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# THE TRUTHSEEKER.

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## THE CLOSING YEAR.

Once more we come to the end of our labours for another year; and once more, with the few words we are accustomed to write on such occasions, we have to commend these labours to the generous consideration of all who have borne us company on the way.

The year that is now ending has not been as fruitful of change as previous years, for it seems that we have now found the audience that can hear all we have to say. As a matter of business, our undertaking must still be regarded as a failure; our contributors still write for love, and the conductor of "The Truthseeker" is still solely responsible for the yearly loss which rewards his toil. It is very likely that a committee could be formed who would undertake to relieve him of this responsibility, but it is felt that perfect freedom can be best secured by maintaining the present position of affairs; and, so long as convincing proofs exist, as they do now, that the seed sown is bringing forth good fruit, any work or sacrifice, within possible limits, will still be cheerfully and even thankfully welcomed.

And yet we appeal for help. These

words will be read by more than two thousand persons, nearly all of whom will be sincerely interested in our efforts, or even quite at one with us in our ideas. To these we say;—and we have earned a right to say it;—Give us your hearty sympathy and earnest help in carrying out the task we have set before us. We need not point out the legitimate and proper ways in which such an undertaking as this can be supported. We ask for no personal favour and plead for no "nursing" of this Review, willing as we are to stand or fall on our own merits or failures. We only repeat the word of last December,—"The seeking of the Truth sometimes scatters us, but concerning one thing we should at least be united—the preservation of the faintest light that illumines, or the feeblest sentinel that guards the way."

Thanking many known and unknown friends for kind and generous words that have helped us greatly, we have now only to prepare for another year of work, with undiminished faith, and a good hope that will

"Still bear up and steer right onward."

## THOUGHTS FOR THE HEART AND LIFE.

(FOR ADVENT TIME.)

“Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out; when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And He shall send Jesus Christ who, before, was preached unto you.”—Acts iii, 19-20.

We have come round once more to the first days in Advent. From afar we once more see the star of the child—Christ appear; and the blessed atmosphere of Christmas, which is itself a kind of benediction, is slowly gathering round us. It was a wise and pious feeling that led the fathers of the English Church to provide a month of preparation that we might not be surprised by a sudden Christmas, or lose the sweet charm of *anticipation* and the prolonged pleasures of the day. To-day, then, we stand on the threshold—we come into the outer court of the Holy Place, and all around us gather the pure memories of the time. And to the eye of the reverent believer there is an angel everywhere with a message suited to the day. The earnest woman who hastened at early dawn to the sepulchre found angels waiting where her dear Lord had been: and so to us will the angels appear when, with loving haste, we turn our feet to seek the Lord. And this is what seems to me their message to us now—purest and heavenliest message for Advent time—“Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.” And a dear and loving message from on high it is,—a message which if it fills us with contrition will fill us also with consolation,—a message which calls us to repent, but which calls us to sweet refreshing from the presence of the

Lord. I want no theory of the Church to prove to me that this message is inspired: no miracle could prove that to me as itself could do. It brings with it its own evidence in its power to heal and to bless me: it is not merely inspired, it is an inspiration: it is not only alive but it gives life. We are called by these words, then, to make this month of Advent time a month of heart-searching and of heart-refreshing; and, that we may do so, look upon their wondrous wisdom and heavenly beauty.

First, the angel of Advent time calls us to *Repent*;—a word that suggests the commencement of all heart-change, that goes to the root of all heart-sin. Why are we so far from God and Heaven? Why do we need an Advent time, and a Christ who shall save His people from their sins? Why do we need the redeeming angel with his heavenly message of love and peace? Simply because we are estranged from God by sin. And so the first strain of this Advent song is in the minor key—“O sons of men, Repent!” Ah! how often does God so begin even His dearest messages! Intending to end in love and joy and gladness even to exultation, how often does He begin with some touching minor strain, that opens the heart, that lures us from our sin, that teaches us how to repent! We may not come *suddenly* to the joy of our Lord: first sorrow then salvation: first repentance, then peace. And so the angel seems to meet us on

the threshold; seeming to bar our passage with sober hand—"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Put off thy follies, thy vanities, thy pride, thy envy, thy jealousy, thy malice, thy selfishness; make the heart ready for Him who is to dwell therein, its rightful Lord and King—Repent. Dear friends, let us listen to this good angel—to this first word that falls from its lips, and let Advent time once more be consecrated by the cleansing of our hearts before God. Think of all the old offences of the year, of all the undue anxiety about gain, of all the ungenerosity, of all the hard, unyielding, temper of the year; and now, with this sweet messenger of Advent time—this new angel from Heaven to lead the way—let us enter in, with silent feet and bowed head; and if the dear God will suffer us to lay before His altar all these sins and stains and scars of the year, let us sorrow before Him with lowly hearts and bid our better nature live.

But this is another step in the Heavenly way: and this, too, is named here, as the angel's second word—"Repent and be converted." For repentance is not all: repentance is negative. Conversion is affirmative. Repentance says—This is that for which I grieve: conversion says—This is that for which I long. Repentance is stopping on the wrong road, conversion is turning into the right road. Hence that beautiful word of Christ—"Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven." For this is indeed, conversion,—to become as little children,

living in all pure simplicity, putting aside all our artificial evils and contracted sins, and letting the pure nature that belongs to every man have sway. And though this angel of Advent time may seem inexorable, asking too much of mortal man, we may be sure it asks no more than we need to have asked of us,—we may be sure that it is needful for us that the heavenly message of peace should begin with a call to purity: for, before the pure light of Advent time can stream into our hearts, the brood of evils that have nestled there must all depart, and the longing soul must be prepared to receive the better life. So then conversion as well as repentance is asked of us, that we put down the old and take up the new—that we not only see the wrong but follow the right,—that we not only bid farewell to the offences of the year but joyfully welcome the new Evangel of a better life to come. We must not only bury the old grudge, but we must stretch forth the generous, open hand: we must not only sacrifice pride, but go on to taste the sweets of all humility: we must not only check our feverish pursuit of gain, but learn to prize the better riches of a furnished mind, a virtuous spirit, and a religious soul: we must not only lay our burden down at God's altar with regretful hearts that we had sinned, but lift up this prayer with passionate entreaty—"Lead me, O God, and teach me, unite my heart to fear Thy name." Thus much the Heavenly messenger demands of us—that we enter not into the Heavenly Temple with soiled and stained hearts, with unchastened spirits, with lofty tempers, with unsubdued wills,—that

we may not be inwardly darkened against the glorious light of Advent time,—that we may make the heart ready for the Christ that is to be.

And now, the tone is changed; another key is struck; and the angel of mercy ceases this plaintive cry for repentance and conversion; and, these being accomplished, the face of the messenger beams with a serener radiance, as these words fall on the prepared ear,—“and the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.” Dear friends, we cannot believe these words too well,—we cannot hear them too often: for God who calls us to repentance calls us to refreshing, and has appointed blessings to wait upon us while we lie before Him humbled in the dust. But here is the secret. It is not that He demands repentance and contrition before He will give these times of refreshing, but it is that this refreshing is the fruit of the repentance to which we are called. And this is why Christmas time is a time of generosity and kindness,—a time of pleasure and pure delight. We feel more generous then, more forgiving, more open-hearted, more child-like; and we wonder what it is that gives the charm. Alas! that we should be in doubt about it: it is only what Christ said,—only they can enter the Kingdom of Heaven who are like little children, and the Kingdom of Heaven is “within you;” and ’tis the child-like, gentle, holy heart that enters into its own holy of holies, and finds its priest and home and altar there. Hence, the angel’s message is only the announcement of nature’s law—a Heavenly translation of an earthly condition—“the

times of refreshing” shall come when repentance and conversion have led the way. And is it not so? Is there not a refreshment [in loving forgiveness, when we refuse to remember old offences, and let the dear light of Advent time create a new world of sympathies and delights? What a sad life it is that is filled with envy, and wrath, and a spirit of resistance and avarice, and assertion of self? What a loss of all that is dear and beautiful in life! What a blighting of all pure affections, and generous feelings, and noble thoughts! What a creation of a perennial fountain of bitter waters in the soul! and in what a gloom must the spirit live—one long, black, cheerless winter day! But what new joys and pure delights are born when the ice melts, when the hard hand relaxes, when the stubborn temper yields, when the heart yearns to do an unselfish thing, and flies to make a sacrifice rather than to snatch a victory! What a new joy rises upon the whole man! What a release of all the frost-bound affections and imprisoned kindnesses of the poor starved soul! What a new world of life and beauty! The eye can see now, and the ear is open, and the heart is sensitive, and the times of refreshing have come to the recovered soul. Is there not a refreshment even in the very tears of contrition, when the wanderer comes back, and the soul regains its own true home? and are not the regrets, the remorse, the very shame of the spirit, precious and dear, since they tell of a great deliverance and a true return?

And then what times of refreshment come when the new virtue clothes the

soul like some pure vesture brought by angel-hands—when the spirit *feels* that it is pure, and at peace with God and man—when, one by one, like the stars at night, the virtues of the soul appear, and blot out at last the dreary expanse with their glorious array! What a refreshment when the soul can return to God's altar, no more with the bitter cry of repentance, but with the subdued and peaceful voice of lowly-hearted gratitude,—“Not unto us, Oh Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name be all the praise!” Like that sad demoniac who sat at last clothed and in his right mind at the Saviour's feet: like the worn and weary prodigal, when he had proved his penitence, and shown that he was worthy of the forgiving kiss of peace: like the wounded Magdalen, when all Heaven dawned on her sorry heart with those consoling words, “Thy sins be forgiven thee, go in peace;” so to our hearts—to each in his degree, if we be truly penitent—comes this sweet evangel, this first strain of the full angel-melody that shall fill the air with Heavenly music soon, “Peace on earth, goodwill towards men.” And that word brings us to yet another note in the perfect harmony of this heavenly message. For listen to its fulness—“the times of refreshing shall come *from the presence of the Lord.*” Yes, there is all the secret! It is the presence of the Lord that works all this glorious change. Once believe in that, and old things will pass away, and all things will become new: and we shall seek no more our true delight in our own poor deeds and plans, but in Him whose beautiful presence is in itself a salvation, and who “gives to His beloved in their sleep.”

Thus from that presence the refreshment comes; for He beholds our contrition, and accepts our penitence, and consecrates our tears, and fills us with a nameless *peace*, when we put on our beautiful garments, and stand before Him as sons at home. It is the presence of the Lord that makes Advent time a time of purity, and peace, and holy joy; and it is this presence of the Lord that would turn earth into Heaven for us *everywhere*, if we had eyes to see and hearts to love Him:

“Old friends, old scenes, will lovelier be,  
As more of Heaven in each we see:  
Some softening gleam of love and prayer  
Shall dawn on every cross and care.”

And now, to complete this Advent song—to bring us nigh to the very Holy of Holies—to shed abroad the true light and glory of the time, hear these words: “And He shall send Jesus, who before was preached unto you.” Thus in Him all is fulfilled, to bring us to sincere repentance, to teach us true conversion, to give us immortal refreshment, and to bring us nigh to the presence of the unseen Lord. Behold, then, the meaning of Advent-time. It heralds the coming of one who is the revealer of God and the Saviour of man—of one who comes to open our eyes and touch our hearts—to do for us all that the love and wisdom of an unseen God designed. For it is the Father who sends the Son, that we might know all the mighty meaning of an unseen Father's love.

Come then, holy and blessed Redeemer of the world—come to our long-estranged hearts, and win them all for God! And Thou, Father and Saviour, who art so nigh to us, and who didst send Thy Son only that He might open our hearts to see Thee, vouchsafe to us

the purest fellowship with Thy Heavenly messengers; and into all our hearts let this dear message fall:—"Come, oh ye children of time, and hear

once more the psalm of the blest Evangel—"Repent, believe, and live, that the times of refreshing may come to your fainting souls!"

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## THE FOUR GOSPELS :

THE HISTORY OF THEIR TRANSMISSION, THEIR EVIDENCES AND THEIR PECULIARITIES.

### LECTURE VIII.—AN ENQUIRY INTO THE HISTORY, CLAIMS, AND PECULIARITIES OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.

Turning now to the last of the four gospels, the least careful reader will feel that he is treading on new ground, and breathing another atmosphere. "In the other gospels," he will say, "I saw *peculiarities*, and detected distinctions, but here everything seems changed. The story is a different one: the very Christ himself seems no longer the same." This will be felt even by one who can only read the gospel in our English version, and who is unacquainted with the history of thought in the ancient world and in the early Christian Church. But all this will be much more sensibly felt by those who know something both of the original tongue and of the peculiarities of thought and expression associated with ancient philosophical systems. The very first phrase in the gospel, the whole, indeed, of what has been called the prologue to the gospel—marks it out as a specialty, as something to be studied in connection with the prevailing religious speculations of the age which produced it. For that "In the beginning was the Word" could only have been written by one who had grown familiar with the philosophy which delighted in these very words. Thus, the question as to the authorship of this gospel becomes a very important one: but up to

this very hour it remains an open question—one upon which fresh light is being poured almost every day.

The John to whom this gospel is ascribed seems to have been one of Christ's favourites—in all probability the disciple described as the one "whom Jesus loved." He was, moreover, one of the two or three Christ took with Him on great and solemn occasions: so also he was one of the few who ventured near to witness the last moments of his dear Master and Friend; and it was to him Christ looked when, with touching thought and affection, He bade him be a true son in His stead to the mother who also stood by. He it was who, it is said, wrote the three tender epistles that contrast so wonderfully with the gigantic strength of the Epistles of St. Paul. He it was also of whom it was said that, when old age prevented him speaking, at length, of the Master he loved so well, he used to be carried into the church by younger hands, to repeat over and over again, day after day, the burden of his epistles—"Little children! love one another." Nor is it a contradiction to this glimpse of the character of St. John to be reminded that he was one of the two brothers whom Christ called *Boanerges*, or Sons of Thunder; for all greatly loving

men have in them much potential thunder. Thus Paul who, in an hour of peril, cried to his sorrowing friends, "What mean ye, to weep and to break my heart!" added, "For I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." And Luther, who knew how to defy all the crowned and mitred heads in Europe, had a nature that was pathetically tender and affectionate. In our own time Theodore Parker was another illustration of this apparent contradiction—that the Son of Thunder is the disciple whom Jesus loves.

That this gospel, then, was written by John was the ancient belief of the fathers of the Christian Church, so far as they have mentioned it at all. Thus Irenæus distinctly states that John wrote this gospel "to extirpate the errors" of the Gnostics. Eusebius, the historian, testifies that "John, who is the last of the evangelists, having seen that, in the three former gospels, corporeal things had been explained, and, being urged by his acquaintance and inspired of God, composed a spiritual gospel." But no one is to be censured who is unable to receive this opinion, since it is very doubtful whether in the lifetime of John, and by John, such a gospel could have been written.

I shall have to point out, presently, the very peculiar character of this gospel—the evident familiarity of the writer of it with the phrases and the forms of thought of philosophical systems prevailing both before Christ (as, of course, separate from Christianity) and long after Christ (as allied to the new faith.) Well might it be asked, "Is it indeed John who is able to write in Greek these

lessons of abstract metaphysics, to which neither the synoptics nor the Talmud offer any analogy?" The same questioner has acutely remarked that if Jesus really spoke as these discourses in the fourth gospel represent Him as speaking, it is more than suprising "that but a single one of his hearers (and biographers) should have so well kept the secret."

"The Gospel according to St. John," then, may, in reality, be the gospel according to the school of John, written, not by the apostle himself, but by some devoted disciple who, preserving the traditions handed down by John, used these and other "remains" of the venerable and venerated apostle to combat and yet to satisfy the growing heresies of the day that attempted to pour the new wine of Christianity into the old bottles of a metaphysical system of thought, of which John would know little, and for which he would have cared less. It is not at all impossible; indeed, it is quite likely, that some follower of John, or, perhaps, at a farther remove, some Christian thinker acquainted with the philosophy of Alexandria, wrote this gospel, never intending to "palm it off" upon the Church as the work of St. John, but simply publishing it as another version of the life of Him to whom the whole Church ardently desired to make subject all the "kingdoms of this world." Certain it is that this gospel seems to depart from the simplicity of the earlier records, giving a new reading, as it were, in a new light, of the great life: and it is not easy to see how such a life could have been written by one who had seen the Lord—who had known Him as the guest at Bethany and

the despised one of Jerusalem—who had been trained, not in the schools of Egypt, but by the side of Christ.

One thing we must note, by the way, that the gospel was evidently written for Gentile readers. The Hebrew names, such as Rabbi, Cephas, Messiah, &c., are all translated into Greek equivalents. The feasts of the Jews, moreover, are called Jewish, as though the writer stood outside Palestine. In the same way, explanatory clauses are often inserted which could hardly have been necessary for Jewish readers.

Respecting the style of writing peculiar to this gospel, what we have chiefly to notice, is its remarkable simplicity; this being all the more remarkable because it concerns itself with the profoundest metaphysical and spiritual subjects. In other hands, this gospel might easily have become so dull that ordinary readers would never have cared to read it, or so involved that few would have been able to profit by it. But, as it is, it is not too much to say that we should look in vain amongst early Christian records for a narrative at once so simple in its style and yet so lofty in its aim,—so artless and unpretending and yet so original and profound. This is all the more remarkable because there is nothing in this gospel, as to the style of it, to lead us to suppose that the author of it was either a practised writer or a great reader of classical Greek.

I have already intimated that the peculiar character of the gospel is to be seen at once in what has been called the prologue or proem—the opening verses of the 1st chapter. Now this prologue has been misunderstood by thousands

who have not sufficiently taken into account the relation of the peculiar phraseology employed here to the philosophical systems that prevailed before and after the time of Christ. The word “Logos,” here translated *Word*, was no new term, but one that had long been used by the philosophical writers of influential schools of thought. It was older than Christ, and the writer of this gospel found it ready made to his hand. He was coining no new phraseology,—he was starting no new idea. He did not set out of his own accord to call Christ “O Logos,” or the *Word*; but he begins where others left off—he takes up the common language of the schools, he stands with the philosophers, and, like Paul in another case, the *Word* they dimly knew or profitlessly theorised over he proposed to preach unto them: “Behold in Him,” he cries, “behold in Him the Logos of whom ye speak.”

The truth, then, is, that the Evangelist sets out to prove the very opposite of what is generally supposed to be proved here. We are told that in this prologue we have a triumphant proof of the Deity of Christ, but what we really have is a wonderfully clear testimony as to the essential and perfect unity of God. If these lectures were theological instead of critical or descriptive, it would be easy to shew this at length, but I may just point out that what the writer is here combating is the idea that the word or creative power is a being separate from God. The truth is that the one great object of these opening verses is to assert, (*in opposition* to the philosophical speculations that were gradually introducing into the Church the monstrosity of a second God,) that God was



one—that the Word was not something or some one apart from God,—that it never began to be as a separate being—that it was therefore “in the *beginning* with God,”—His very inmost Thought and Life—Himself. Yes! the Word was God, and not a separate being as the philosophers had maintained, and as the so-called orthodox divines of our own time now maintain. And, in Christ, the Word was “made flesh”—the image of the invisible God was projected upon the manifested man, and so, as even Dean Alford admits, “Christ is the Word of God—because the Word dwells in and speaks from Him, just as the light dwells in and shines from, and the Life lives in, and works from Him.” Thus, though the man Christ Jesus was not pre-existent, the Logos was; for Christ was of Time but the Logos which was manifested in Him was of Eternity—that was “in the beginning with God”—that “was God;” and in Christ we see “the glory” of it, even in Him who was “full of grace and truth.”

The idea of a Logos or word, then, as having an independent existence *apart* from God,—as being, in fact, a second person,—was the idea the Evangelist *combated* as repugnant to Christian thought. For the philosophers, reflecting upon the Infinite God and the creation of the world of matter and finite man, had called into being this idea of a second or mediate Deity, in their attempts to conceive of the creation of all things. This mediate Deity was at first, not a definite and distinct person, but an impersonation of power or wisdom—a personification of the Eternal idea—an image of the Divine mind, by which (or by whom) all other things were made or

became. Thus, the Word was the image of the invisible God, “the beginning of the creation of God;”—and this was how the philosophers sought to bridge over the infinite and awful interval between the seen and the unseen, the eternal and the temporal, God and man.

It was thus that the idea of a Logos or Word arose (long before Christ came). Men could not logically conceive of God as creating the world till he had “passed” as it were “out of Himself;” and so man’s apparent necessity led to the conception of God’s all-creative Word;—a personification the worst fruit of which was that it put far away the face of God as the immediate Guide and Friend of man. Upon this, the Christian teacher comes in with his sublime declaration that man is born of God—that God is all, and that the Word, which has been deemed so great a necessity, was and is no other than God Himself. Seeming to partly agree with the philosophers and their doctrine of the Logos, and taking up and repeating their language, he yet comes to quite another conclusion,—that we are *all* the sons of God who receive Him in the spirit of His Son.

That this essential Unity of God was not broken but rather manifested and set forth by the coming of Christ is seen in the attitude Christ loved to preserve towards God, and in that great declaration “that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,” and that they who beheld the glory of Christ beheld the glory of a beloved son full of His Father’s “grace and truth.” This exposition of these phrases is borne out by some of the most ancient Fathers of the early Christian Church. These opening

verses of the Gospel, then, contain for us a priceless truth. The Word of God is that inspiring Breath—that all pervading Life of God—which blesses “every man that cometh into the world”:—a Life which will be in us and in all men as we are able to receive it.

It is clear, then, that this Gospel was written not for ordinary enquirers, or for Christian learners, but for believers who had got far beyond the elementary teachings of the Church—who knew the facts, so fully and so constantly reported by every Christian teacher who opened his lips. We have no longer the reporter but the apologist, the Christian philosopher. For narrative, we have analysis; for remembrance, we have meditation; and for a simply told story, we have an earnest exposition of ideas. Thus this Gospel differs from the other three in being concerned with what we may either call the deeper utterances and manifestations of Christ, or the philosophy of a later time and of a new culture respecting Him. The weight of probability is certainly in favour of the latter supposition; and this is borne out by the fact that, as time went on, the growing Church would naturally demand and supply a class of writings which would be something more than a mere narrative of events. But, even on this supposition, (though it may exclude the authorship of John), it may still be held that these more contemplative writings were the proper and legitimate development of what had gone before. And, indeed, in this Gospel we seem to come nearer to the holy of holies—to the inner life of things—to the vital significance of what the others could only report, half from without. We seem

to see here in growth what the other Gospels give us in the seed.

But this does not lay bare, after all, the most striking peculiarity of this Gospel, which consists rather in the strange and mysterious fact that the scene of the whole seems laid in a region outside of our common world, and that the writer deals even *more* with the eternal than the temporal—more with heavenly than with earthly things. Thus it is the Gospel of John which gives us nearly all those mysterious sayings that connect Christ's earthly with His heavenly life—that seem to attribute to Him a pre-existence in Heaven—nay! an actual existence in Heaven even while men spurned Him upon the earth. For does not this Gospel make Christ speak of Himself as, even here, “in the bosom of the Father”? But, as I have already intimated, this was mysteriously, yet simply enough, connected with the great truth presented all through the Gospel, that Christ was the manifestation of God; or the being in and through whom was manifested the eternal Word. Thus the Christ of this Gospel is the sent of God; the Son of The Infinite Father, the Word of Life, the Bread of Heaven, the Life of the world, whose flesh is “meat indeed,” and whose blood is “drink indeed.” In a word, He is, throughout, the manifestation of the Divine Wisdom, Power, and Love, destined to overcome the disorder and evil of the world. Hence we are told in the Epistle of St. John that “for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” Hence, again, we have a running contrast all through between the Father and the world, be-

tween that which is from above and that which is from beneath, between the Light and Darkness, Life and Death. Thus a miracle of feeding is worked in connection with a discourse concerning the Bread of Life, and the eyes of the blind are opened in connection with a reference to the Light of the World; and everything is set forth as a manifestation of the Divine glory which in this honoured being shone, "full of grace and truth." The great end, the inner design, then, of this writer is, as I have said, to set forth the wonderful truth indicated in the sublime prologue to the Gospel—the complete and conscious realisation of the Divine Life by man, as a child of God, born "not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

And yet, in all, we never lose sight of "the man Christ Jesus." It is in this Gospel we see Him seated "wearied with His journey," by the well, asking drink of the woman of Samaria. It is in this Gospel we have that touching appeal to the twelve—that faltering, loving enquiry of a truly human soul, when some "went back, and walked no more with him"—"Will ye also go away?" It is in this Gospel we read the beautiful story of His friendship with Lazarus, and Mary, and Martha: and here, alone, we find the touching record that "Jesus wept." Thus, all through the Gospel, with all the mystery attending the revelation of the Divine life in Christ, we are brought very near to the tender heart and gentle spirit of the man in and by whom that Life was manifested. And so, if we could only judge more after the spirit, and less after the

flesh, we should see the mystery made clear.

It is true that we have here the revelation of an "Eternal Life which was the Father," but it is the revelation of that Life in humanity. The first half of that great truth, standing alone, is dead or bewildering; but when understood in its divine completeness we see, with a great thankfulness, the significance of the whole;—we see a Father who, because He is a Father, has revealed Himself to us in a Son,—we see a Divine Life that seeks to manifest itself in our human life,—we see a Divinity that comes to restore our humanity,—we see, not that God is put farther off from men by the interposition of a second mysterious being who stands between God and man, but that God is really brought nigh to us in the person of one whose humanity was found a fitting vehicle for the revelation of "that Eternal Life which was with the Father, but which is now "manifested unto us:" and which only seeks to be manifested in us. For the witness who told us this, also told us that "now are we the sons of God," and that "of Hisfulness have all we received, and grace for grace." Thus, heaven and earth, the human and the divine, God and man, meet, in a very real and glorious sense, in this picture of Christ, who is no longer a being separated from us as an object of mystery and wonder, but indeed our brother, who came from God, and was one with God, because in His holy soul, as in a prepared and sacred temple, dwelt "all the fulness of God."

The revelation of Christ, then, in this Gospel, is not the revelation of a mystery of God in man, apart from God in

humanity, but the revelation of God in man as the great fact of humanity:—the Christ being really our representative, our Head, our elder brother, through whom, as the revealer of our true life and our true relationship to God, we may humbly lay claim, in our degree, to all that was His, “without measure.” Thus, instead of Christ being something essentially different from us, He is in truth the very opposite of this,—He is *our* revealer;—as truly the revealer of *man* as of God: and the Divine Life which He manifests, He manifests as the root and ground of our human life—as a Life which ever seeks to realise itself in humanity, that man may know he is of God, and that he also, by right of his humanity, is “a partaker of the Divine Nature.” O this is a great truth!—happy are they to whom it is “spirit and life,” and who see in the sonship of Christ, not something to marvel at as a great mystery that separates Him from us, but something to love and welcome as a pledge, a surety, and an illustration of our own!

Such being the special character of this Gospel we are not surprised to find that it is, in effect, a life of Christ unlike the other three. Here, for instance, we find those discourses and conversations, at once so touching and so profound, which are peculiar to this Gospel; discourses and conversations which are best and most fully represented by those wonderful Chapters, the 13th to the 17th, recording at such length the discourses and the pathetic prayer that preceded the betrayal of the garden and the sorrows of the cross. Of these, and similar discourses found in this gospel,

we must admit that they are utterly unlike anything we find in the other gospels; so much so, indeed, that we are almost forced to the conclusion that if the discourses of Matthew are genuine, those of John are very doubtful, since it is hardly possible both could have fallen from the same lips. At the same time, it is only fair to add, that many see, in these discourses, reminiscences of “the deeper spiritual verities relating to His own divine person and mission,” which Christ unfolded to His chosen ones “when conversing privately with them.” If we accept this theory, as accounting for the difference between the public discourses of Christ given by the first three evangelists, and these inner and more spiritual discourses preserved by John, we shall be prepared to give due weight to the opinion of one who, maintaining this theory and defending also the authenticity of the gospel as the actual testimony of John, says—“I think it—probable, that the character and diction of our Lord’s discourses entirely penetrated and assimilated the habits of thought of His beloved apostle; so that in his first epistle he writes in the very tone and spirit of those discourses; and, when reporting the sayings of his own former teacher the Baptist, he gives them (consistently with the deepest inner truth of narration,) the forms and cadences so familiar and habitual to himself.”

And now, I can only name, in conclusion, the passages in this Gospel that have been marked as doubtful by many reliable authorities. The touching record at the end of the 7th and the beginning of the 8th Chapters, that “every man went unto his own house,”

but that "Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives," is generally regarded as an interpolation, since it forms part of a fragment which, in original MSS, appears in various forms and in various places. The account which immediately follows it, of the sinful woman brought to Christ for judgment, forms the principal portion of that fragment, the true place for which may be the Gospel of Luke and not this Gospel at all. It was, in all probability, one of those ancient and well-received fragments which, as being too precious to be lost, was "in or soon after the 4th century adopted into the sacred text." The marvellous statement in Chapter 5, respecting the pool at Bethesda, that "an angel came down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water," is also pronounced, even by conservative critics, as "doubtful," the "internal evidence, (as well as the external,) being very strong against the whole;" though Strauss who, (one half suspects,) is glad to retain the legend to help him to discredit the Gospel, says that "the most convincing critical grounds are in favour of the genuineness of this verse." The whole of the last Chapter is also very different in its character from the rest of the Gospel, and is evidently by another hand, though some, who are anxious to maintain the authorship of John, have supposed that it was added by himself long after the writing of the Gospel, which fittingly and clearly ends with the 20th Chapter.

Here I close our brief and rapid examination of the History of the MSS of the New Testament, and the peculiarities of the four Gospels. I have done little more than indicate objects of study and point out fields of enquiry—exhausting nothing and attempting to finally settle nothing, believing that our wisdom will be best shewn by retaining many as open questions, to be, for ages yet, the objects of enquiry and the subjects of change. And yet, let me hope, I have given to earnest seekers after truth such information and indicated such well ascertained facts as will help to make the prosecution of this enquiry a pleasure and a profit to all who have a mind to go on with it.

Nor can I let my last words here be any other than words of humble thankfulness to God that, amid all the changes and mischances of troublous times He has so well preserved these precious records for our reverence, our study, and our love. Perfect they are not: infallible they have never been; but they are what thousands now in heaven have felt them to be—"a lamp to their feet, a light to their path," and a comfort to their souls:—they are what the Evangelist of whom I have now spoken said his Gospel was *meant* to be—a record of words and deeds "written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye might have life through His name."

## THE DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

(CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 248.)

## IV.

The relativity of Jesus was made then an integral part of the orthodox dogma at the end of the third century. But there was still much to be done before this divinity was proclaimed in the absolute form towards which Christian thought gravitated, and which it would earlier have attained if the facts, the apostolic witnesses, the Jewish monotheistic spirit, in fact all that was of a primitive character had permitted. Orthodoxy, in the second half of the third century, consisted in regarding the Son as a Divine Being, but subordinate. Upon this contradictory basis, minds, according to their particular tendency, were either urgent for the subordination by the love of monotheism and to give a good account of the evangelical history and apostolic doctrine; or insisted upon his divinity to satisfy the ardent piety which could not too highly exalt Christ. This oscillation originated two doctrines which have ever been struggling, the one to destroy the other, viz., those of Arius and of Athanasius. Arius and his numerous partisans, generally disciples of the exegetic school of Antioch, more frequently simple presbyters than bishops (and this fact, in general too little remarked, very strongly influenced the beginning and conclusion of the struggle), wished to definitely fix the subordination; and we must acknowledge that they did it in the only way that could satisfy intelligence within

the limits of the system generally admitted. If the Son is subordinate to the Father, said they, he is not absolutely God; consequently he has not that which the Father has, therefore we must say he is not equal to the Father. Not being equal, he is not of the same essence; for if he possesses the Divine essence, this essence being perfect, he ought to be perfect himself, and there is therefore two Gods, equal in everything, which is polytheistic and absurd. On the other hand, at the side of the uncreated essence there can only be created essences, and that which is said to be created is said to be a being born in time. Thus the Son is not eternal, he is a creature, the first, the most excellent of creatures, but still a creature. "*There was a time when the Son was not:*" behold here that which, in accord with Tertullian, Arius proclaimed as the base of his system. "*He is of another essence than the Father:*" behold here the fundamental idea which Origen held.

Athanasius, on the contrary, retains from Tertullian the idea that the Son and the Father are of the same essence, and from Origen that the Son is eternal. Both find then, in the old orthodoxy, the elements of their own systems; and if one acknowledged that Arius had more reason than Athanasius, in maintaining that the New Testament and all tradition of the first three centuries had always taught that the Son is inferior and subordinate to the Father (a prin-

oiple which they have only to advocate to be Arian)—Athanasius in his turn was more with the tide of the Christian idea, which from the beginning had not ceased to approach Jesus to God.

Such is in reality, the true reason for the triumph of the doctrine of Athanasius. Doubtless we ought not to forget the numerous causes which contributed to this result. It was fatal to the cause of Arius, that the first grand ecumenic Council, under the pressure it is true of the Emperor Constantine, had pronounced solemnly against him. Constantine who perceived afterwards, that in favouring the Episcopate he was giving to himself a redoubtable rival, altered his opinion and recalled Arius from exile, but the first prestige was against him. The Arian Emperors who succeeded him did more harm than good to his doctrine by their despotic measures, initiated it is true, and even surpassed by the intolerance of the orthodox Emperors. Then, the Arian party, because that it represented the opposition to ecclesiastical authority and mysticism, was in general that of free thought, consequently it was always less united than its adversaries, more opposed also to the superstitious, ascetic, monkish customs, which invaded the church. Vigilance, Arius, Jovinian, these Protestants of the fourth century, were more or less Arian: but that which would recommend in our own days Arianism to our esteem would only make it lower in the opinion of the majority then. All this was, however, only accessory. The multitude, who comprehended nothing of the debates of the doctors, understood very well that, in the eyes of Arius, Jesus was less

than in the eyes of the orthodox. It would seem then, to them, that these last were better Christians. It is just the same now when a great majority of fervent Catholics have declared themselves in favour of the Immaculate Conception, without knowing very exactly what it is that is discussed; but more because the profound devotion to Mary finds greater satisfaction in affirming than in denying. In short, in the bosom of the Roman Church, the gradual glorification of the Mother of Christ follows, although much more slowly, a march analogous to that which the church of the first centuries followed in elaborating the deity of her Son. Already more than one Catholic author has made serious attempts to add Mary in one way or another to the Trinity.

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Let us pass on to the later developments which the orthodox dogma had yet to receive. The unity of God was compromised by the dogma of Nicea, and it became necessary that Christian speculation should apply itself to this subject of greatest importance, in order to try to reconcile the divinity of the Son with that of the Father. At the same time the church had preserved, by its prolonged struggle with Gnosticism, a lively sentiment of the reality of the flesh and of the human nature of Jesus: and yet it was important to the glory of this man that it was he himself who was God, and not that he had served occasionally as form or instrument of divinity. But how had God been able, while remaining God, to participate really in the infirmities of human nature? And how could they affirm that he had been truly man, without denying by the same that

he was truly God? The persons who in our day, love to oppose to these indiscreet questions, the conclusion of not receiving what is to be drawn from the mystery, forget that this mystery is not primitive, imposed by the nature of things, but that it was elaborated knowingly and freely by the theology of the fourth and fifth centuries.

From the moment that the equality of the Son and Father was acknowledged, the divinity of the Holy Spirit, of which the distinct personality had been little by little admitted, in spite of frequent oppositions, ought also to be proclaimed absolute. This was the work of the Council of Constantinople 381, which condemned in Macedonius the opposite doctrine. To Augustine (the fifth century) was reserved the honour of founding dogmatically (eliminating all idea of subordination), the numerical unity of the three divine persons; without succeeding, however, and for good cause, notwithstanding the turns and evasions of his subtle genius, in satisfying a somewhat obstinate reason.

But the East had already solved the problems concerning the union of God and man in Christ Jesus. How could God, as a perfect being, have been man? Were not there two persons in Jesus, then, one divine, the other human? and could they admit that two persons had constituted a single being, endowed with one conscience, or one will? Apollinaris Bishop of Laodicea, had believed himself able to solve the difficulty by admitting that the Word had held in Jesus, the place of rational soul. This was without doubt, conforming to the doctrine of the fourth gospel; but it was also a denial of the integrity of the

human person. Thus Apollinaris and his partisans were completely beaten and finally condemned. Nestorius tried to solve the question by taking the other side. According to him, Jesus was a complete man, the Word or the Son was truly God, but in him the two natures, the divine and the human, were quite plainly conjoined, but in a way, for example, that does not enable us to call Mary *mother of God*. This last trait did him a great injury, and, for the rest, it was not difficult to see that in pressing this point still farther one would arrive at Unitarianism. Jesus is a man, who finds himself with the Word in a close connection of spiritual union, but the Word has not quitted the heavenly glory to become man in him. His fiery adversary, Cyril of Alexandria, pretended on the contrary, that the two natures made *only* one, and that their properties were integrally passed the one into the other; but this led on to the denial of the human nature, in the absorption of it in the divine nature; for if we can conceive that the finite passes into the infinite, it is not the same with the inverse passage. Nestorius, since 428 Bishop of Constantinople, was condemned in 430 and died in misery 440, but not without leaving a school which became even a church, existing till the present day in the East. Cyril was more fortunate, but did not wholly succeed in making his views triumph, for they were condemned in the person of Eutyches by the Council of Chalcedon (451), although in 449 the ecumenic Council of Ephesus, called later *Council of Brigands*, had given him a verdict. The Egyptians nevertheless declared themselves for the unity of the nature



in the sense of Cyril and Eutyches, and caused a schism. In the seventh century the Emperor Heraclius having attempted to reconcile them with orthodoxy, in proposing to them a formula according to which if there had been two natures in Christ, there was in him only one will, there resulted from it a new and very bitter debate, in which the rival pretensions of Rome and Constantinople entered into play and which terminated by the condemnation of *Monotheism*. In fact this would have ruined the dogma of the two natures by suppressing the human will in the person of Jesus Christ. It was then resolved at the Council of Constantinople, 680, that there were two wills, one divine, and the other human, in Jesus Christ; but that this was necessarily and constantly subject to that; a resolution, we must avow it, which only suppressed the difficulty and which is the very opposite of a solution.

It is in order to be quite exact that we have thus recapitulated this tedious history, extremely dreary to follow, in all its details, but which, losing itself more and more in all its subtleties, shows that the immanent law of all this dogmatic vegetation is just what we have said—*deification* as complete as possible of Jesus, with a repugnance for everything which would annihilate him in absorbing him in the divinity, and also for everything that would lessen him in taking from him something which might belong to his divine glory. Thus understood, orthodoxy is logical, I will even say faithful to the end of the secret principle which directs it. On the whole, it avows with naive audacity the contradictions which it has piled up one upon

another in the famous creed *Quicumque*, or Athanasian; which is called by this last name, because it is regarded as being a resume of the opinions of the illustrious Bishop; but of which in reality Augustine ought rather to claim the paternity, since it appeared at the end of the sixth century, in the west, was written in latin, and proceeded evidently from a spirit nourished by the works of the great African Doctor. This creed became ecumenic, in fact it expressed very well the paradoxical faith of the Church,

#### V.

The Creed *Quicumque* is the full-blown flower of traditional orthodoxy. We may say it is orthodoxy itself in its strictest sense. We have not the least right to call ourselves or to believe ourselves orthodox, if we do not admit completely the tenor of each of the clauses of which it is composed. This creed once fixed, there was nothing more to be done upon the subject of the Divinity of Jesus Christ; and, in fact, since that moment, except the addition of *filioque* in the article on the Holy Spirit, an addition which was one of the complaints of the Eastern against the Latin Church, and except a quarrel soon forgotten of *adoptianism* (a kind of revived Nestorianism), the doctrine of *Quicumque* reigned undisputedly during the middle ages. Scholasticism found in it a marvellous theme on which to exercise its subtlety. Besides, as we may easily comprehend, the doctors of the schools either fell into Sabellianism when they wished to shew how three divine persons make only one God, or they give in to full tritheism when they would shew how one single God exists

in three distinct persons. The realist who sacrificed the plurality to the unity would be rather Sabellian; and, inversely, the nominalists would be often tritheists. But, let us add, their intentions were always strictly orthodox. It is in the school of Abelard alone that we find the feeble desires of opposition to the orthodox dogma more or less declared. The Socinians especially gathered together quite an arsenal of arguments against the orthodox dogma of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, many of which remain to this day without refutation, and we may add that, since the last century, the number of Unitarian Christians, both within and without the constituted protestant church, has not ceased to increase.

It is certain that, except by mixing up with the contradictory definition of the *Quicumque* philosophic ideas without real connection with it, there are no other means of persuading ourselves that we believe positively in that which it contains, than to submit blindly and without inquiry to the authority of tradition; since, if we wish to reason, we ought to break off with a symbol which affirms repeatedly and consciously a contradiction. To call God a being who exists not by Himself, but who is engendered or proceeds from another; above all to add that this being is not unequal in anything to God, who possesses in Himself the eternal cause of His being, is evidently to declare the absolute is the relative, or that the relative is the absolute; it is to fall headlong into a strife of words. On the other hand, that which distinguishes hypostatically the divine persons is either an imperfection or a perfection; in the first case, it is

false to say of one being possessing an imperfection that he is God; in the second case the perfection of one supposes defect in the other two. But we will leave controversy and remain historians.

We may be permitted to conclude, as a matter of fact, that the Dogma of the Trinity has a history in the bosom of Christianity, and that nothing is more improper than to mix it up with the Gospel as is constantly done. Pious souls, easily enkindled for the cause of religious traditions, do not always consider how much injury they inflict upon Christianity by binding it in an indissoluble manner to certain doctrines which are after all only one or the other of its historic forms. Even from their point of view is it not much better that such men as Milton, Newton, Priestley, Channing, Theodore Parker, and many others should be able to call themselves and believe themselves to be Christians whilst rejecting the Trinity, than that they should give up the Gospel altogether? \* \* \* \* \*

Let them know decidedly, they have no longer any right to identify this dogma with the Gospel, or to conclude that the Gospel falls or rises with it. Let them compare, for one single moment, the form and basis of the *Quicumque* with the teaching of Jesus, and they will feel as though there were two spirits there,—almost two religions.

As to the present epoch: if in Jesus, the God goes away, the man shines forth with a splendour more glorious than ever. For, in spite of the good intentions of orthodoxy, it is a fact that, of the two natures agreed to by the Councils, the divine nature ceases not to confiscate to its profit the human nature,

And this ought to be. A man is only God on the condition of being most truly man; and a God is man only on the condition of being most truly God. But in the first case he is elevated; in the second he humbles himself. Piety, then, of itself, tends to do wrong to human nature rather than to the divine nature; and thus, in the Church of the middle ages, Christ had become so much God that it was necessary to Christianity to provide a mediator, which was found in the Mother of Christ. If modern Christianity is called (as all facts foretell) to undo by little and little the intricate web of dogmatic definitions of the first five centuries, it will simply return to the consciousness which Jesus had of himself; that is to say of his divine vocation to found upon earth the religion of pure love. And, if we take a thorough account of what this implies, when we picture what the world would be if this divine principle pervaded all, (which it has never yet done,) we should not be able to deny to Jesus

the glory of having placed, by word and example, the foundation of the vastest edifice in which men may be converted to adore God in spirit and in truth. The history of the church testifies to the incalculable power that such a principle has communicated to the teaching and the person of him who was the incarnation of it, and, reciprocally, of the incompetency of Christianity to elevate itself high enough to seize it in its purity and to apply it with fidelity and resolution to the collective and individual life. In like manner, the special history of the dogma of the divinity of Jesus Christ proves that, contrary to his positive intentions, men attach much more importance to the forming precise definitions as to his person and origin, than to the conforming themselves to his spirit: but this proves also how great has been the impression produced on humanity by him whose memory has not been left to repose until men have completely deified him.

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### MARGERY MILLER.

[Some time ago the following poem was read by Mr. Home, at a meeting of spiritualists. It was announced as "given through the mediumship of

"Lizzie Doten." But, whether by spirit in the flesh or out of the flesh, we know of none much more worthy to be read at Christmas time.]

Old Margery Miller sat alone,  
One Christmas eve, by her poor hearthstone,  
Where dimly the fading firelight shone.

Her brow was furrowed with signs of care,  
For O! life's burden was hard to bear.

Poor old Margery Miller!

Sitting alone,  
Unsought, unknown,

Had her friends like birds of summer, flown?

Full eighty summers had swiftly sped,  
Full eighty winters their snows had shed,  
With silver-sleec, on her aged head.

One by one had her loved ones died—  
One by one had they left her side—  
Fading like flowers in their summer pride.

Poor old Margery Miller!

Sitting alone,  
Unsought, unknown,

Had God forgotten that she was His own?

No castle was hers with a spacious lawn ;  
Her poor old hut was the proud man's scorn ;  
Yet Margery Miller was nobly born.

A brother she had who once wore a crown,  
And deeds of greatness and high renown  
From age to age had been handed down.

Poor old Margery Miller !  
Sitting alone,  
Unsought, unknown,

Where was her kingdom, her crown, her throne?

Margery Miller, a child of God,  
Meekly and bravely life's path had trod,  
Nor deemed affliction "a chastening rod."

Her brother, Jesus, who went before,  
A crown of thorns in his meekness wore,  
And what, poor soul, could *she* hope for more?

Poor old Margery Miller !  
Sitting alone,  
Unsought, unknown,

Strange that her heart had not turned to stone !

Aye ! there she sat, on that Christmas eve,  
Seeking some dream of the past to weave,  
Patiently striving not to grieve.

O ! for those long, long, eighty years,  
How had she struggled with doubts and fears?  
Shedding in secret, unnumbered tears.

Poor old Margery Miller !  
Sitting alone,  
Unsought, unknown,

How could she stifle her sad heart's moan ?

Soft on her ear fell the Christmas chimes,  
Bringing the thought of the dear old times,  
Like birds that sing of far-distant climes.

Then swelled the floods of her pent-up grief—  
Swayed like a reed in the tempest brief,  
Her bowed form shook like an aspen leaf.

Poor old Margery Miller !  
Sitting alone,  
Unsought, unknown,

How heavy the burden of life had grown !

"O God !" she cried, "I am lonely here,  
Bereft of all that my heart holds dear ;  
Yet Thou dost never refuse to hear.

O ! if the dead were allowed to speak !  
Could I only look on their faces meek,  
How it would strengthen my heart so weak !"

Poor old Margery Miller !  
Sitting alone,  
Unsought, unknown,

What was that light which around her shone ?

Dim on the hearth burned the embers red,  
Yet soft and clear, on her silvered head,  
A light like the sunset glow was shed.

Bright blossoms fell on the cottage floor,  
"Mother" was whispered, as oft before,

And long-lost faces gleamed forth once more.

Poor old Margery Miller !  
No longer alone,  
Unsought, unknown,

How light the burden of life had grown !

She lifted her withered hands on high,  
And uttered the eager, earnest cry :  
"God of all mercy ! now let me die.

Beautiful Angels ! fair and bright,  
Holding the hem of your garments white,  
Let me go forth to the world of light."

Poor old Margery Miller !  
So earnest grown !  
Was she left alone?

His humble child did the Lord disown ?

O ! sweet was the sound of the Christmas bell !  
As its musical changes rose and fell,  
With a low refrain or a solemn swell.

But sweeter by far was that blessed strain,  
That soothed old Margery Miller's pain,  
And gave her comfort and peace again.

Poor old Margery Miller !  
In silence alone,  
Her faith had grown ;

And now the blossom had brightly blown.

Out of the glory that burned like flame,  
Calmly a great white Angel came—  
Softly he whispered her humble name.

"Child of the highest," he gently said,  
"Thy toils are ended, thy tears are shed,  
And life immortal now crowns thy head."

Poor old Margery Miller !  
No longer alone,  
Unsought, unknown,

God *had* not forgotten she was His own.

A change o'er her pallid features passed ;  
She felt that her feet were nearing fast  
The land of safety and peace, at last.

She faintly murmured "God's name be blest !"  
And, folding her hands on her dying breast,  
She calmly sank to her dreamless rest.

\* Poor old Margery Miller !  
Sitting alone,  
Without one moan,

Her patient spirit at length had flown.

Next morning a stranger found her there,  
Her pale hands folded as if in prayer,  
Sitting so still in her old arm-chair.

He spoke but she answered not again,  
For, far away from all earthly pain,  
Her voice was singing a joyful strain.

Poor old Margery Miller !  
Her spirit had flown  
To the world unknown,

Where true hearts never can be alone.

## BRIEF NOTICES OF BOOKS.

*The Inquirer, The Theological Review, The Christian Spectator, The Christian Unitarian, The Monthly Journal of the American Unitarian Association, and The Phrenological Journal* have been regularly received during the year.

*The Inquirer* has increased in interest and usefulness. Wisely opening its columns for the discussion of great principles, and taking broad and thoroughly liberal views in its various utterances concerning them, it has more than retained its position as the competent and generally accepted organ of the Unitarian Church.

*The Theological Review*, while maintaining its character for ability, seems to be quietly changing its vocation. Instead of reviews, it seems to prefer independent (and sometimes gets contradictory) essays, accompanied by the signatures or initials of the various writers who are alone responsible for them. This may have its uses, but it has serious disadvantages, and certainly prevents the Review taking that kind of aim which men generally believe will best hit the mark. But we cannot have everything in one thing, and what we lose in unity and directness we shall probably gain in breadth and diversity. At all events, it is satisfactory to see that the Review is doing a good and wholesome work in an able and honest way.

*The Christian Spectator* this year has been edited by an advanced mind, and

we have been glad to see its willingness to tell all the truth concerning subjects that have too long received very indifferent treatment even from independent Independents. Amid papers of strangely unequal merit, we notice a few that are singularly beautiful and thoughtful. We are sorry, however, to hear that it is about to pass into other, and, we fear, less liberal, hands.

*The Christian Unitarian* is confirmed in its office as the misrepresenter of all who fail to come up to the requirements of its one narrow condition of Church Communion.

The monthly journal of the American Unitarian Association is the able and business-like organ of that flourishing Society. The numbers for July and August contain a remarkably interesting report of the forty-first anniversary of the Association.

*The Phrenological Journal* is an American monthly of considerable merit. It is full of good-tempered and wholesome counsel, and presents what we may call the ethics of phrenology in a very favourable light.

"THE RELIGIOUS WEAKNESS OF PROTESTANTISM." By Francis W. Newman. Ramsgate: Thomas Scott. Mr. Newman has here re-printed, with a few changes, a review intended to show, to use the words of an anecdote at the end, that Christianity has no future. Christianity, based on the miraculous, has, according to Mr. New-

man, nothing to say even to *this* age. It is an anachronism, if not an impertinence; and he is right, regarding Christianity as that "Protestantism" which pretends to appeal to the reason it only insults, and clamours for "the right of private judgment," but smites the private judge or the public truth-teller on the mouth. But Mr. Newman's "Protestantism" is one thing, and the Protestantism that is ready to develop and that is going on to develop the principles of the Reformation is another. Mr. Newman rather summarily dismisses those who do *not* base Christianity on the miraculous—who do not swear by the "wonders" of the New Testament, or the "mysteries" of the Church—who reject the Trinity, and deny the orthodox atonement, and go on with St. Paul to know Christ "in the newness of the Spirit" and not in the "oldness of the letter." And yet surely, these are worth reckoning when we look out upon the gathering hosts, closing in for future conflicts. Mr. Newman says well what he has to say against the "miraculous conception" and the physical resurrection of Christ: and many will think that he is unanswerable on the subject of "miracles" generally. We do not think so; but feel perfectly content in leaving that a perfectly open question: and this we do all the more because of that fatal error which desperately stakes the existence of Christianity upon the truth of miracles. We have a Christ Jesus, the Son of God and brother of man, come what will: and, to be brought home to God in the spirit of sonship, is all we seek—is all we need.

"UNITARIANS VINDICATED AGAINST THE

MISREPRESENTATIONS OF THE REV. C. H. CRAUFURD." A letter by David Maginnis. London: Whitfield, Green and Son.—The Rev. C. H. Craufurd is clearly one of those unfortunate beings whose training in an Established Church has been too much for them. Without meaning any harm, perhaps, the poor man half unconsciously falls into the habit of despising all dissenters, and then of damning all heretics. The next step is an easy one: for after you have given a man over to the devil what does it matter what you say of him or do to him? Hence we find this ecclesiastical person coming out with gems of this sort:—"The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.' I am greatly afraid there are many such fools amongst us . . . And, observe, I am not speaking of heathen fools, or Unitarian fools, but of those who profess to be Christians:" (just as though Unitarians did *not* "profess to be Christians".) And again, still careful to assure us that Unitarians are "fools", he tells us of "their poor shallow intellects, their unscholarly pens, their prating tongues." And all this because they will not say that Christ is "God the Son." And this is the kind of thing Mr. Maginnis has to "vindicate" himself and his friends from. Heaven help us!—it is almost a pity to waste time over such nonsense. It seems like hanging a gnat or breaking a fly on the wheel. But even this is, perhaps, necessary,—with modifications. The pamphlet, however, is well done, and is, in tone and spirit, an admirable contrast to the amazing production of this "rector" of a place we never heard of before, and of which we shall probably never hear again.

"**DOGMA versus MORALITY**; a Reply to Church Congress." By Charles Voysey. B.A. London: Trübner and Co.—This is a sermon by Mr. Voysey concerning the rapturously applauded declaration made at the "Church Congress" at York, that "it is better to have a religion without morality than morality without religion." The absurdity of this irreligious utterance is well exposed. What the speaker meant by "religion" we all know; and alas! what the British public mean by it we all know: but the time is fast coming when, for rapturous applause, such monstrous sayings as that we have quoted will be received with blank surprise if not with sheer disgust. Well does Mr. Voysey say, "If religious belief" (that is, as we should say, creed-making and creed-believing) "and the cause of morality should ever come into open collision, I know well which must give way. A creed crowned with the victories of twice two thousand years cannot stand a day when brought into open contrast (or rather conflict) with the eternal law of God." The Scribes are putting the issue very plainly before us; and we are heartily glad of it. Is it to be dead Tradition or living Inspiration?—Creed or Conscience?—Ritualism or Righteousness?—Dogma or Morality? We are not afraid to accept the issue thus brought home to us; nor are we afraid that the English people will ultimately go wrong on this question. They *will* presently say, "Take your religion, with its mystifications and its impossibilities, and leave us to our excommunicated morality, and to the uncovenanted

mercies of God!" Then, in love to God, in doing good to man, and in the hearts hungering and thirsting after righteousness, they will see what "religion" really is.

"**HAGGAI.**" By James Biden. Gosport: J. P. Legg. We have heard from this writer before; but he does not improve. His present pamphlet is a curious and incoherent attempt to explain certain ancient prophecies, mixed up with a chaotic story about an old seal and an ancient spoon which somehow do something towards proving the writer to be "of royal origin." But, what with Darius, Zerubbabel, Ezekiel, King Edward, Haggai, and the old spoon, we can make nothing of it.

"**UNITARIANISM:** What claims has it to respect and favour?" By Joseph Barker. London: E. Stock. [Second notice.] In justice to a respectable publisher we return to this disreputable pamphlet just to say that we have received a communication informing us that the publisher's name was attached to it before he was aware of the character of its contents; but that he has now declined to have anything more to do with it. As a last word, we may state that Mr. Barker, at the end of his pamphlet, publishes what he calls a correspondence between himself and certain Unitarian ministers. It is simply a reprint of his own letters, without a word on the other side, from the letters that convicted him of crookedness, the exposure of which has led to this sad display of "envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness," from which "Good Lord, deliver us."

## NOTES BY THE WAY.

The long pending suit in Chancery,— Bishop Colenso against the trustees of The Colonial Bishops' Fund,—has been settled at last. On the 6th of November, Lord Romilly, The Master of The Rolls, decided in favour of the Bishop. The contributors to the fund, he said, ought to have known the law. Bishop Colenso is Bishop of Natal, and will remain so till convicted by regular process of law of immorality or heresy, or till removed to another see: he has been "in the right throughout;" and the decision is—payment to the Bishop of all arrears of salary, with interest, and all his costs. As regards the *status* of the Bishop in Natal, Lord Romilly holds that his letters patent are valid, as constituting him a Bishop of the Church of England in Natal, but that they are invalid as regards any compulsory jurisdiction, except through the civil courts there. This is all Bishop Colenso contends for. It is for the Bishop of Capetown to say "what next." As for our brave and good Bishop, this is what a letter from Natal says of him:—"The Bishop goes on steadily increasing his influence among the people—some of them almost worship him. Persons from the neighbouring colony, while visiting here, of course go to hear him preach, and all express themselves astonished at what they find. They seem to have received some extraordinary ideas of his conduct and sermons, and are little prepared to witness the great, earnest, reverent eloquence of the preacher, and the breathless attention of the congregation.—We want all

to belong to our National Church, and we hope that our church will, before long, open her arms wide enough to include a much wider range of thought and belief than she seems inclined to admit just now. I do not understand a *National* Church trying to exclude differences and even shades of differences of opinion."

After having been unanimously recommended to the Chair of Mental Philosophy and Logic, by the Senate of University College, London, the Council have thought well to reject Mr. Martineau, and thus to deprive the University of the services of one whom they cannot hope to match in ability or surpass in conscientiousness and liberality: the only discoverable, and we may venture to say the only possible, reason for this being that Mr. Martineau is a distinguished Unitarian. What this has to do with mental philosophy and logic nobody knows; and what the end of this rather shabby business may be nobody knows; but it is clear that the Council have seriously imperilled the reputation of a University that was believed to be the cradle of advanced liberality, and not the refuge of threadbare bigotry. It cannot matter much to Mr. Martineau how the affair eventually ends; for he would bring to the vacant chair as much honour as he would receive from it; but, for the sake of a University that has hitherto borne a good name, we hope some way may yet be found to reverse a decision which can only wound the truth in the house of its friends.