly offered by the priest to atone for the sins of the faithful on earth and in purgatory! They call this an "unbloody sacrifice," and on that ground alone it can avail nothing, for it is a divine decree that without shedding of blood is no remission of sin. I will quote from a Roman Catholic Catechism. "Question, What is the Mass? Answer, It is the unbloody sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ. Ques., What are the ends for which we are to offer up this sacrifice? Ans., 1st, For God's honour and glory. 2ndly, In thanksgiving for all his benefits, and as a perpetual memorial of the passion and death of his Son. 3rdly, For obtaining pardon for our sins. And 4thly, For obtaining all graces and blessings through Jesus Christ." "It may be doubted" one writer has declared, "whether reason was ever more outraged, and the laws of language more unblushingly violated, than in this definition. The jumble of contradictory ideas is truly astounding. 'An unbloody sacrifice' of 'the blood of Christ!' What does the expression mean? An 'unbloody sacrifice' we comprehend; but 'an unbloody sacrifice of blood' confounds us! The absurdity is such that nothing from the first could have prevented its indignant rejection, but the solemnity which attaches to the subject. The ignorant world of that day were afraid to exercise, about a subject so awful, the small portion of reason which still remained to them. The priesthood taught them that their duty was to be thoughtless and dumb; and the perpetuity of the monstrous belief is to be attributed to the fact, that the priests repressed as iniquity the first risings of common sense. An 'unbloody sacrifice of blood' is as if one should talk of an unwatery stream of water, or an ungolden cup of gold, or a dishonest act of honesty. It is simply a preposterous contradiction, both in words and in ideas; it is an endeavour to identify the positive

with the negative. It is a sporting at once with logic and with language. The Mass is declared to be 'the true body and blood of Christ;' and, so constituted, it is declared to be a 'sacrifice,' and that sacrifice—a 'sacrifice of blood'—while yet 'unbloody!'" We pass over the answer given concerning "the ends" for which this sacrifice is offered, though we might point out much that is unscriptural about it. You say perhaps that that is out and out Roman Catholic doctrine, and that nothing so advanced and unscriptural is taught in the Church of England. There is a "Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ" connected with the Established Church which, I believe, numbers thousands, and their manuals and books teach the grossest idolatry, Virgin worship, Saint worship, and this doctrine of sacrifice and transubstantiation! We could give you extracts teaching superstition as gross as anything almost in Popery. One of the Ritualistic Tracts published years ago claimed for the ministers that they were "entrusted with the keys of heaven and hell; entrusted with the *awful and mysterious gift of making the Bread and Wine Christ's Body and Blood.*"* "I should like to know" says Froude (vol. I., p. 326) "why you flinch from saying, that the power of *making the Body and Blood of Christ* is vested in the successors of the Apostles." "The power claimed by the Church" writes Sewell, (p. 247) is a vast power, which places it almost upon *a level with God himself*,—the power of *forgiving sins* by wiping them out in Baptism,—*of transferring souls from hell to heaven*,—the power of bringing down the Spirit of God, and of incorporating it in the persons of frail and fleshly man." These are samples of Ritualistic doctrine. We leave you to ponder over them. Such doctrines are spreading rapidly in England. The Church of England clergy are doing Rome's work and doing it well. Rome knows and rejoices. Her organs acknowledge the fact and anticipate even more effectual work. It is the highway to Popery. Let those who love their Bibles hold firm to the book. Have no communion with darkness. Come out from among them and be ye separate. Stand aloof from all who pervert the truth and exalt tradition and themselves. Be not hoodwinked by the ceremonial and services of Rome or the Established Church. It is not candles and crosses, and genuflexions; it is not white, or black robed men; it is not the laying on of hands, or the absolution pronounced by a priest that will save you from death. The doctrines we have passed in review to-night—and we might have said much more on some points than we have,—come not from the Bible, but from tradition, cast that to the winds. Search the Scriptures, and you will find revealed there that the judgments of heaven will by and bye sweep away the refuges of lies, therefore we say unto you, and to all connected with every false and unscriptural Church, "Come out of her, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. xviii. 4.)

* Tract X. p. 4.

THE IMPOSITION OF THE CLERGY:

A CONSIDERATION OF THEIR PRIESTLY CLAIMS AND
ASSUMPTIONS, AS SET FORTH BY ARCHDEACON LEA IN AN
ADDRESS DELIVERED IN ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH,
KIDDERMINSTER.



“ The parson who sets up a claim to authority on the strength of his orders, bears, in the eyes of the educated layman a disagreeable resemblance to a trickster. In the arena of life he is trying to get an advantage outside the rules of the game. Other men in that arena are measuring themselves squarely by their intellectual and moral quality and they resent the dodge by which this black-coated competitor seeks to evade the criterion. George Eliot remarks somewhere that there is no calling like that of a clergyman for securing to a man of mediocre ability a position of influence altogether out of proportion to his faculty. She was describing the order of things fifty years ago. The cleric of our day has gone one better than this. He has made himself a priest. Against the learning or the genius of the layman he sets his power, supernaturally vested in his order, of working miracles. The trick is an old one, and has had amazing vogue in its day. But the educated world at last sees through it, and cannot help despising a little the men who seek for power by such a method.”—Extract from an Article—“ Clericalism the Enemy ” in the *Christian World*. —

THE Church of England is called the Protestant Church. Once it was connected with and was a part of the Roman Catholic Church. During the time of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, the authority of the Pope in Ecclesiastical matters in England was set aside, and owing to the efforts of the Reformers, many of the doctrines of Rome, were repudiated and protested against as repugnant to Scripture and to common sense. A lecturer in this town, some time ago, whose address we answered at the time,* lecturing on behalf of the Church of England, and supported by the local clergy, told us that—during the period to which we have referred—the Church reformed itself from the errors that had been imbibed. The Church, he said, at the Reformation “washed her face,”—“it had got dirty and was washed.” Now, we entirely agreed with him as to its previous dirty condition, that is, in the doctrinal sense; for, of course, he had, and we have, in view only the foul doctrines which were taught by her as a branch of the Church of Rome; but we did not agree with him that the washing was perfect. It was only half a wash; a large number of Romish and unscriptural doctrines and practices were left behind and exist to-day. Nevertheless, it became a Protestant Church—a Church which protested against the

* See next Lecture, *Who Established the Church of England*.

errors of Rome. A number of her Thirty-nine Articles prove this, to which, as we shall show, a large number of her so-called priests are now false, although professedly bound by them. They condemn "Works of Supererogation," "Purgatory," "Speaking (in the Church) in Foreign Tongues," the so-called Sacraments of Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction; Transubstantiation; the withholding of the wine from the people in the Lord's Supper; the sacrifice of the Mass, and other things practised and believed by the Church of Rome, of which the Church of England was once a part. These doctrines are distinctly singled out and condemned, and every clergyman in the Church of England is formally compelled to condemn these doctrines, and yet it is a fact that in that Church there are some thousands of men so regardless of the vows they have taken, and of the articles to which they have set their seal, and which are the supposed basis of their ministry, that they teach the exact opposite to these articles, and proclaim as Bible verities those falsehoods against which they ought to protest. Such broken vows, such dishonest action, passes the comprehension of ordinary, straightforward men, yet so it is. If these teachers were honest, they would abandon a Church whose articles condemn their belief. But no, they cling to their positions, they hold on tenaciously to their livings:—the cash, at least is essential, though the articles go to the wind. I think the power and influence of this Romanizing party in the Church is but little known. They are called the High Church Party, and they are zealous, earnest, and very numerous. Their numbers are rapidly increasing, and they have much wealth on their side. They are ceaselessly active in their inculcation of Romish doctrine and their efforts to unprotestantize the Church. Their work is very effectual among the women. They have their sisterhoods and guilds of various kinds, and large numbers of females are under their control. It is pitiable to observe the abjectness that is manifested by weak-minded people towards the clergy. But this deference is sought after and inculcated by those to whom it is shown. They love the praise of men. There are large numbers of people who think very much of being noticed by the clergyman, and who scarcely dare question anything he advances, while the ignorance of the Bible is so great on every hand that the generality of the people are unable to test what he says from their knowledge of the Truth.

These Romanizing clergy are prepared at college for the work of bringing back England to Papal darkness. It is an undoubted fact that the Church—once, to some extent, reclaimed from Romish error—is returning, "like the dog to his vomit, or like the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire." I was recently reading a little book, entitled "The Cambridge Chamber of Darkness." It is written by a gentleman who is the author of many publications on Bible subjects. After referring to the abominations which Ezekiel saw in the vision, narrated in the 8th chapter of his prophecies, he writes thus:—"I would now ask you to go with me, not to Jerusalem, but to Cambridge, one of the great seats of learning in England. One word of explanation. I had been with a friend to visit a sick person. The mother of this invalid had a room in the court or yard, which she desired to let to my friend. He

asked me to look at it with him. Now, I want you to go in with me, and I will help you to look at it for yourself. At least I will describe exactly what I saw. We will follow the owner of this room. It is dark : she takes a candle in her hand up the dark passage. She has the keys ; but before we go in I must tell you, so as to prepare you a little, that this room in the dark passage is let at present to some members of the University, and the owner is very wishful for them to give it up. After some difficulty the door in the wall is opened. We have only one candle. Dear me, how dim and strange this place looks ! What can that be opposite the entrance ? Why look ; it is actually a large image of a dead Christ lying down ! And that ? An image of a woman leaning or weeping over the awful-looking dead body of Christ ! And that ? What can that large triangle of wood be, with candles stuck on it, burnt nearly down to the sockets ? I should have been puzzled if I had not seen this same purgatorial triangle in the temples of idolatry on the Continent. There you may see a distressed widow or orphan come and buy a candle, place it on the triangle, and then kneel before some image in prayer for a supposed soul in purgatory whilst the candle burns. And this is done by millions in what is called Christendom ! Do you see that penitential chair before the awful image ? Just look at those sticks fastened to the back of the chair, to support, I suppose, the hands uplifted in idol worship ! And did you ever see such horrid-looking cloaks, black and ugly ? Well, you would almost think the order of Beelzebub must worship here. Hush ! Some of the most gentlemanly members of the University meet here. You notice that large cross behind the prostrate body ? And these articles, what are they ? Incense vessels, and other utensils of idolatry. Now step through this hole in the wall, and see other abominations. A strange feeling creeps over you. The light is very dim. You see that image of an angel, meekly asking you to dip your finger in the holy water ? No, by the way, it is all dried up. Now look around. Yes, that is the image of the Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven, and the little child. And there the altar, with its great flaring cross ; there the desks ; here lie vestments and books. . . . But this place looks so dismal ; where are the windows ? Oh, this is like the old worship of Tammuz ! The dark chamber of idolatry. Now look, those windows are carefully boarded up. Not a ray of God's light must enter this chamber of spiritual abominations. What ! Not a chink between the boards ? The members of the confraternity have carefully, most carefully, papered over those boards, and where the light of day should be, there stands their altar. Oh, England ! England ! these be the men preparing to be thy parish Antichrists !"

Now, this society, described by this gentleman, thus meeting at Cambridge University, is called the "Holy Confraternity," and at the time his little pamphlet was written, some years ago, consisted "of more than sixteen thousand five hundred" persons, "of whom two thousand six hundred were clergymen," a list of many of whose names and addresses were published in a pamphlet at the office of *The Rock* newspaper, London, called "The Ritualistic Conspiracy." It is admitted by Roman Catholics that the Ritualists are doing their work for them, and that they will yet do it more effectually, and if you could see the books

published by the members of this Holy Confraternity, you would not be surprised at the Romish expectation. These books are not easy to get hold of, as they only circulate them amongst the members. One of them is actually the well-known Roman Catholic book, "The Garden of the Soul." Another is "The Manual of the Holy Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ." Another is "The Day Office of the Church, According to the Calendar of the Church of England." The greatest spiritual abominations are taught in these books. Idolatry of the worst kind is inculcated. Transubstantiation is taught. The bread and the wine is changed into the real body and blood of Christ! He is actually present and adored! He is spoken of as the *victim* offered on the altar. "O, Sacred Victim, offered in satisfaction for the sins of the world." "Extreme unction," another Romish doctrine, is taught, "which wipes away the remains of sins," only, rather contradictorily, they teach that after the rite of extreme unction has been performed, the finishing touch has to be carried out in purgatory. Of course, too, there must be priestly confession and priestly absolution, and there are prayers for the departed faithful, and prayers for the miserable souls in purgatory, and prayers for the Pope, and there are prayers to the saints, invoking their intercession, of a most blasphemous nature. Here is one of the prayers on page 117 of the "Day Office of the Church," for December 6: "O God, who by numberless miracles hast honoured Blessed Nicholas, Thy bishop, grant, we beseech Thee, *that by his merits and intercession* we may be delivered from the flames of hell, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen." What a slight upon Christ, the only Mediator between God and man acknowledged in the New Testament. Then there is an address to some one named Lucy, who is declared to have "overcome the enemy *with Thine own blood.*" Here, too, is a most singular Collect:—"O God, who didst give the law of Moses on the top of Mt. Sinai, and by Thy holy angels didst wonderfully convey the body of blessed Katharine, Thy virgin and martyr, to the same place, grant, we beseech Thee, that for her sake, and at her intercessions, we may be enabled to reach that Mount, *which is Christ.*" What a marvellous ignorance of the Scriptures such a collect manifests! Apart from the superstition about Katharine, whoever she was; apart from the blasphemy of invoking her intercession, what a wilful perversion of the Scriptures it seems! The idea of saying that Mt. Sinai is Christ, or in any way represents Him! Mount Sinai is set forth by Paul, in the 4th chapter of Galatians, as the symbol of bondage and of the curse. It represented the law, which could not give life, but cursed all who were under its yoke, and here we are taught, on page 236 of this High Church Book, to pray to God that St. Katharine may, by her intercessions, lead us to the place representing that bondage from which Christ came to deliver those who believe in Him! Is it possible for so-called Christian teachers to show their folly and reveal their ignorance more than this? And how blind must be the dupes imposed upon by this spiritual nonsense! It is a case of gross darkness on both sides, and "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." One would think we were reading instructions to a Pagan priest when we come across the following passage: "In censuring the altar there are twenty-five

swings." Directions for Officiant—"Bow to the crucifix. Salute same with three double swings. Turn towards epistle side, salute back of altar slab, three swings, one swing lower corner of epistle side, one swing upper corner, proceed towards centre of altar, salute fore part, three swings. Repeat on gospel side and return toward epistle corner, salute fore part of altar, six swings, salute, three swings." Ah, you will search the New Testament in vain for instructions of that kind. They are foreign to its letter and its spirit. We require no images to bow to, and no temple to worship in, and no costly and elaborate paraphernalia; we require no crosses, nor candles, nor swinging incense, nor surpliced choirs, nor splendidly robed priests; we require to have a mental grasp of what God has revealed; to worship Him in spirit and in truth; to believe, and love, and obey. Doing this we can dispense with all the gaudy frippery and foolery of Ritualism; nay, we must do if we would be saved, for to practice these things reveals the fact that those who do so misapprehend the requirements of the truth, and are false teachers of their fellow men.

Now, these things are openly and secretly taught in the Church of England. Men are getting bold in their proclamation. Purgatory is openly and unblushingly taught.* It is only a short time ago that a public service was held in St. Barnabas's Church, Pimlico, to pray for the repose of the soul of the "Rev." W. J. E. Bennett, the late vicar of Frome, and the former minister of this London church. The preacher was a "Rev." H. M. Villiers, and in his remarks he said that "Mr. Bennett would, by his power of intercession for those left behind him, do more than when on earth!" The Rector of Coppenhall (Crewe) was written to some time ago and asked to contradict a statement to the effect that he had affixed to the notice board in his church the request—"Of thy mercy pray for the repose of the soul of the 'Rev.' J. B. Wheeler" (one of his predecessors). In reply to his correspondent he wrote:—"Dear Sir,—The statement to which you refer was substantially correct. I boldly teach the duty of praying for the departed, and publicly ask for the suffrages of the faithful on their behalf. I utterly deny that my practice is 'Roman,' unless, indeed, we are prepared to make the Roman Catholics a present of the fathers of the undivided Church. The Church of England has suffered many things through the mutilation or suppression of the truth, but she can never receive 'damage' by the preaching of the whole counsel of God. I am, dear sir, yours very truly in the faith of Him who is Lord both of the dead and the living, William Cawley Reid, Coppenhall Rectory, Crewe." † What a misapplication of Scripture this last sentence is, to be sure. Christ is, indeed, Lord both of the dead and the living. Paul says he died and lived again that he might be; but then, the one class *is* dead. There are two classes, living and dead. With this gentleman they are *not* dead. They are living somewhere else, and it would seem as though their circumstances had changed for the worse, for it is necessary to pray for the

* An article appeared in the *St. Mary's Parish Magazine* (Kidderminster) in the October issue for 1897 advocating Prayers for the Dead, and we have not heard of any protest being made by any one on the subject.

† *Birmingham Daily Post*, December 8th, 1885.

repose of their disturbed souls in the purgatorial state. Paul didn't mean the same as Mr. Cawley Reid when he wrote that passage. Christ lived and died and rose again for the purpose of immortalizing mortal men. If they die believing in him, he is still their Lord. They sleep till he wakes them. Their destinies are in his hands. He is the resurrection and the life. He holds the keys of death and the grave, and in due time his power will be exerted to bring the sleepers forth from the dust of the earth and clothe them with immortality, at which time also he will change the nature of those who are alive looking for and awaiting his appearing. Thus he is the Lord both of the living and the dead, two states, not, in truth, recognized by those who believe that they are "not dead, but gone before." It is not necessary that I should point out that the gentleman who thus so boldly teaches the purgatorial doctrine, assented, when becoming a clergyman of the Church, to—among others—the twenty-second article of the Church of England, which states that "The *Romish* doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping, and adoration, as well of images as of reliques, and also invocation of saints, is a foul thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God." Yes! he assented to that. What complete dishonesty to teach the opposite! Where are the consciences of such men? If their convictions alter, why don't they leave the Church, and not have the effrontery to pledge themselves to one thing and falsely teach something else?

Need I refer to the way the clergy impose upon people by claiming power to forgive sins and by urging the members of their flock to attend the confessional? This is done more than you may think. You may remember what a stir there was a few years ago over the publication of a book entitled "The Priest in Absolution;" a book which was privately printed by, and was at the disposal of an association of clergymen called the Society of the Holy Cross, for private and limited circulation among the clergy. It was not sold to anyone, not even to any clergyman. He must send a "reference to some well-known *priest* of his acquaintance" before he could get it, and it was to be a sort of guide to them in the "discharge of their duties as confessors!" This book was an abomination. The late Archbishop of Canterbury, himself, said that "no modest person could read the book without regret," and that it was "a disgrace to the community that such a work should be circulated under the authority of clergymen of the Established Church." He also stated in the House of Lords, his conviction that "it was the duty of any father of a family to remonstrate with the clergyman who had put such questions as the book suggested to any member of his family, and warn him never to approach his house again." This book asserted that "The priest is judge in the place of God." "That is, he assumed to himself perfect infallibility of decision in respect of the persons who came to him to receive absolution, and thereby to be relieved from all responsibility on account of their sins."* It taught that the Virgin Mary was immaculate, or sinless, and that she interceded with God for those who asked for her intercession. It taught the doctrine of transubstantiation. It

* The Earl of Redesdale.

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taught, in its "Address to the Children," that "It is through the priest, and the priest only, that the child must acknowledge his sins if he desires that God should forgive him." "Do you know why?" it asks. "Because," it replies, "because God, when He was on earth, gave to His priests, and those alone, the Divine power of forgiving men their sins; it was to the priests only that Jesus said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost' . . . 'Those who will not confess will not be cured' [where did Christ ever say such a thing?] Sin is a terrible sickness and casts souls into hell." Now, I have already shown that these High Church, or "Catholic" notions, these abominable, unscriptural fallacies, are very largely taught and believed in in the Church of England. It is true the Evangelical party as stoutly deny these dogmas, but that only shows that the Church is a house divided against itself, containing men who almost hate each other, who teach as fundamental truths, the most opposite dogmas; who anathematise each other and so disprove the oft-made claim that it is the one true Church, the veritable kingdom of God upon the earth.

I wish to ask now where do the sympathies of the Church clergy in Kidderminster lie? Is it with the Evangelical party, who renounce these Popish dogmas and contend against them? Not one bit. They have not an ounce of sympathy for those who protest against the errors of the Ritualists. You never find a solitary Kidderminster clergyman on a platform at a meeting called by the Church Association. It is possible they do not go to such extremes as some of those to whom I have referred, but their leanings are that way, and the same High Church doctrine regarding Apostolic succession, special powers of the clergy, regeneration of infants by sprinkling, appeal to tradition, and other things tending in the direction of Popery, are freely made and set forth. It is the beginning, yea, more than the beginning. It is bound to creep on and on. Men are so fond of power, they love to be looked up to. To be thought to possess Divine powers, and to be the dispenser of Divine grace is flattering to the pride of man. They have ceased to protest against these fables, and from time to time we have felt it to be our duty to protest against them and their heresies. A few years ago, when Mr. Claughton came into the "family living," we protested against the claims made by Canon Melville. It was said then that "from the days of the Apostles till now, the holy faith had been set forth by a consecrated ministry, bound together, as one, since Apostolic times by special gifts and graces which were bestowed upon them in the laying on of hands." We challenged the statement at the time. We wished to know what the special gifts and graces were which the clergy possessed *after* the bishop's hands had been laid upon their heads, and whether they possessed anything they did not possess before. Is there any difference? Have they become the recipients of miraculous power? Can they heal the sick, give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, straightness of limb to the cripple, or can they raise the dead? Verily not. They are as helpless as you and I, upon whose heads no prelate's hands have ever been laid. Do they receive the gift of tongues? Verily, no. They are admittedly often not very well able to speak in the language in which they were born. One told me some time ago that he was "too

nervous to preach," and I need only quote Archdeacon Lea in support of what I state. People complained—this is what he said the other night in St. George's Church—people "complained that their sermons were dull; that the same subjects were often repeated; that the voice of the clergyman was feeble, and the matter poor." Well, he is, of course, an authority. *We do not question this remark.* "All that," he said, "might be the case," "the gift of eloquence was a rare gift," and so it is. But eloquence is not so much required as knowledge. A man certainly can't preach, if he has no speaking ability, and there can be no doubt a great many men who go through the services of the Church with sing-song voices have altogether mistaken their calling. God never called them to the work, and it's a great deal worse than absurd to say He did. Paul was not eloquent, but he had knowledge. He could reason out of the Scriptures, and convince the minds of those who listened, so that they were brought to believe the truths he set forth. If the bishop's hands are so efficacious, it is a pity the preachers do not cease to be so dull and the matter so poor as the Archdeacon admits may be the case. These gifts and graces do not make the priests infallible either. This is singular, too. But Archdeacon Lea furnishes the proof. He made the same claims—as I shall proceed to notice—at the induction of Mr. Church as Canon Melville made at the induction of Mr. Claughton. They are thoroughly unscriptural. They are an imposition. The people who believe them are weak-minded and credulous, and imposed upon. You cannot find any testimony to substantiate these claims. They claim to possess, in a special manner, the Holy Spirit. Listen: "Those who were ordained by the bishop were thereby, and from that day, taken out from among the laity as God's people; they are set apart, for the rest of their lives, as Christ's ambassadors; as stewards of the manifold grace of God, to minister to the people in holy things. . . . By virtue of their ordination, they receive *from the Holy Ghost* the gifts of the ministry—they were made the appointed channels of the grace of God, so that whether they preached in the congregation, or prayed beside the sick, or gave absolution, they were the dispensers of God's mysteries. *Their words, deeds, acts, were not their own, but the Holy Ghost's.*" Now, that is a pretty strong claim, and that is what Archdeacon Lea says. There is not an atom of proof for it. It is a distinct claim for infallibility; because the Spirit of God cannot err, cannot make a mistake, cannot do wrong. And they are controlled by the Spirit to such an extent that "their words, deeds, acts, are not their own, but the Holy Spirit's!" Do you believe it? I don't. It's an imposition. Whether this gentleman believes it or not, it is not true. If anyone objects to our speaking so emphatically, we may say that we proceed on the principle of the old proverb, "Call a spade a spade," and we assert that the mortal man who claims Divine power in this manner; who claims in every word, and act, and deed to be controlled by the Divine Spirit; who claims the power to absolve men from sin, to become a channel of Divine grace and a steward of the mysteries of God; who asserts that babies are regenerated when he drops a few spots of water from the tips of his fingers upon their foreheads; who professes (as some to whom we have referred do) to turn a bit of bread and a drop of wine,

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week after week, into the actual body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to pray non-existent souls out of a non-existent purgatory, we say that such mortal men are impostors, deceived, it may be, themselves, but certainly deceiving others. And these priestly claims and assumptions—which have their natural home at Rome—have been the cause of more war and bloodshed, murder and crime, and lust and villany during the past twelve centuries than has sprung from any other source.

Notwithstanding this claim of Divine control, the preacher afterwards admitted that “in the present day there were often laymen in the congregations not only infinitely more learned on general subjects, but sometimes better theologians than the priest, and to tell such men that they were to accept the mere dictum of the priest on doubtful or scientific principles would be absurd. The points on which they did claim respect and attention were those upon which the apostle bade the congregation obey the priests, their ministerial acts, and words which they spoke on the authority of Holy Scripture and the Church.” Here you see Divine control of the Holy Spirit is narrowed down to things taught by the Bible and tradition. And “the Church” has varied in its teaching in every age and generation on many topics. I may go into a church at Kidderminster and hear the voice of the Church say one thing, and I may go no farther than to Wolverley and hear the voice of the Church say another, and which of these two ordained ministers—“priests” I ought to say—speaks the words of infallibility, for they have both been ordained by the Bishop, and consequently, according to the preacher, “by virtue of their ordination, received”—not from man, but “from the Holy Ghost—the gifts of the ministry;” so that “their words, deeds and acts, were not their own, but the Holy Ghost’s.” When we consider the chaotic state of the Church of England, its opposing voices, its distracted teaching, its unbelief and its credulity, its worldliness and its pride, what foolish talk this seems! If the Holy Spirit were indeed controlling its ministry according to this claim, we should have unity in its teaching, harmony instead of discord among its preachers, vigour instead of flabbiness in its pulpits, earnestness instead of the dull sermons of which the preacher speaks, and the word of eternal life instead of the “poor matter” of which he says complaint is made. But the Holy Spirit is not there. Eighteen centuries and more ago that Divine Spirit condemned the very things these propagate, and foretold the great departure from the simplicity of the truth which we witness in every State-connected Church throughout the world. It is an empty claim; so is that of apostolic succession insisted upon by the archdeacon. We wonder at it being made. One would think it was too late in the day; that at the end of the nineteenth century men had grown more wise: but every now and then ecclesiastics make the claim as fresh as ever. “Again and again,” says one able writer, “the sacerdotal order have found it necessary to remind the people that they hold their office by virtue of a supernatural appointment. Otherwise some would be likely to conclude that the Prime Minister had had something to do with it; or that it was due to the fortunate circumstance that there was enough money in the family to arrange the necessary preliminaries. In the

absence of anything like religious zeal or devotion to the interests of pure Christianity, or aptness to teach, men would be in danger of adopting the inference that these persons were altogether like themselves—just as worldly, just as mercenary, just as intent upon making the best and the most of the present life, and with every bit as keen an eye towards temporal advantage. They require therefore to take shelter beneath the plea that they are by no means ordinary mortals, but that to them has been Divinely committed the exclusive right to handle 'the vessels of the Lord.' But if we were to pursue our enquiries into the foundation of all such current assumptions, we should not find much Divinity there. And if these pretensions do not rest upon a supernatural basis, they are certainly fraudulent and delusive, and as such can no longer command our respect. We have no objection to the genuine thing. . . . A priest exercising the functions of his office by a prescriptive authority, whose sacred credentials were beyond all dispute, would be a sight that would gladden our eyes. We should then have nothing to do but follow and obey. The trouble of having to think for ourselves about such matters would be spared us, and we could hand over our individual responsibility to those who had been appointed of heaven to see after our proper instruction in all that appertains to our duty. But as the case stands, we are apt to be bewildered amid a variety of rival claims upon our allegiance. If we follow Rome, we place ourselves in antagonism to Canterbury; and if we allow the Divine right of a dissenter from both to dictate to us in spiritual things, we have still to decide which branch of the Nonconforming community may lawfully arrogate to itself this awful power. Under these circumstances what can we do but simply reject all such pretensions *in toto*, and take matters into our own hands for better or worse? By this plan we shall lose nothing in the way of authoritative and infallible guidance, and shall escape much confusion and perplexity and useless expenditure of money and thought." *

This claim of spiritual superiority and of direct apostolical succession is, as we have seen, been made as freshly as ever by Archdeacon Lea. Of course the line of succession has never been broken! These gentlemen nearly always use the same words when speaking on this highly interesting subject. "The primitive rule of episcopal ordination and apostolic descent," said he, "had never been broken in their Church. It was by virtue of that lawful authority which their own Bishop had received from Christ, through the Apostles, and the unbroken line of their successors, that he ordained ministers to serve God in the congregation, and it was by virtue of that commission that the clergy of the Church exercised their ministry in their respective parishes." I would not be proud of my pedigree if I were a clergyman in the Church of England. Through strange and wicked hands have the gifts and graces of the Church descended upon the men of to-day. Of course I do not for a moment believe this assumption about the unbroken line. It is impossible of proof, and it is intrinsically absurd. I speak however of their known pedigree. It is a matter of history how wicked and how ignorant have been the ecclesiastical authorities of the past ages through whom these

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holy orders and spiritual gifts have descended. They have to wind their way through a long, dark, and slimy passage before they get to the light of Apostolic days. But they claim to do it—that is, some of them. Others—and among them the very bishops themselves, and among the bishops the most talented—deny their power to do it. Dr. Hook, speaking very emphatically, says: "There is not a bishop, priest, or deacon among us who cannot, if he please, trace his own spiritual descent from St. Peter or St. Paul." Against that assertion I quote Dr. Whateley, not many years ago Archbishop of Dublin, one of the greatest thinkers and truest logicians of the age: "There is not," he says, "a minister in all Christendom who is able to trace up, with any approach to certainty, his own spiritual pedigree." Stronger language still I might quote from Bishop Headley and Bishop Stillingfleet, two men of great intellectual power, in condemnation of this huge claim by such lesser lights as Dr. Pusey and Archdeacon Lea. But I forbear.

There were those in the time of Nehemiah who returned from the captivity in Babylon; who—careful as were the Jews, and especially the Levites—regarding their genealogies, were unable to trace their pedigree; and Nehemiah would not allow them to officiate or partake of the holy things till it was possible to infallibly decide upon their case; but notwithstanding the thousands of possibilities of failure in the case of the modern priests, they are very confident in their assertions that their pedigree is correct. We are able, however, to test their claims by the word of truth. If it were possible for them in the clearest way to trace back some kind of succession to apostolic days—I mean in the mere form of laying on of hands—it would not help their claim in the least. The powers given to the apostles were not continued. Those who had the Holy Spirit in those days were able to prove it by the mighty deeds they did; but those who profess to have it in a special manner now are powerless in this respect. There is not the slightest analogy, as asserted by the archdeacon, between the Levitical priesthood and the New Testament ministry. That was confined to one family or tribe. All the descendants of Levi were specially set apart for the Divine service, how then could the preacher say that there was "an analogous appointment of God under the New Dispensation?" There is no analogy whatever. If all the lineal descendants of the Apostles had been set apart by God for the future ministry of His Church, and all others excluded, then the preacher might have so spoken; but it was not so, there is no such command, and the preaching of the Gospel was not confined to the Apostles; for we find in the 8th chap. of the Acts and the 1st and 4th verses, that, owing to a great persecution at Jerusalem, the members of the Church there "were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria," the Apostles only remaining at Jerusalem; the result was that the truth spread, for we read that "they that were scattered abroad"—these private members of the Church—"went everywhere preaching the Word." No man has a prescriptive right to preach. "Let him that heareth say, come." It is the duty of all who have the ability, to "hold forth the word of life." It is confined to no special class of men. The true Apostolic succession is based upon character, and knowledge of the truth. I wish that to be impressed upon your

minds. The true Apostolic succession is based upon a knowledge of and obedience to the truth. Therefore, remember this, if you find men preaching doctrines opposed to the Apostles, or not living in accordance with the precepts they lay down, they are no successors of theirs—they are bastards, not legitimate children. Test the clergy by this rule, and they won't stand the test. Weigh them in the balance of truth, and you will find them wanting. Do they preach the glad tidings of the kingdom of God? For the most part—No. Do they unfold to their hearers the covenants of promise made with the fathers of Israel, which were confirmed by the ministry and death of Christ, whose blood is “the blood of the everlasting covenant?” Ask them about these covenants, and see how blank their countenances become. Do they preach eternal life alone through Jesus by a resurrection from the dead? Not one in a hundred. Do they follow the divine teachers in setting forth that the righteous will inherit the earth and dwell therein for ever, and that a man must know and believe these things, and *then* be baptised into the Name of Jesus for the remission of sins? It is the same answer—they do not. What do they teach? Why they teach the heathen dogma of the immortality of the soul; that the soul goes away at death to Purgatory, or Hades, or heaven, or hell—for they do not agree on this matter. They teach that man has eternal existence apart from Christ, and that the reward is not here but up above. They sprinkle babies and say they are regenerated, and they have sponsors to renounce the devil and all his works for the children and they have a rite of confirmation which is an unscriptural farce. They teach the doctrine of the Trinity in the place of the sublime truth when, very often, they have not done it for themselves; there is One Eternal God, and that He is one. They have their feast days and fast days and holy days, their confession and absolution, and transubstantiation, and bowing to the east, and their crosses and candles, and white robes and black robes and other adornments;* and all these things are unscriptural, and stamp their claim to be successors of the Apostles as utterly false. They are mixed up thoroughly in worldly matters. They have their bazaars at which gambling is carried on, and they patronise Punch and Judy, and theatrical entertainments, and comic performances, and they act as judges at sports, and they seek the favour of the world which is enmity with God, all of which things are condemned by the Apostles; and so we say again they cannot be their successors. If you know any among them that “love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men Rabbi,

* We are reminded of the following scathing passage on the Clergy of to-day from the pen of the sage of Chelsea:—“Legions of them, in their black and other gowns, I still meet in every country, masquerading in strange costume of body, and still stranger of soul; mummung, primming, grimacing poor devils; shamming, and endeavouring not to sham: that is the sad fact. Brave men many of them, after their sort, and in a position which we may admit to be wonderful and dreadful! On the outside of their heads some singular headgear, tulip mitre, felt coal-scuttle, purple hat; and in the inside—I must say, such a theory of God Almighty's universe as I, for my share, am right thankful to have no concern with at all. I think, on the whole, as broken-winged, self-strangled, monstrous a mass of incoherent incredibilities as ever dwelt in the human brain before.”—THOMAS CARLYLE, in *Latter-day Pamphlets*.

Rabbi," depend upon it that *they* are not in the true line of Apostolic succession. If you know any that are particular about holy days, and that forbid to marry, as do the priests of Rome, and that command men to fast, to "abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth;" that covet gold and silver and apparel; men that look after the fat livings, that fleece the sheep instead of feeding them, as Israel's shepherds did, do not call *them* successors of the Apostles, because Paul called them "grievous wolves," and said in his letter to Timothy and elsewhere that the Spirit spoke expressly—that in the latter times some should depart from the faith teaching and practising these very things (I Tim. iv. 1-5.) I know that these High Church clergy will tell you that character and false doctrine does not affect the validity of their ministry, shocking as such a statement is. Archdeacon Mason in his "Defence of the Church of England Ministry," teaches that neither "degradation," nor "heresy," nor "schism," nor "the most extreme wickedness," nor "anything else," can divest a Bishop of the power of giving true orders; and the Puseyites taught that "the Sacraments, not preaching, are the source of Divine grace," and that the efficacy of these is wholly "independent of the personal character of the administrator,"* it is quite enough if he has been episcopally ordained,—forced no doubt into this position by a consideration of the character of those monsters in the past, who have officiated at the altar, whom every faithful historian condemns.

This teaching does not fit in with Paul's. "A bishop," said he, "must be blameless, the husband of one wife"—you see *he* did not forbid to marry—"vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without (I Tim. iii. 1-7.) That is Paul's prescription for bishop making. They were to be careful whom they placed to be overseers in the church. They were to "lay hands suddenly upon no man," but to be assured fully that his life was in the right, and his doctrine sound. Do you think the Prime Minister for the day seeks for all these requirements when he makes a bishop? Or does he reward faithful political friends and adherents? Or is he ever influenced by influential men—Lords and Earls and Dukes, as to whom he shall appoint? A queer way of making successors of the Apostles, isn't it? Quite a political matter! Altogether an affair of the state! A bit of worldly business! and we wonder how men can have the effrontery to associate it in any way with things divine. Is the apostolic rule observed in providing a pastor for a flock? How does it fit in with the purchase of livings as a monetary speculation? How does it agree with the presentation of a living by a rich donor to some one he or she may be

* Tracts, Preface, 1834, No. xi.

interested in who may not have the slightest mental or moral or spiritual qualification for the position? How does his advice get followed in the ordinary creation of men for the ministry? A youth goes to college in the ordinary manner. He learns his lessons according to his ability. He is clever or dull, as the case may be. He engages in all the games of the college—cricket, football, swimming, racing, boxing etc., until the time comes for him to go out into the world. He is asked to decide what he shall do for a living, whether he shall go into the army and kill people, or to the law and fleece them, or whether he shall enter the church and be appointed to a "cure of souls." If he is bold and clever he will perhaps choose the former professions, if he is dull, or not so adventurous, he will decide for the ministry. The bishop's hands are placed upon his head, and, without one bit of divine truth, it may be, in his mind, he is in the line of the succession, he is elevated into that sacred class called apostolic successors, he has become the recipient of "special gifts and graces," he possesses the Holy Spirit, he is made a priest of the Most High God, a father confessor, having power to pardon and absolve his fellow mortals from their sins! Albeit, he may be as worldly as other men. He may not be able to unfold the truth. He may be fond of sporting, and, as we read of one in yesterday's issue of the *Shuttle*, may pay some Duke £600 for three months shooting on his estate; but whatever he may do he is a priest, and as Dr. McCave* once said to me nothing can ever alter that fact, whatever he may do he remains a divine priest still! Oh! where is the intelligence of those who believe such wicked nonsense as this? How perverted the minds from the simplicity of Christ, of those who set forth and defend these anti-scriptural fables. "Unto the wicked, God saith, what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth?" (Psalm L. 16.) The Apostle John declares that "he who transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God;" but that he "who abideth in the doctrine of Christ, hath both the Father and the Son" (II John 9.) That was the test of public teaching with him. The priests who had divine appointments under the law were condemned and cursed, if they were unfaithful, and shall those go scot free who have no divine appointment at all?

There is another point I wish to notice before I close. It would take another lecture to deal with it properly, so I will only briefly notice it, and that is that the Church of England Ministry does not correspond with the New Testament, and therefore, cannot be the true Apostolic succession. You have nothing there at all approximating in the slightest degree to what we now behold. Paul, who gives advice about the appointment of those to continue the work of the truth, knew nothing of the things called "Deacons' Orders" and "Priests' Orders" as they exist in the Church of England. He never writes anything about Archbishops, and certainly never contemplated any genuine successor of his receiving £15,000 a year salary, having two magnificent palaces at his disposal, and legislating as a Peer of the Realm in all political matters.

* The Roman Catholic Priest in Kidderminster.

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“Archbishops,” says one writer, “Diocesan Bishops, and a Clergy, as contra-distinguished from Bishops, a Clergy comprising Priests, Deacons, Archdeacons, Deans, Rural Deans, Prebends, Canons, Curates, Vicars, Rectors, some working, others idle, the latter laden with wealth, the former pining with poverty, in all cases the recompense being in the inverse order of the toil,—these were perfections to which the rude Ecclesiastical Polity of the Apostolic age had not attained.” “The Apostles appointed Pastors or Bishops or Elders or Presbyters to attend to the affairs of the church, and these terms appear to have been convertible. All were Bishops; none less, none more.”

In the 20th chapter of the Acts, and at verse 17, we read that Paul sent from Miletus to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church to meet him, there must therefore have been more than one in this church. In the 28th verse he calls the same men “bishops” or “overseers.” “Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flocks, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers” or bishops. It is the same word as that translated bishop elsewhere. A bishop according to the New Testament is an overseer, one who has the oversight of the church. A bishop according to the Church of England is one who has the oversight of the clergy, and there is no more proof for such an order of men than there is for a Pope. If you have pastors of pastors, you may just as reasonably have a chief pastor over them. The only “chief shepherd” the apostles acknowledged, however, was Jesus the good shepherd, who laid down his life for the sheep. They claimed no supremacy themselves. They exhorted, they did not command like the Popes of Rome. “The elders which are among you I exhort,” said Peter, “who am also an elder.” . . . “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (I Peter v. 1-4.) This is all reversed now. They are lords over the flock now. The Rt. Reverend the Lord Bishop of so-and-so! Right Reverend Father in God! and such titles they assume; and as for the “filthy lucre,” well, if it were not for that, a great many flocks would very soon be without a shepherd, and the bishops’ hoods and gowns and breeches might be put up for sale. As to the rise of the Episcopacy, we may say something about it another time.

The Deacons of the New Testament were simply the servants of the churches, as were also the “deaconesses.” They were appointed to look after the temporal matters of the members, as the 6th chapter of Acts clearly shows. And the Priests—Ah! where do you read anything about an order of priests in the New Testament? This is one of the most hideous features of the Apostacy. How Archdeacon Lea kept referring to “the priest.” Those who believe in human priests in connection with the work of the Apostles are branded with the brand of the Apostacy. The mark of the beast is upon them. They want a sacrifice if they have a priest, and they have invented one. They have the sacrifice of the mass. They profess to turn the bread and the wine into the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ, and offer him upon the altar. Oh! it’s the greatest insult they can offer to Christ. It’s the

greatest imposition in the world. It's the most monstrous deceit ever practised by mortal man. It's the greatest perversion of divine truth ever made. We have one glorious exalted high priest and only one,—the Lord Jesus Christ.

“ We other priests deny,
And laws and offerings too,
None but the priest on high,
The mighty work can do.
To Him then all our praise be given,
Who pleads his household's cause in heaven.”

“ He ever liveth to make intercession for us.” Is'nt that enough? We want not the intercessions of St. Katherine, or St. Mary, or St. Ambrose, or St. Nicholas, or St. Lucy, or any other dead saint,—Christ is enough. He lives at the Father's right hand. When His intercessions fail we may turn—shall I say to the saints or to the hateful priesthood of Rome?—it would be in vain, but the “one Mediator between God and men” will not fail; God has constituted him our high priest, so that through him we may “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. iv. 16.) The sacrifices of Rome and of the Ritualists are a mockery and a snare. The one sacrifice is enough. Christ “needeth not daily” as did the priests under the law, “to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.” “This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” (Heb. vii. 27; ix.-x.) He was once offered to bear away the sins of many. That's enough. One sacrifice, once offered. Take away your human priests and their lying legends, and cling to Christ. Oh! if I could only awaken some one to see the danger of these things, and to seek for truth, I should be satisfied. Turn, friends, from these dangerous fables to Him who is “the way and the truth and the life” (John xiv. 6,) he is your only refuge from the storm, the only hope for dying men. The clergy who teach the views we have examined to-night only darken counsel with words without knowledge; turn from them to Christ, for “no man cometh to the Father but by him”—**BUT BY HIM.**



WHO ESTABLISHED THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND?

A REVIEW OF A LECTURE DELIVERED IN THE TOWN HALL,
KIDDERMINSTER, BY W. H. MASON, Esq., BARRISTER-AT-LAW.



“The Church of England is the daughter of the Church of Rome. She is so, perhaps, more directly than any other Church in Europe. England was the special conquest of the Roman Church, the first land which looked up with reverence to the Roman Pontiff, while it owed not even a nominal allegiance to the Roman Cæsar.”—

PROFESSOR FREEMAN. (*Encyclop. Britt.*, Art., “England.”)

IT is not quite a fortnight since the learned gentleman whose name you have heard lectured in the Town Hall upon the question, “Who established the Church of England?” It was my privilege to attend the lecture, which was delivered under the auspices of the local clergy, and in defence of the Church Establishment which it is their interest to maintain. The lecture was characterized by a large amount of assumption throughout, and it appears as though the lecturer presumed very much upon the ignorance of his hearers in regard to the history of that Church on behalf of which he stood there to plead. It would be impossible in the course of one lecture to deal comprehensively with all the fallacies advanced in the course of a long address, a very brief report of which appears in the local papers; but it will be our endeavour to-night to examine some of his facts, and among them the assumption with which the lecturer started, but for which he did not adduce one atom of proof, scarcely referring to the Scriptures throughout his address, viz., that “it was a part or branch in this land of the Society founded by Christ himself!” The lecturer laid particular stress upon the fact that the Established Church was “*the* Church.” I am not here to blame him for doing so if such is his belief. If it is his sincere conviction that that very worldly institution, that State-connected organisation is the veritable Church, or a part of it, established by the Lord Jesus, it is his duty to say so, and to defend it, and to try to prove it, and I would be the last to condemn him for so doing; but the right to examine his statements, and question his facts, and probe his assumptions is ours, and, thank God, we have liberty to do so. There was a time when we dare not have met as we do to-night for such a purpose, when his Church would have persecuted us to the death for doing so, for daring to question that it alone was the depository of divine truth. “The Church of England was not (said Mr. Mason) called *the*

Church, because, as it was erroneously believed, it was established by law, because in Scotland the same communion was called *the Church*, although another form was established; and so in America, the same body was called *the Church* although no form of Church government existed. The Church in Ireland had been disestablished, and yet it still retained the name of *the Church*; and if ever the day should come, which God forbid, when the Church was disestablished, it would not cease to be *the Church* of the country." Now all that is not worth much to start with. Who calls it "*the Church*?" Simply its adherents. The lecturer and his friends. He spoke as though it were an universally admitted fact. But half the nation would not admit the claim. Do the Wesleyans, and Independents, and Baptists and other dissenting bodies speak of it as "*the Church*?" Do they not rather look upon their own communities as approximating far more to the New Testament standard? Yea, their very dissent from the Establishment is a proof that they conscientiously believe her teachings on some points at least to be at variance with the Bible, and consequently that she is not what she claims to be, while the persecutions they have received from the hands of her officials in the past prove very clearly how little—at times—she has been able to lay claim to the Spirit of him whose offspring she professes to be. Do the immense majority of dissenters in Wales acknowledge the Establishment to be "*the Church*?" Do they not look upon its present position as a most unjust one, and is the time not quite ripe in the Principality and elsewhere to reduce it to the level of the other sects? Do the Presbyterians of Scotland, and the great majority of the Irish nation pronounce it "*the Church*?" Of course we know they do not. The Roman Catholics speak of their own in the same manner, as "the only true Church," so that when Mr. Mason speaks of his community being called "*the Church*," we must remember that it is he only and his friends who understand it so to be. What he said of his Church, each of the other sects to which he referred may say of their own. "There were," said he, "over 200 different religious bodies in this country, and amid all this babel and discord they were able in all parts of the world to point to the Church of England and her branches as *the Church of God*." There is not perhaps greater discord between the lot than there is in the Establishment itself. This we may refer to further on, but surely it is babel within the Church as well as outside. There is no unity, but the greatest diversity. This is even spoken of at times as one of the advantages of the Establishment—its comprehensiveness, its many beliefs, its *lack of unity*. The greatest possible antagonism exists as we know between its members, and yet the lecturer—amidst all the discord outside—can point to this peaceful and happy and united community as the one true Church of God!

The lecturer assured the audience that the Church did "not consist of buildings, nor in the Prayer-book, nor did it depend upon the dress, social position, birth and education of the Clergy." One would almost be led to think so if we were not assured to the contrary. Many Church people know much more of the Prayer-book than of the Bible. There is much talk, too, about the dress of the Clergy. "The Clergy and their Clothes" was the title of a leading article I saw in the *Liver-*

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*pool Mercury** a long while ago, the article itself being of a somewhat amusing character. "On the testimony (it commenced) of no less a personage than Dean Stanley, the house of Convocation of the province of Canterbury, which has just risen, has spent no fewer than seven years on 'a question which is nothing more than one as to the clothes a clergyman should wear.' The ecclesiastical name for the 'question' is 'The better regulation of the ceremonial of the Church of England,' and it appears to have fluttered the reverend and right reverend counsellors far more than the use of the Athanasian Creed, or charity in the matter of the burial service. Indeed, if things go on in this way much longer, one of the bishops must be consecrated and set apart as head milliner, having previously received the necessary amount of lessons from Monsignor Capel as to the colour of ribbons and the cut of capes. . . . Seven years is a considerable part of human life; and surely at a time like this, so justly characterized by Dean Stanley as 'a period when the interests of religion require so much attention, and so many important reforms are before the world,' the united learning and common sense of both Houses of Convocation might have settled the matter in two or three sittings. Of course, dress is dear to the hearts of boy-curates, fresh from Oxford and blossoming into father confessors of the most approved ritualistic type. Red coats are said to do a great deal with the ladies in the case of officers in the army, and perhaps this is one reason why the lads in question, officers of the State ecclesiastical army, are so anxious to be provided with a uniform that will catch if not kill."

We cannot wonder at this sarcasm. It is deserved. Some of the clergy appear to think more of the shape of their collars and hats and ecclesiastical clothes than of those grand truths contained in the Scriptures. To claim to be successors of the Apostles or in any way connected with them while they trouble their minds about these puerilities and others we might name is a libel upon the men of God who lived in the past. *They* were willing to "wander about in sheepskins and goatskins," for the sake of truth, to be "desitute, afflicted, tormented," to endure "cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment" for the sake of truth and for God. A noble band were they! The men who can be so concerned about the burning of candles in broad daylight, and the shape of their surplices and other garments, who can preach about Church towers, and Church bells, and Church crosses, and Church decorations, and Church music, and Church politics, who, to use the words of one writer, "dedicate their lives to the fringes of religion, who are only profound when the gait of a Greek Archbishop, the shaking of an incense burner, or the Catholic colour of a vestment is at issue"—these men, I say, are not worthy to unloose the shoe's latchet of God's heroes of the past; they are ignorant of "the glorious gospel of the blessed God," they know not and do not proclaim his salvation, they have the form but not the power of the truth, the shadow but not the substance, and when they are weighed in the balances of truth, their claim to be *the* Church is found to be altogether lighter than vanity.

Now there are two ways of looking at and answering the question "Who established the Church in and of England?" It may be viewed as a religious society, and the enquiry may be directed as to how it was first planted and by whom; or it may be viewed from another standpoint, a political one, and we might enquire how it became connected with the State, how it acquired its present ascendancy, why all the advantages of State patronage are hers? When we use the word "advantages," we do not wish to be misunderstood. We mean only in a worldly sense, not a spiritual. The idea of connection with the State is most foreign to the teaching of the New Testament. It would be utterly impossible to identify the Church of England—with its compulsory tithes, its union with the world, which it defends and strives to prolong, its Legislating Bishops, its clergy with their high-sounding and blasphemous titles, and its Romish doctrines, with the Church of the New Testament. There are no spiritual advantages. There is no spiritual freedom. A clergyman cannot do as he likes in the Church. He is bound by Acts of Parliament, which he defies at his peril. He is an instrument of the State. He cannot preach in a Nonconformist pulpit if he has the desire without breaking the law; or even, if I mistake not, in the parish of another clergyman without consent. He is tied up with red tape. He is not a free man. He dare not do as he sometimes would. Paul and the Apostles sought not the alliance of the State in their day. They would not have accepted the friendship of the heathen. They would not have permitted their consciences to be regulated by Act of Parliament. They announced the fact that "the friendship of the world was enmity with God," and that "whosoever would be a friend of the world, was the enemy of God"—statements which are sufficient to seal the doom of this great ecclesiastical system which is hand and glove with the world, and whose bishops are actually recognised as a part of the Legislature of the nation.

The Apostles preached the gospel in order that a people might be "taken out of the Gentiles for the name" of Jehovah in the age to come. The word "church" in the New Testament is rendered from a word which means really "called out ones." "Church" does not truly convey the idea of the original *ekklesiai*, but "is a corruption of *kuriake*, which signifies 'pertaining to a lord.' The Anglo-Saxons took the first and last syllables of the Greek word, as *Kur-Ke*, which they spelled *Circe*; but which is more obviously shown in the Scotch *Kirke*; both of which are equivalent to the modern English *Chur-ch*. *Ekklesiai*, however, which is rendered 'churches' in our version of the Scriptures is a word compounding of *ek*, 'out of,' and *klesis*, 'a call, or invitation,' hence an *ekklēsis* is 'an invitation to come out,' and the assembly of people convened in consequence of their acceptance of the invitation is an *ekklesia** or a number of called out ones.

They are called out from the world for a particular purpose, viz., to be associated with Christ hereafter in the rulership of the nations when the Kingdom of God is established upon the earth; but this description would not apply to the members of the Church of England,

for really the world is the Church, all can claim membership, it depends upon no personal acceptance of truth, the most godless and profane—in whose minds there is a total absence of divine truth and no desire to possess it—are part of the Church. This is clear from Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity." The law knows no other answer to the question "What constitutes membership of the Church of England?" than the one he gives, "that there is not any man a member of the Commonwealth which is not also of the Church of England."* The *Times* has put the case in this way—"The fact is, that all Englishmen are, by law, members of the Church. It is about as difficult for any Englishman to separate himself from the Church of England as it is for the Church of England to separate itself from him. Indeed, practically, there is no such act, form, or way of separation."† Its position then brings it no spiritual advantage. It fetters its action. It cripples its life. It paralyzes its arm. It represses its energy. Its evils are manifold. It "pauperises the many at the cost of the few, it tends to create a dominant priesthood," and it obscures the truth that shines from the sacred word. The gospel needs no support from princes and earthly potentates. It needs no pampering by the State. It needs not to be nursed in the arms of luxury and wealth. It needs not the prestige of worldly power, nor the endowments of wealthy men of the world. It can get on best without them. It prospered most when all heathendom tried to exterminate it. Let the winds blow and the storms beat about its head, it will survive, it will grow, God will take care of his own truth, though all the monarchs of the world hang together to exterminate it from the earth. Noble words were the words of Milton: "Though all the winds of doctrine," said he, "were let loose and play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously, by licensing and prohibiting, to mis-doubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter? Her confuting is the best and surest suppressing. For who knows not that Truth is strong next to the Almighty? She needs no policies, nor stratagems, nor licensings, to make her victorious: those are the shifts and defences that Error raises against her power. Give her but room, and do not bind her when she sleeps, for then she speaks not true, as the old Proteus did, who spake oracles only when he was caught and bound; but then rather she turns herself into all shapes, except her own, and perhaps tunes her voice according to the time, as Micaiah did Ahab, until she be adjoined into her own likeness." There is an old saying that "a fool can give a wise man good advice." One writer tells us that Henry VIII. proved this when he received the title of "Defender of the Faith." "O good Harry," said his court fool to him, "let thou and I defend one another, and let the Faith alone to defend itself."‡

One object which Mr. Mason appeared to have in view throughout his lecture was to prove the continuity of the Church of England from the first introduction of Christianity, about the year 200 to the present time. It was one and the same Church throughout according to his

* "Ecclesiastical Polity," book viii., sect. 2

† *Times*, October 9th, 1876.

‡ Southey's Book of the Church.

argument. But he failed to sustain it. Even had the pure truth been introduced in those early days, which is most questionable for reasons we shall adduce, it does not follow that the Established Church is the same as that planted then. Its identity cannot be proved. There was a break in the lecturer's own argument. He said that "when the Jutes, Saxons, and Angles swept through the country" religion was swept away, "*the people lapsed again into heathenism.*" What became of the Church then? According to the lecturer's argument it was gone. It disappeared. How was it re-established? Who brought it back again? Where did it come from? The lecturer answered the question. From Rome. How was this? Why the Pope of Rome—for by this time "the Church" was greatly corrupted,† and Popes had appeared upon the scene—The Pope of Rome—Gregory the Great as he is called—the one who was so struck with the fair faces and handsome forms and flaxen hair of the boy slaves, and who upon learning that their nation were called Angles, said "It is well, angels they are in countenance, and ought to be co-heirs of angels in heaven"—this Pope sent Augustine—*Saint* Augustine as he is called—"a Roman monk, at the head of forty missionaries, from his own monastery at Rome, to make his way to Britain." He came in the year 597 to convert the people, "and afterwards," said Mr. Mason, "was the first bishop of Canterbury, and from him had descended in an unbroken line, through early times to modern times, through all the changes, revolution and reform, the long line of Archbishops of the Church." Here then was the origin of the religious institution—Rome. It came from thence with its corrupt doctrines, so far as they were developed at that time, and it embraced what were developed afterwards. It was undoubtedly a branch of the Roman Catholic Church. Mr. Mason tried very hard, but very unsuccessfully, to wriggle out of that great fact of history. He spoke of the independence of the English Church, although he admitted that the Church of England had "been in communion with Rome," and he did not object to the same communion existing again if the Romish Church would abandon some of the errors that had lately been tacked on to her faith. There may have been, and doubtless were acts of independence on the part of some English monarchs who were not prepared to bow to all the grinding tyranny of the Roman Pontiffs; but this was the case in

† It is fully admitted that all the errors held by Rome at the present time had not then been authoritatively promulgated. Neither had the presumptuous claims of succeeding Popes then been made, acknowledged, or scarcely conceived. This identical Bishop of Rome—Gregory I.—himself most forcibly disclaimed the title of "Universal Bishop," so tenaciously insisted upon at the present time. He denounced it as a "profane title." He was, on one occasion, addressed by the Bishop of Alexandria in this capacity, but he made reply, "I do not esteem that an honour by which I know my brethren lose their honour; my honour is that of the Universal Church; I know what I am, and what you are; in position you are my brethren; in manners you are my fathers; I did not therefore command, but desired only to dictate what seemed to be expedient." On another occasion he wrote to one the very significant words—words which condemn those who have since his time occupied the Papal chair—"I confidently say that whoever calls himself universal priest, or desires in his election to be called so, *is the forerunner of Anti-Christ.*" It would be well if those Catholics who are so fond of appealing to authority would consider these words of Gregory the Great.

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other lands beside England where the Popish Church held supreme sway. Individual acts of independence do not absolve the Church from the charge that she was a part of that great ecclesiastical community symbolised in the Apocalypse by a lewd, drunken, filthy woman, "sitting upon many waters," interpreted to mean "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" "with whom the Kings of the earth have committed fornication"—i.e. been in fellowship—had wicked connection and communion with her, and through the "wine of whose fornication"—that is her corrupt and bemuddling doctrines—"all the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunken" (Rev. xvii. 1, 2, 15.)

It was most astounding to hear Mr. Mason declare that "at the time of the Reformation no change of faith took place. It was simply the Church reforming herself from the corruptions which had crept in. While, on the other hand, the Church of Rome had added to her doctrines those of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, and quite recently, the infallibility of the Pope. The Roman Church at the time of the Reformation was not the Catholic Church in any modern sense of that term, and the Church of England had never been Roman Catholic in the true sense of the term. If the Church of England was not Roman Catholic at the Reformation, much more was it not in the time of Gregory the Great. "Why much more" if it was not at all at the time of the Reformation? But facts are against the defender of the Church. In the course of the evening it was said that "if anything could be proved by figures, certainly anything could be proved by facts," or words to that effect, but I think the statement that "the Church of England (or in England) had never been Roman Catholic" is one altogether incapable of proof. To go back only to the Reformation period, who was it that conferred the title of Defender of the Faith upon Henry VIII.? Was it not the Pope who did so, and complimented the King because he wrote a book against Luther? Was it not in the reign of this monarch that the breach was made with Rome resulting from the quarrel between Henry VIII. and the Pope on the subject of the King's divorce and his marriage with Anne Boleyn? This is a well-known fact, and admitted by Church authorities. The Church of England owes its origin to this period, and to the efforts of Reformers at this time. Bishop Short, in his "History of the Church of England"* says "The existence of the Church of England as a distinct body, and her final separation from Rome, may be dated from the period of the divorce." Mr. Lecky, an able writer, speaks of the English Church as having been "created in the first instance by a Court intrigue," and of the Roman Catholic Church as "the Church which it had superseded."† The Report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Courts issued some time ago maintains the same view. It speaks of "its organic connection with foreign Churches," and says that "the Church of England was not, even in Anglo-Saxon times, merely the religious organisation of the nation, but a portion of a much greater organisation; the exact limits of its relation to foreign churches were possibly disputable, but

* P. 86. Sixth Edition.

† "History of Rationalism." Vol. II., p. 193.

the fact of its incorporation was admitted on all sides.* Dr. Stubbs, the Bishop of Chester who drew up this portion of the report, has in his "Constitutional History" contradicted by anticipation still more clearly the view set forth by Mr. Mason the other night, and set forth the fact that the English Church was a part of the Roman Catholic Church. These are his words:—"In the general legislation of the Church, the English Church and nation had alike but a small share: the promulgation of the successive portions of the Decretals (the letters written by the Popes for the determining of matters of controversy, and having the authority of law) was a Papal act to which Christendom at large gave a silent acquiescence; the Crown asserted and maintained the right to forbid the introduction of Papal bulls without a royal license, both in general and particular cases: and the English prelates had their places, and the ambassadors accredited by the King and the estates had their right to be heard in the general councils of the Church. But except in the rare case of collision with national law, the general legislation of Christendom, whether by Pope or council, was accepted as a matter of course.† Hence it is plain from the Church's own historians that it was part of the Roman Catholic Church.

There would be, I think, but little difficulty in proving from other sources, the connection of the Church of England with the Church of Rome. Were not "her primacies instituted by Papal authority, and confirmed and maintained by the same authority?" Are not the communications on record from the Pope to the Primates of the Church? Was not the pallium they wore "a symbol of their union with the Roman See and a token that they held their office and jurisdiction from the Pope?" I have seen a number of quotations from these epistles given in controversy on this question. For instance Pope Boniface V. wrote to Justus:—"Moreover, we send to your fraternity the pallium, granting you also to celebrate the ordination of Bishops when need requires." Pope Honorius wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury in 626:—"We grant to you and to your successors for ever, by the authority of Blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, the primacy of all the Churches of Britain. Therefore, we have ordered all the Churches and regions of England to be subject to your authority." Again in the year 670, when Theodore of Tarsus was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury by Pope Vitalian, the following communication was addressed to him by the Pope:—"We learn your desire of the confirmation of the diocese subject to you, because in all things you desire to shine by our privilege of apostolical authority. Wherefore, by the authority of Blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, we, however unworthy, holding the place of that same Peter, who bears the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, grant to you, Theodore, and to your successors, all that from of old time was allowed for ever to remain unimpaired, in that your Metropolitan See of Canterbury." Other communications of this kind could be given of later periods than the above all clearly showing the union of the English Church

* Pp. 22, 23.

† Stubb's "Constitutional History." Vol. III., p. 348.

with that of Rome, a fact testified to also by various historians. The "Rev." Dr. Brewer, in his "Guide to English History," page 263, says:—"Henry VIII. denied the Pope's supremacy, which had been acknowledged in England for more than nine hundred years." The "Rev." S. Milner, in his "History of England," page 409, writes:—"Cromwell obtained a place in the Privy Council, and through eight years prompted and directed the Measures which rendered England independent of the See of Rome." Lord Macaulay says:—"It was possible to transfer the name of Head of the Church from Clement to Henry, but it was impossible to transfer to the New Establishment the veneration which the Old Establishment had inspired. Mankind had not broken one yoke in pieces in order to put on another. The supremacy of the Bishop of Rome had for ages been considered as a fundamental principle of Christianity."

But, said Mr. Mason, "At the time of the Reformation no change of faith took place." Is that so? What did he mean by "the Church reforming herself from the corruptions which had crept in?" What did he mean further on in his address when he spoke of the Church "washing her face?" It had got dirty, he said, and was washed. We agree with him as to its dirty condition, and believe that it was only half washed; but does not that washing, and that reforming itself from corruption mean that it altered its belief on many topics? Undoubtedly this was the case. Are not several of the "Thirty-nine Articles" specially condemnatory of Popish errors previously taught and believed by the Church in England? Do they not condemn Works of Supererogation; Purgatory; speaking in a Foreign Tongue; the so-called sacrament of Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony and Extreme Unction; Transubstantiation; the withholding of the Wine from the people in the Lord's Supper; the Sacrifice of the Mass, and other things practised and believed by the Church of Rome? These doctrines and practices were abandoned by the Reformers, they changed their faith, and these Articles were formulated and became the law of the Church under the authority of the King, who declares himself to be "By God's ordinance, according to our just title, Defender of the Faith, and Supreme Governor of the Church, within these our dominions." And yet Mr. Mason says, notwithstanding all this abandonment of false doctrine, this "washing of the face," there was no change of faith! How can we rely upon his other "facts" when he talks thus? Here then is the time when the "Church of England" was brought into existence. The material to work on was there before, but it was brought into a new relationship, owing to the determination of Henry VIII. to divorce his wife and marry another whether the Pope sanctioned it or not. It is no figure of speech to speak of the Church "as by law established." Such is the case. As an establishment it originated in tyranny and lawless passion, and the substitution of a King-Pope for a Priest-Pope. The lecturer in the course of his address tried to soften down the meaning of the words "Supreme head," or "Supreme Governor of the Church" applied to the Kings and Queens of England, by saying that she was supreme governor over Dissenters as well as the Church, as they would find if they got up a quarrel and went to law.

But this seems something like a little dust-throwing. Other sects are free to regulate the internal matters connected with their systems without any appeal to Parliament. They can alter their forms of worship, and adopt what services they like without any appeal to the law, but it is not so in the Church. That is absolutely subject to the State authority. And if through the advance of Constitutional liberty the real power has left the throne and has come to reside in the Government of the Legislature, it does not alter the fact that the kings of the past acted very differently. The Church is now absolutely under the control of Parliament, but it was different in days gone by. Henry VIII. claimed more power than that which now rests with Parliament. "The supremacy he claimed" says Macaulay, "was certainly nothing less than the Power of the Keys:" the King was to be the Pope of his Kingdom, the Vicar of God, the expositor of Catholic verity, the channel of sacramental graces; and more to the same effect. The clergy submitted. They were the sycophants of monarchy. The great majority changed their allegiance from the Pope to the King, though some refused and went to the stake. It speaks but little for the honesty and consistency and religious principle of those who so readily changed from Pope to King. But they were prepared to swim with the tide. To become Catholic when a Catholic monarch reigned, and Protestant when a Reformer sat upon the throne. They have almost continually supported the throne against the good of the people. The lecturer referred to Stephen Langton in regard to the part he took in defending English liberties, but one swallow does not make a summer, and though he was a staunch adherent to the cause of national liberty, yet we should remember that he was created an archbishop by the Pope in opposition to King John, and when he was forbidden by the King to enter England, and the monks of Canterbury banished, the kingdom was placed under the Papal interdict. The King was excommunicated, and his subjects absolved from their allegiance, and when he submitted to the Pope, as he afterwards did, and complied with the Papal terms, he received the Papal absolution from Langton, a clear proof that Rome was at that time the head of the Church in England.

But it would be impossible to acquit the clergy of subserviency to monarchy whatever may be said of this man of pre-reformation times. What does the great historian, Lord Macaulay, say :* "The Church of England continued to be for more than a hundred and fifty years the servile handmaid of monarchy, the steady enemy of public liberty. The divine right of Kings, and the duty of passively obeying *all* their commands, were her favourite tenets. She held these tenets firmly through times of oppression, persecution, and licentiousness; while law was trampled down; while judgment was perverted; while the people were eaten as though they were bread." The Historian Hume, writing of the Tudor period, says, "So absolute was the authority of the Crown, that the precious spark of liberty had been kindled, and was preserved by the Puritans alone, and to this sect the English owe the whole freedom of their constitution." Mr. Lecky in his "History of Ration-

alism" bears the same testimony to the Puritans, and speaking of the Church of England says, "No other Church so uniformly betrayed and trampled on the liberties of her country. In all those fiery trials through which English liberty has passed since the Reformation, she invariably cast her influence into the scale of tyranny, supported and eulogised every attempt to violate, the Constitution, and wrote the fearful sentence of eternal condemnation upon the tombs of the martyrs of freedom."* Imagine this being written of a New Testament Church! Of an unworldly community! Of a people called out from the world! What a misconception of everything divine must prelates have to suppose that —while acting thus—they are part of that undefiled Virgin community espoused by the Apostle Paul to Christ. We might multiply statements of eminent writers which testify to the same facts that we have just referred to. The Church has been opposed to every noble reform, it has ever been on the side of injustice and wrong. Its history has—to use the words of Mr. John Morley, M.P.—"been one long and unvarying course of resolute enmity to justice, enlightenment and freedom."†

I said that it was no figure of speech to speak of the Established Church "as by law established." It is the Church of the State. "Every line of its rubric, every thread of its vestments, every article of its faith, every stone of its buildings, every source of its revenues, every acre of its property is regulated" by Act of Parliament.‡ Its tithes are made compulsory by law. Under the sanction of law, Church rates were collected until a few years ago, and by Act of Parliament that power was abolished. It has no power to legislate itself. Convocation is a farce. A form without the power. The clergy meet and discuss and go home again. Legislation is at the mercy of a Parliament composed of Churchmen, Roman Catholics, Dissenters, Jews and Infidels. Her bishops are appointed by the Prime Minister for the day, often for political reasons and as a reward for party services. Her clergy are placed in their positions often without any regard for personal fitness, but for family and other reasons, while livings are regularly advertised for sale in the papers and put up by auction so that the highest bidder may buy, and are often at the disposal of the most godless men. I could narrate matters that would disgust you also in regard to the institution of men to Church livings—whom the Bishop had no power to put aside—utterly unfit for the position, and yet Mr. Mason—without any proof—taught that this Church of the State is a part of the Society founded by Christ himself! Those who can receive the statement know little indeed of that book in which is contained the revelation of eternal life, and the history of the foundation of the Christian Church.

I need not refer to the many Acts of Parliaments from the time of Henry VIII. to our own which prove that the Church is the creation of the State. By Act of Parliament the King was appointed supreme head of the Church, the services of the Church are all established by law, and the

* "History of Rationalism in Europe." Vol. II., pp. 193-4.

† "The Struggle for National Education," pp. 6, 7.

‡ British Quarterly Review.

very seats upon which the Bishops sit in the House of Lords are defined by an Act passed in 1539 during the Reign of Henry VIII., the provisions of which still regulate the positions of the Bishops in the Upper Chamber. It was by an Act of Parliament by which it was decided that the Cup should be given to the laity in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. (Act 1. Edward 6, c. 1). The Church was not consulted in this Parliamentary transaction; it was wholly an act of the secular power, or State. The next Act passed was one that ordered that Bishops should be nominated by the King, and that all processes in the Ecclesiastical Courts should run in the King's name.

Edward was a Protestant. He was followed on the throne by Catholic Mary—"Bloody Mary" as she is called. Early in her reign (1554) the two Houses of Parliament addressed the Queen. In this address they confess that, "whereas they had been guilty of a most horrible defection and schism from the Apostolic See, they did now most heartily repent of it; and in sign of their repentance, were ready to repeal all the laws that were made in prejudice of that See." How accommodating they were, were they not?—when their necks were in danger. This same Parliament further prayed the Queen's good offices "with the papal legate to grant them absolution and to receive them again into the bosom of the Church." The Parliament was absolved; the legate "restored them to the communion of the Holy Church," and the laws which had furthered the Reformation were abolished. The Church was now again wholly Popish, and this change was effected by the action of Parliament. Those who did not submit went to the stake. They counted not their lives dear unto them. They played the men. They were martyrs for freedom of conscience, and the martyr roll was greatly lengthened during the reign of this Popish Queen. Hundreds were burnt alive, and the greatest cruelty was manifested by the adherents of the Romish faith. Elizabeth was the next Queen, and she soon manifested the disposition to reverse the ecclesiastical policy of her predecessor. By Proclamation she ordered that the Daily Lessons, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed, should be read in the Churches, until Parliament should determine the religious services of the people. This was another great change and it was wholly made by a Royal Proclamation. The Bishops were opposed to the Queen's reforming movements and refused to assist at her Coronation, only one,—Oglethorpe, of Carlisle—could be persuaded to officiate in the ceremony. Parliament now met and *restored to the Crown its supremacy* in ecclesiastical affairs, and passed an "Act for the Uniformity of Common Prayer and Service in the Church" (1 Eliz. c. 1 and 2). "These two Acts," says Hallam, "are the main links of the Anglican Church with the temporal constitution, and establish the *subordination and dependency* of the former." In this arrangement the Church was not even consulted. When the Act of Supremacy was before the House of Lords *every Bishop voted against it*; while the Act of Uniformity was adopted in opposition to a counter scheme which the clergy had passed in convocation. These facts show that Elizabeth gave the Church no leave or power to frame its own constitution. She and her Parliament made it all, and forced it upon the Church. It is "established by law." If further evidence were

needed we might refer you to the Prayer Book where we read "that such ornaments of the Church, and of the ministers thereof, at all times of their ministration, shall be retained, and be in use, as were in this Church of England, *by the authority of Parliament*, in the second year of the reign of King Edward the Sixth," or to the coronation oath of the Kings and Queens of England in which they swear to maintain "the Protestant Reformed religion *as established by law*."

I wish now more particularly to notice the statement made at the opening of Mr. Mason's lecture that the Church of England "was called *the Church* because it was a part or branch in this land of the society founded by Christ himself." "She was known" he said "by three distinctive marks" by which "she was recognised all over the world," these three marks were "(1) the faith, (2) the sacraments, and (3) the ministry." Now let us, as well as time will permit, examine this claim. How are we to know the faith of the Church of England? Mr. Mason would perhaps say by her Creeds and by her Thirty-nine Articles. But is that a satisfactory answer? How are those Creeds and Articles understood by different members of the Establishment? Is there unity of belief? At the meeting in the Town Hall the hymn was given out by the Vicar and sung by a large portion of the audience in which the words occur referring to the Church,

"One Lord, one Faith, one Birth."

But can any man honestly pretend that there is but "one faith" in the English Establishment? Is there not a multitude of beliefs? Is there not the greatest diversity imaginable? Is there not positive antagonism so that at the vestry meetings sometimes they almost come to blows? Are there not two large associations—The Church Association and the English Church Union—in existence for antagonistic purposes? Do not Churchmen sometimes prosecute Churchmen and are they not sent to prison on account of their faith? Is not the Establishment a house divided against itself? Can it be said in truth that—although they have all subscribed to the same Articles, and accept the same laws—that Evangelicals, Broad-Churchmen, and Ritualists have but "one Faith?" Why a babel of voices is heard inside as well as outside the Church. The Church came from Rome and a very large and active portion of it is engaged in the effort to lead it back to the Mother Church—the "Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth." The Mother Church fully recognises this. The *Tablet*, a Roman Catholic Newspaper, said some time ago, "The Ritualists are doing our work for us, and as time goes on they will do it still more effectually. As men found out that Tractarianism was a half-way house to Rome, so they will find that Ritualism is a stage or two further on."* The Romanisers in the Church are a powerful body, and they teach almost everything that Rome does. Baptismal Regeneration of Infants, Transubstantiation, Purgatory, Prayers for the dead, Confession and Priestly powers. These ideas, these heresies, are altogether repugnant to another large section of the Church, how then can any one speak about its "one faith?" The Act of Uniformity has failed to bring about unity of thought and belief, and

* *Tablet*, January 7, 1881.

Churchmen fiercely fight about their faiths though in the same fold. All sorts of coloured sheep (or goats) are there. And many probably without any faith at all.

But if you take the teaching of the Prayer Book it cannot be found in the Bible. One of the Creeds—the Athanasian—is openly repudiated by many Churchmen. A London Clergyman has only recently stated that he never reads it. He does not believe it. One said to me once very significantly that "He had his own views about it!" As we dealt with the Trinitarian view at length only a fortnight ago, we need not enlarge to-night, but that Creed is without any scripture warrant, and is opposed to its plainest declarations. It is contradictory and absurd. It is, as I showed, a cause of infidelity. It will muddle your brains to try to understand it. It speaks of three who are each—by himself—God, each eternal, each uncreate, each incomprehensible, and yet—there are not three, but only one of each! It tells you that "we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person *by himself* to be God and Lord," that is, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, *all three*, yet the Catholic Religion forbids us to say "There *be three* Gods, or *three* Lords!" The Catholic Religion is evidently in a muddle over the matter. I need not go through the Creed, do so yourselves and see how contradictory it is. The Bible Teaching is plain upon the subject of God—and that is the true source of appeal.* There is but one,—the Holy *One* of Israel. "To us" says Paul "there is but *One God*, the Father out of whom are all things, and one Lord (or Ruler) Jesus Christ, through whom are all things," that is they were brought into existence by the Father with a view to what he would hereafter accomplish by his Son (I Cor. viii. 4-6.) Jesus is the Son of God, begotten by the power of the Father of the Virgin Mary. His miraculous power was derived from the Father. He himself said "I can of mine own self do nothing." "My Father is greater than I." (John v. 30; xiv. 28.) The words of wisdom which he spake were the Father's words taught him by the Spirit of God (John xii. 49, 50.) The Apostolic teaching, and the teaching of Jesus himself upon this important matter of his nature, and of his relationship to the Father, seems to us to be remarkably clear and convincing, and the Revised Version is even more destructive of the Trinitarian view than the Authorised Version of the Scriptures. The subordination of the Son to the Father, whom he acknowledged as his God repeatedly, even after he was glorified (John xx. 17; Rev. iii. 12,) to whom he prayed for help in need, to whom he cried for deliverance from death, upon whom he relied for all his marvellous miraculous power, and of whom he said—in the hour of his darkest sorrow, when the shadow of death was crossing his path and when the film of death was clouding his vision—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46)—this

* "Let not these words be heard between us, 'I say,' or 'you say,' but rather let us hear, 'Thus saith the Lord;'" for there are certain books of the Lord in whose authority both sides acquiesce. There let us seek our Church, there let us judge our cause. Take away, therefore, all those things which each alleges against the other, and which are derived from any other source than the Canonical Books of Holy Scriptures. But perhaps some will ask, 'Why take away such authorities?' Because I would have the Holy Church proved, not by human documents, but by the Word of God.—*Augustine. De Unitate Ecclesie c. iv.*

subordination is clearly and consistently taught throughout the New Testament. And some of the statements are so clear and emphatic, that, to us, it is most singular that his co-equality with the Father should be so strenuously maintained. Look at Peter's teaching on the day of Pentecost regarding Jesus—inspired as he was by the Spirit of God—"Ye men of Israel" he said, "hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you as ye yourselves also know" (Acts ii. 22.)—why how simple such a passage is, and how easily understood. He worked by divine power his mighty works. *God did the works through his instrumentality*—he could not have done them unaided. He was "a man approved of God," sinless, pure, perfect and therefore God was with him as with no other being before. So Peter taught also to Cornelius—Acts x. 38—that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil; for God was with him." Evidently if God had *not* been with him, if he had *not* anointed him with his Spirit, he would have been unable to do the works he did, and it is a strange idea to entertain—with such passages in view—that Jesus was himself Almighty God, possessing all power, and yet needing to be anointed by the Spirit of God to do these works, and only able to do them because "God was with him"—the man Christ Jesus. In all things he was completely submissive to the Father's will, even to the death of the cross, and in this way he was made perfect through suffering. Because of his perfect obedience "God hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name" (Phil. ii. 9.) He is never called "God the Son" in the Bible, is never spoken of as "very God." You never read there that "Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost!" "*The head of Christ is God*"—that is what Paul says (I Cor. xi. 3.) There is *one God*, and one mediator between God and man, the man *Christ Jesus*"—that is what he says in another place (I Tim. ii. 5.) The Holy Spirit is the power of the Father by which his will is carried out in all his wide domains. It is not a person distinct from him, but his power present everywhere, proceeding from him in heaven, by which he is cognisant of all things, and by which all the operations of nature are carried on. We are enveloped by this Spirit of God, hence we live and move and have our being in him. "The Spirit of God is in our nostrils" and apart therefrom we die and go to dust (Job xxvii. 3; xxxiv. 14, 15.)

And that leads me to point out another feature in which Church of England ministers differ among themselves and with the book. They teach for the most part that man is an immortal being, that there is—tabernacled in the flesh, the outward shell as it is called—an indwelling, immaterial, immortal spark, in which resides the personality, which at death leaves the body and resides somewhere else—they can't agree where. Now we say they are not agreed among themselves upon this matter, for a considerable number of clergymen of thought and intelligence repudiate this Pagan belief. The majority however cling to it, and broadly speaking it is the foundation stone of sectarian Christianity. Upon it is built a number of other dogmas which—if that be false—fall,

with most disastrous consequences to modern ecclesiasticism. If it be not true that man has an indwelling immortal entity called the soul then the doctrine of the eternal torment of the wicked in hell is a baseless and horrible fable, as gross a libel upon the justice, and mercy, and wisdom, and righteousness of the Almighty as it is possible to conceive. If it be not true, Evil will not of necessity be eternal. Men will not enter into torment when they die, and agonize in hopeless and useless woe throughout the illimitable future. Neither can it be true that they pass through purgatorial fires preparatory to heavenly bliss—a monstrous delusion which has brought any amount of cash to the priests of the Romish Church. Neither can the idea be correct that they consciously dwell in some dreamy intermediate state in a place called Hades,—as taught by so many Churchmen—awaiting the resurrection of their bodies. Neither can the belief in heaven-going at death be true.

All these ideas—involving other doctrines besides,—fall, if the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul be false. And for that belief there is no scriptural evidence. It is never once asserted in the Bible. It is there taught that man is a creature of the dust, animated by the spirit of life common to every living creature upon the earth. At death he returns to the ground. If ever he lives again it must be through a resurrection from the dead. In the death state he knows nothing. He is unconscious. "His thoughts perish." "The dead know not anything." They sleep soundly. No voice falls upon their ears. No praise issues from their lips.* No! Man is absolutely mortal. The mission of Christ was to bring life where there was death. He "brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel" (II Tim. i. 10.) He is the life giver,—"the Prince of Life" (Acts iii. 15.) God has "given him power over all flesh that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him" (John xvii. 2.) This he will confer upon certain conditions upon members of the human race. It will be bestowed at his coming—his second coming—the great hope of New Testament believers, and the burden of Apostolic preaching. When he comes he will raise the responsible dead. He will judge and reward those thus brought to life from the dust. The righteous will "enter into life eternal." They will "put on immortality." They will be "made equal to the angels and die no more." The wicked will be destroyed, blotted out of existence, die "the second death."§ Christ will then establish his throne in Jerusalem. He is the heir to the throne of David, and at this time the promise made by the angel to his mother will be fulfilled and "The Lord God will give unto him the throne of his Father David"—which was not a spiritual throne in heaven, but a literal throne on earth,—"and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i. 32, 33.) The Jews will be gathered to their own land, according to the numerous prophecies of the Bible. They will become the first and most powerful nation upon the earth. All earthly powers will be subdued to the sceptre of the Son of David and the Son of God. He is "the heir of the world." God will

* Eccles. ix. 5, 6; Ps. cxlvi. 2-4; vi. 5; Isaiah xxxviii. 18, 19; Ps. xiii. 3; lxxvi. 5, 6.
 § I Cor. iv. 5; II Tim. iv. 1, 8; Matt. xxv. 46; I Cor. xv. 53; Luke xx. 36;
 Rev. xx. 13, 14.

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give him "the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession" (Ps. ii. 8.) The saints who are made alive at his appearing will reign with him. They are now called out of the Gentiles for this purpose. They are "joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17.) They will "reign upon the earth kings and priests unto God" (Rev. v. 10.) Christ will be the supreme King. All enemies will be subdued to him. He will put away the sin of the world. He will break the tyrant's power. He will smite the despot upon the throne. He will remove the crown from every earthly potentate's brow. He will disestablish all State Churches in every land and sweep away every vestige of their lying superstitions. He will help the poor and needy. He will judge the nations righteously. He will scatter the proud and haughty in the imaginations of their hearts and exalt them of low degree. The unjust and unrighteous laws of the past will be abrogated, and justice will prevail the wide world through. A pure and incorruptible administration will exist under the whole heaven. This is Bible teaching concerning the kingdom of God. "The kingdoms of this world" will at this time have become "the kingdoms of our Lord and of his anointed;" for "he is king of kings, and Lord of Lords," and every knee must bow to him (Rev. xi. 15; xix. 16.) His reign will finally result in universal righteousness, in the destruction of all evil, in the exaltation of Jehovah's name, in glory to God in the highest, in the peopling of the earth with a redeemed and immortal throng, who will dwell therein for ever, at which time "God will be all in all" (I Cor. xv. 28.)

You will see that I am only in the briefest manner possible summarising these truths. We cannot go into detail. Each theme requires a lecture to elaborate it. But do the clergy preach these truths? Yea they are largely unacquainted with them. *Their* faith—or faiths—are spurious, they cannot be found in the Bible. Hence the claim of Mr. Mason that the Church of England is a branch of the Church planted by Christ is without proof. The first of his three distinctive marks fails. The *multitudinous faiths* of the Established Church are not the "one faith" of the Bible, the various hopes entertained by her ministers and members are not the "one hope" of the New Testament believers; the three-fold Deity is not the "one God" we read of in the book, "who is above all, and through all, and in all;" the Christ they proclaim "*begotten before all worlds*" and yet contradictorily said to be "*co-equal and co-eternal with the Father*" who *begat him*—is not the "one Lord" of the gospels, begotten of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Highest, —in other words the spirit of God,—in the time of Herod the Great; the English Church Union and the Church Association, are not the "one body" of Christ who "*keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace*," and the baptism they practise is not the "one baptism" practised by the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. iv. 3-6.) No! and we shall find that the second of the three distinctive marks of the Church—given by Mr. Mason to establish it as the Church of Christ—fails deplorably to do so. The "sacraments" and what is taught about them by many prove clearly that the apostacy so clearly foretold by the apostles, and already at work in their own day, surely overtook "the Church." Where do you read of baby baptism in the Bible? There is not a single case of baptism recorded where you can possibly

by any ingenuity screw a baby in. The candidates for baptism were all believers of the truth. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. xi. 6,) and babies are incapable of faith. Where in the book do you read of infant regeneration brought about by sprinkling a few drops of holy water upon the brow? Where there do you read of signing "with the sign of the cross?" Where there do you read of sponsors, of "godfathers and godmothers," who so lightly "renounce the devil and all his works and the pomp and vanity of this wicked world" on behalf of a child in whom, perhaps, they have no interest, and when they have never renounced the devil on their own account! Baby baptism is a farce, a perversion of the truth, an insult to the Deity, a source of incalculable mischief, a cheat, and a lie. Bible baptism is different altogether. It is only for those who understand and believe the truth concerning the kingdom of God, and the things concerning the name of Christ. When men realise their own mortality, that sentence of death is passed upon them, that Christ only can confer upon them immortality, that he has died on their account, and rose from the dead for their justification, and been made unto believers "righteousness, and sanctification, and wisdom and redemption," and that it is only by union with him that they can partake of his life and glory, they are then prepared to "be buried with him by baptism into death," they are willing to bury the old man in a figure by immersion in water, and to rise again from that symbolic death to walk in newness of life typical of that resurrection life to which they are called, of which the ordinance is a beautiful representation. We cannot enlarge upon this doctrine. We repeat that baby sprinkling, or baby immersion, is absolutely unscriptural, there is no record of it in the Bible, nor in the history of the Church for the first two centuries. It crept in with other errors which it would be most interesting to notice if we had time. The other "sacrament" of the Church as it is termed is likewise not scripturally understood by its members. The bread and the wine are the symbols of the body and the blood of Christ. He was the true bread that came down from heaven to give life unto the world (John vi. 51.) This he did by submitting to the death of the cross. His life was yielded up on account of sin. "He poured out his soul unto death." "The soul or life of all flesh is in the blood."* His blood was shed, because without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, and as the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin it required the blood of one who was perfect in character and yet a sharer in the nature of his brethren, to be shed. The covenants of promise made to Abraham had also to be confirmed by the shedding of the blood of Christ before they could be brought into force, hence we read of "the blood of the everlasting covenant," and Christ said "This is my blood of the new (or Abrahamic) covenant shed for many for the remission of sins" (Heb. xiii. 20; Matt. xxvi. 28.) To intelligently partake of the bread and the wine these matters need to be understood. It is simply a memorial service commanded his people until he again returns to the earth. It needs no priest to administer it. By partaking of the bread and the wine we remember our Lord's broken body and shed blood, we recognize that through him alone we can eat

* See Author's Lecture "The Soul; What is it?" Price Twopence.

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and live for ever, and we call to mind those great and precious promises made to the fathers, of the everlasting inheritance of the land, which were confirmed by the death of Christ. The Church has made a mystery of this ordinance. Many of the clergy teach the real presence of Christ in it, that is, that after consecration, the bread becomes *the real body* and the wine *the actual blood* of Jesus Christ, of him who has ceased to be mortal, who became a partaker of the divine nature more than eighteen hundred years ago. So that they profess to believe that *they actually reproduce the mortal Jesus who trod the streets of Judea in the days of his flesh!*

It was my intention when preparing this lecture to show how some of these errors crept into the Church in the very early days of Christianity, so that even when it was first introduced into Britain the truth was greatly corrupted by the main body of professors through their desire to propitiate the heathen around them, and make Christianity more palatable to the Pagan mind. The fact is *the Church got Paganised*, whilst some of the early dissenters held the truth, the men who protested against the error and the worldliness and the vain philosophy that abounded in the schools of thought in those days, and which became incorporated with,—and ultimately sapped the life out of—“the Church.” The persecuted few had the truth in all probability, but they suffered for their faith and consistency, whilst “the Church” so called developed into a vast, worldly, intolerant, persecuting power, from which evolved at last the Pope of Rome, the universal father, “our Lord God the Pope,” whose blasphemous pretensions are well known to students,—to whom even kings must bow, and subjects swear allegiance, the claimant of infallibility, the head of the worst tyranny that ever cursed the earth, the end of which, however, draweth nigh, for Christ will consume it with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy it with the brightness of his coming.*

As regards the third distinctive mark of the Church of England, by which it may be identified with the Church of Christ—according to Mr. Mason—it is, equally with the others, a failure. We know of no priests in the New Testament but one—that is Jesus. They abound in the Church of England. The deacons we read of in the Apostolic writings were elected for what would now be called secular work. The bishops were those who had the oversight of the brethren in various places where ecclesias were formed. The preaching of the word was not confined to any particular order of men. The brethren generally preached the word, that is, those who had ability so to do. They were warned against those who would make merchandise of them—that is just what is done now. It is, with, of course, many noble exceptions, a matter of preaching for pay, and they seldom refuse a call to a higher salary or office. Somehow the spirit seldom, or never calls them to a lower salary, even though it were a “wider sphere of usefulness.” You do not read of Archbishops in the New Testament with two palaces to live in and £15,000 a year to boot! You do not read of Canons and Deans and Archdeacons and

* MOSHEIM'S “Ecclesiastical History” gives interesting particulars of the development of Episcopal power.

Prebendaries and the host of other titled clergy, in the epistles of the Apostles. And no one in their days ever listened to such sing-song, whining gentry as those who now chant the services of the Church. I wonder sometimes why they can't speak with a natural voice. If Paul could re-appear upon the scene and walk into one of our large churches or Cathedrals, and behold the candles, and the decorations, and the black and white robed ministers, and listen above all to the things proclaimed from the pulpit, no one would be more surprised than he to be told that these highly paid gentry claimed to be his successors in the ministry. Paul was an honest man working with his own hands for his daily bread, he would not even take what was his due from the ecclesias; what would he think of men who are anxious to hold double offices in the Church for the sake of greater gain! But the people are content to have it so. The multitudes go to hear because it is fashionable. "They (the clergy) are of the world and the world heareth them." They seek its smile, and approbation, they pander to its follies, they join its institutions, they pat it on the back, they attend its jollifications; "they love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets"—like you to touch your hat to them and to pay them homage—"and to be called of men Rabbi, Rabbi," or in our day "Reverend," and, "Right Revd. Fathers in God," and "Drs. of divinity" and so on—as though the truth needed any doctoring! And this is one of the marks of their identity with Christ and the Apostles! Alas that man should think so. It shows how little their minds are impregnated with truth. Let us "go back to the charter," let us seek the truth at the fountain head. Let us go to him who is "the way and the truth and the life," for through him alone can we get light, and by his power alone can we live for ever. "The Church" is not the fountain of life but a polluted stream—polluted with the traditions of ages which have been running into it and destroying the pure, invigorating truth concerning the "water of life." We must get rid of the traditions, we must get beyond the church right back to the Apostolic age. We must go to the writings of Apostolic men and read their words, and the words of Him that sent them, and read them uninfluenced by our training and by the teaching in which we may have been cradled, then we shall see how great is the error around us, how lofty and pure and elevating the truths of the gospel are. Then we shall see that the Apostolic message was and is the death knell of priestcraft and sacrifice, that it knows of but one great priest—Jesus; of one perfect sacrifice, even his; of one way of life, that which he has revealed, of one blessed hope based upon his return in power and great glory to reign; and of one glorious kingdom which will be world-wide in extent, and which will be fraught with universal blessing, and result in glory to God in every land—which he will establish at his coming, and of which he will be the blessed, and powerful, and righteous, and most glorious King.





