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ON  
CHURCH PEDIGREES.

BY THE

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**I**N the monthly paper for August, 1871, of the *National Society* we read as follows: "In the present condition of Church Schools, it is more than ever necessary that they should be made the nurseries of Church principles. . . . Leaving the teacher to act as pioneer, the clergyman must follow on to turn to good account the basis of fact which the teacher has laid in the minds of the children. He will naturally be occupied with the two highest classes, as those which are soonest to leave school, and perhaps to slip altogether from his grasp. Before they do so, they should be furnished with reasons for holding fast the faith they have been taught. They ought to know why they should be Churchmen, and not Dissenters; why they should go to Church, and not to meeting; why they should be Anglicans, and not Romanists. The time has come when probably the whole fate of the Church of England will turn upon the hold she may have upon the rising generation."

There is a sweet harmony in the discord of our sectarians. With one voice all the leaders of the wrangling denominations applaud the wisdom of this manifesto. Conceal but the Church colours of the herald who blows that trumpet, and the Romish sacrificer, the Presbyterian priest, the Calvinist soul-

smiter, the Methodist soul-saver—all feel the same inspiration at the sound, and each slaps his thigh, exclaiming, “Just my sentiments.” “We have been losing our time and pain in trying to convince men: that was very proper in the days of the Apostles, when men were nearly all children; but it is folly now. Men now are grown men; they will not listen, they cannot understand. It does not pay to furnish men with reasons—we must take to furnishing the pates of children. All our lessons to men about holding fast the faith seem only to loosen their grip of it. It is painful to see how regardless the men are becoming both of our precept and of our example. They see how cordially I and my brethren hate those other parties; how diligently we shun them, ignore their very existence, and take it for granted, in all our private and public life, that there are no real Christians but ourselves; and yet these men will mingle and act like friends and brothers in business and social enjoyment. In vain do we pen them up on Sundays, labouring to tone, to colour, and to starch them. They will run together over the six days all of one tint like milk and water, and the best starch we put into them will hardly stand ten minutes’ rain of God’s perpetual and unsectarian mercies. Our Church’s fate turns not on her power to convince grown men, but “upon the hold she may have on the rising generation.” Every man of us must gird himself to a desperate fight for these little ones; he must catch them and keep them, and cram them well with reasons “before they slip altogether from his grasp!”

What kind of reasons should they be? Of course, few and simple, easy to comprehend and remember. We cannot do better than take a lesson from the Romish priest. Is it not wonderful that after three centuries of perpetual bombardment by the shells of Protestantism he still stands his ground, and seems so

little the worse? What can account for this? I know his secret, my sectarian friend; and I will impart it to you. It lies all in the doctrine of *Church-pedigree*. Nothing like a pedigree to charm the imagination of the young and ignorant. The Romish priest has a thorough contempt for texts and reasons; he lays his firm foundation in the tender mind of infancy by teaching one thing—pedigree. Talk to the average Roman Catholic; he knows nothing, and cares nothing about your Scripture. He goes farther back than Scripture. He stands by his Church, now that he is a man, exactly for the reasons which kindled his childhood's love and loyalty; not because she is Scriptural, but because she is Apostolic. Apostolic!—that is a word which many of you sharp sectarians appear to have forgotten. Only see what energy this one simple phrase of *Apostolic succession* has lately infused into the slumbering Church of England! The most ignorant Roman Catholic can tell you how God came down from heaven, and taught the Catholic religion to his Apostles; how exactly they all learned it alike, and unanimously handed it on, pure and undefiled, to the first Catholic bishops, who have continued to teach and transmit it without changing a single hair to those who succeeded them. Those bishops have it still exactly as the inspired and consenting Apostles taught it to all nations by the gift of tongues, so that the Catholic hears from the lips of his clergy the very voice of the Apostles, and the voice of the God who instructed them. Herein consists the strength of the Romanist: he cares little for texts and less for logic; but he knows and glories in his Church's pedigree!

Come, then, "Come on, my partners in distress,"—as Wesley puts it—let us try in our Protestant fashion to get a few notions about our pedigree. We are, of course, bound to deduce them from Scripture; as

we have conceded to our people a free and open Bible, we must find our heraldry there. About what Scripture means in the half-dozen texts which each of us calls the truth and the faith we have disputed long enough with little profit; let us try to study together this one question of Apostolic consent and unity. If we can convince our hearers that we have our theological light and wisdom from a unanimous college of Protestant Apostles (Conformist or Nonconformist, Episcopalian or Methodist, as our needs require), we shall probably commend it to their loyalty and zeal by this consideration of pedigree far better than by any more learned reasons.

It is evidently in the "Acts of the Apostles" that we are to look for the desired demonstration of Apostolic unanimity. If we succeed in establishing it as the root of our own Church pedigree, we shall have the very best reason for the furniture of our young people's minds; and if we succeed in disproving it, we shall at least have spiked the biggest gun of the Romanist. Let us proceed to the investigation of Apostolic inspiration and united infallibility in matters of faith and doctrine.

We read in our margined New Testament (Acts xv.) that in the year 51 A.D., some twenty years after the death of Jesus, "certain men which came down from Judæa taught the brethren, and said, except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved: when, therefore, Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the Apostles and elders about this question." This took place at the Syrian Antioch, where the disciples were first called Christians, and where Paul and Barnabas, after returning from a great missionary tour among the heathen, had been abiding for some years. "And

when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the Church and of the Apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done for them. But there arose up certain of the Pharisees which believed, saying that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. And the Apostles and elders came together for to consider this matter."

There is not a word in this statement in the Acts from which it can be directly inferred that there was any difference of opinion between Paul and the Apostles at Jerusalem, concerning the obligation upon the Gentile converts to observe the Mosaic religion. All the trouble is made to spring from certain nameless men who went down to Antioch without commission, as we are afterwards informed, from the Apostles, and from certain unnamed believing Pharisees in Jerusalem. Nor is it distinctly affirmed that Paul and any of the other Apostles held discordant views about the obligation of a converted Jew to continue or to neglect the observance of the Mosaic law, in the matter of ceremonial, diet, or sacrifice. In the speech of the President James of this first Council, as it is called, and in the Decree issued for the religious guidance of the Gentile converts, which is contained in this chapter xv., all determination of the obligations of the Hebrew Christians is avoided by the incontestable remark, "Moses hath of old time in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day." Between the Gentile Christian and the Mosaic Jew the line is definitely drawn; between the Christian and the non-Christian Jew no line is drawn, nor is the existence of such line hinted, as marking any difference whatever of Mosaic practice or profession. The Gentiles are instructed in the ritual, self-denial, and diet which they were bound as Christian men to

observe; namely, to abstain from pollutions of idols, from fornication, from things strangled, and from blood. The Christian Jews are simply referred to the teaching of the law in the synagogues to which they and their fathers had always been accustomed. I grant that the speech of James in that reference does not expressly enjoin the old obedience to that teaching of the synagogue; neither does it sanction any even the slightest relaxation of Mosaic obligations—not even in the matter of temple sacrifice. The decree leaves us in utter darkness about what Apostolic authority demanded or dismissed from a Jewish Christian in the matter of Mosaic observance. The obvious, I do not say the necessary, inference from all this history of the council and decree of Jerusalem is that the Apostles and elders in that city expected the Hebrew Christians to continue without change the observance of the ritual religion of their Jewish fathers, and that this was their own practice and intention: that they were, and expected each other to remain, not a whit less arrant Mosaic Jews for all their profession of belief in Christ Jesus. This inference appears reasonable and natural, although the historian in the Acts has carefully avoided drawing that inference, or saying one word that he could avoid, that should tempt his reader to draw it.

I am aware that few of my readers will allow for a moment the correctness of such an inference. Romanists, Anglicans, and Dissenters will protest against its absurdity. To suppose that the first Christians at Jerusalem, after hearing the inspired Apostles of Jesus preach the gospel for twenty years, remained arrant Mosaic Jews! It may be all quite wrong to suspect or to suppose this: the supposition is assuredly gaining ground with learned and critical students of the New Testament; still it may be all a delusion of unbelieving science. All

that I would beg the reader candidly to consider is the number and plausibility of the arguments which, if we look entirely away from the Churches, sects, and creeds of this century, and confine ourselves in the spirit of true Protestants to the study of the Christian Scriptures, and nothing else, present themselves in favour of this supposition. These arguments are now old among thinkers: it is not in my power to add anything to the clearness with which they have often been urged: but as nineteen out of twenty readers of the New Testament in this country, among both the teachers and the taught, are as unconscious of their force, and often of their existence, as the peasants of Connaught or Sicily are of the nature of Protestant reasoning against the teaching of their priests, it may be a contribution not without its value to the slow but certain progress of God's holy truth, on my part, to state the way in which they strike myself. My reader and I, whoever he may be, are agreed on this, that Christianity, just as it has grown and triumphed, and just as it is now working for good, with all its contradictions and conflicts, is the greatest fact in the history of this planet, far exceeding in dignity all other topics in the grand epic of human progress; and that the study of its birth and growth is something nobler than the study of languages and nationalities, of dynasties and constitutions. And why should we not be agreed also on this,—that the only account of the origin and development of God's work of Christianity which is really worth our knowing, is God's own account of it, as He has left it stamped on its earliest records in the New Testament? God's own account of it! the way in which He made it spring out of the elements and combinations, of its birth-place; this is what we want to know. Shall we listen to the priest or the preacher who cries, "Beware of reading the roll of the sanc-

tuary with the spectacles of carnal reason. The account of the rise of Christianity which you want for your soul's salvation is exactly my account; for that alone is orthodox and holy. No matter how true before the tribunal of science may be the historical inferences which Biblical criticism deduces from the record, no matter how harmoniously her arrangement of all the facts may fit together, it is perilous and abominable if it differs from my Church's story, and damages my Church's pedigree." Shall we listen to him? This is the gentleman who cursed the fine calculations of Copernicus, and damned the telescope of Galileo; the spectre who so terrified the former that he never dared to publish what his Maker had secretly whispered to him about his creation, nor ever till just at his dying hour could feast his eye on the printed product of his genius; the wretch who stormed over the latter with the instruments of torture and of fire, and compelled him, in his grey hairs, to recant and deny the glorious truth which God Himself had revealed to him!

Let us examine the facts recorded in this fifteenth chapter of the Acts with the eye of common sense. The first question that suggests itself is,—What manner of men were these who went down to Antioch from Jerusalem to teach the brethren? Something better than fanatical fools they must have been. Such an errand of mere fools would never have found its way into the brief and well-written history of the Acts, even if it be (and it does not profess to be otherwise) an uninspired composition. Silly fanatics would hardly have brought out such antagonists as Paul and Barnabas; it was "no small dissension and disputation" which those holy Apostles had to face from these Jerusalem teachers and their party at Antioch. And it is impossible for us to believe that the raving of wrong-headed dunces, who

had nobody to back them, would have so moved the Church in that city, that "they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others with them, should go up to Jerusalem to the Apostles and elders about this question." They could hardly be a knot of un-instructed nobodies, or a new sect of mushroom fanatics suddenly sprung up outside the area of apostolic unanimity and infallibility, who could raise such a commotion at Antioch, and cause an appeal to be made from the arguments of the inspired Paul and of the eloquent Barnabas to the College of Apostles and elders at Jerusalem. In the Codex Bezae, which is considered by many of the learned to be the most important manuscript of the Gospels and the Acts, which it has pleased the Popes and their holy pokers to preserve for us, these men are said to have come *from Jerusalem*, and to have *charged or summoned* Paul, Barnabas, and the others to that city to submit themselves to the judgment of the Apostles and elders on this question. There is a wonderful interest in these bits of ancient biblical literature: in one point of view, it is like determining by spectrum analysis that the far-distant stars are composed of these earthly elements; in another, it is like trying to judge from the fragments of human bones in the barrows of Yorkshire, whether the earliest barbarians of Britain were or were not cannibals. The commentators all dispose of these zealous gentlemen in the briefest possible manner as Judaizing teachers, a sort of semi-Christian borderers on the pure fold of the Apostolic Church, a sort of parasitic growth on the less instructed portion of the Christian body, to whom the infallible Apostles gave no countenance, and who were certain to be put down as decidedly by the inspired College at Jerusalem, as they had been by Paul at Antioch. There is nothing wonderful in the appearance of such sectaries, nor in

their zeal, however fanatical. What is there too mad or monstrous to be believed about these ignorant and bigoted Jews? But we have before us in this statement in the Acts not the action of a party outside the fold of the Church, but inside it; they were not afraid to face Paul and Barnabas; they were not silenced by these high authorities;—so far from that, they seem to have compelled an appeal to the central authority at Jerusalem, and to have betaken themselves to that supreme court with the confidence of men who had no lack of supporters then, but had good reason to expect an infallible judgment in their favour. “No,” says the orthodox reader, “you are now going too far; that they had supporters at Jerusalem who were important enough to maintain their views in the presence of the Apostles is plain from the statement, in verse 5, of what took place before the whole Church there:—‘But there arose up certain of the Pharisees which believed, saying, that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.’” And that they were important enough to be heard again on an occasion more formal is clear; for the 6th and 7th verses inform us that the Apostles met a second time “for to consider this matter,” and that there was “much disputing.” “This cannot be denied,” continues the reader; “but when you say that these Judaizers had good reason to expect an infallible judgment in their favour, you say what you can never prove. If you really could prove that, you would scatter to the wind every pretence of every Church to trace its pedigree to a college of inspired and unanimous Apostles. It is utterly absurd to suppose that the Apostles had all preached our modern Gospel for twenty years with supernatural power and light, and with that unfaltering consent which is implied in their infallibility, and at the same time to suppose that there could be any

doubt possible to men in their senses as to Apostolic opinions on a question so practical and elementary as the necessity of circumcision and all the rest of the Mosaic rites and sacrifices for the salvation of a Christian man, even of a converted Jew, and a hundred times more, on the question of such necessity in the case of a converted Gentile."

The reader has a right to rebuke me for saying more than I can prove from the explicit evidence of the document before me. Yet I may remark that there are in all sciences, and especially in history, certainties of *inference* on which reliance can be very safely placed. I grant that it is impossible to demonstrate by the testimony of the author of the Acts, that the Apostles, in general, remained Mosaic ritualists and sacrificers. Even if it be the truth that most of them continued such to the end of their days, and required all the Jewish believers in Christ to do the like, it would be unreasonable to demand explicit confession of that truth from the Acts. This treatise had not for its object to state differences of opinion between Paul and the rest of the Apostles; on the contrary, it displays a laudable intention to exhibit those inspired men in harmony; but, from the facts which it does preserve to us, compared with Paul's epistles, we can deduce about the real state of sentiment and practice inferences which, to an increasing number of thoughtful men, have all the marks of historical certainty.

A more definite question may be asked concerning the men who went down from Judæa to Antioch. Who sent them on their errand? In the decree of the Council in this fifteenth chapter it is expressed that they had not been commissioned by the whole body of Apostles and elders. But, in the second chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, we read: "But, when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood

him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but, when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled with him, insomuch that Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation."

If the general opinion of divines is adopted, that the "certain" who "came from James" were the party described in Acts xv. as going down to Antioch, our question is clearly answered. James, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, sent them, and they were so far from being fanatical nobodies, that Peter was afraid of them, and immediately separated himself from the brotherly intercourse with the Gentile converts which he had enjoyed along with Paul, "fearing them that were of the circumcision." That the two parties of bigoted visitors at Antioch were the same it is impossible to prove, and the silence of the Acts about their finding Peter there, to some will appear good evidence that the two parties are different. But we have this certain fact towards an answer to our question, that certain men did once go from James at Jerusalem to Antioch, on the very same errand which led thither the party named in Acts xv. If they went once, and with such success as to overawe Peter, and to carry away Barnabas from the support of Paul, they would be likely enough to go again armed with the same authority of James, to encounter Paul and Barnabas in the absence of Peter. That the errand was the same, whether the times were or were not different, is plain from the words of Paul which follow: "But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the

Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" Had Paul not said this, it might have been pleaded that the effect of these remonstrants on Peter was only to restrict his social intercourse with the Gentiles; but these words make it certain to us that Peter, in separating himself from Paul, was standing side by side with men who, under the authority of James, were determined to enforce upon the Gentile converts the keeping of the whole Mosaic law.

If this is not the truth, there is a very ill service done by St Paul to St James, in placing it on record that these mischief-makers came from the head of the church at Jerusalem. Was Paul a man likely thus to bear false witness, or to employ a phrase carrying with it all the poison of false witness, against a brother Apostle? He could so easily have saved James from the charge of walking "not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel," by recording simply as the compiler of the Acts has done, that the "certain" came from Jerusalem, or, more vaguely, from Judæa. How can we explain this mention of James in this painful statement, except by supposing that Paul felt it to be his duty to saddle the right horse? If James really had nothing to do with this tyrannous message from head-quarters, can we believe that Paul would have stained his page with such an insinuation? Look at the matter in the light of common sense, and consider the cautious manner in which good men not inspired are wont to make use of each other's names in affairs involving a solemn responsibility. Can you imagine that inspired Apostles had less care for each other's fame than ordinary heads of departments have nowadays?

We have already seen enough to shake our faith in the foundation of all our Church pedigrees on an infallible and unanimous body of Apostles. We have seen Paul, the one whose teachings are more clearly

handed down to us than those of any other, in open conflict with Peter, who, according to the Pope, was the prince of the Apostles, not about the fact or the topic of the hour, but about the fundamental conditions of Christian Church-membership; and we have too much reason to suspect that James and the whole college of the Jerusalem Apostles were all justly and alike smitten by the censures of Paul, as walking not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel. We are agreed, every church and sect among us, that the rites and ceremonies, and, above all, the sacrifices of the Mosaic law, were abolished by the Christian Revelation. It was impossible for any man, twenty years after the death of Jesus, to hold the Catholic faith, and at the same time to remain in communion with the Mosaic Church, adhering to the old ritual, and cherishing the old contempt and hatred of those who rejected that ritual. How could any man pretend to believe in Christ as "the Lamb without spot, who, by the sacrifice of himself once made, should take away the sins of the world," and yet remain a frequenter of the temple service, and a partaker in the butchering atonements of those Jewish priests?

We proceed to consider the history preserved to us of this council of Jerusalem, in which we shall look anxiously, first, for proof that the Apostles and elders there, had no sympathy with these superstitious and scornful bigots who went down to Antioch to insult the Gentile believers, and, secondly, for evidence that the heads of the Christian Church in the holy city were no longer in bondage to the Mosaic ordinances; and we shall try to keep our eyes open in our examination of the matter. It is natural for us to feel surprise that the Apostles should have condescended to hold a public debate and council about the very first propositions of Christian faith and fellowship. Honest

Adam Clarke feels this in his note on verse 7, and makes the best of it thus: "Though the Apostles and elders were under the inspiration of the Almighty, and could by this inspiration have immediately determined the question; yet it was highly necessary that the objecting party should be permitted to come forward, and allege their reasons for the doctrines they preached, and that these reasons should be fairly met by argument." Does this diminish the wonder of the reader that, in the centre of Christian light, where infallible Apostles had been teaching men of all nations for twenty years, such an objecting party should exist at all, with any recognition as a portion of the Catholic Church? Twenty years! It is a long time for a direct negation of Christian faith and charity to pass unchallenged and unrebuked in the presence of inspired and unanimous Apostles. At what period, and under what instruction, during those twenty years, could these sham Christians have found admission into the fold of the faithful? We have no inspired Apostles now; yet converted Jews do not rush from London into Lancashire to command us to keep the Jewish Sabbath, to circumcise our children, to patronise none but Hebrew butchers, and to keep the whole Mosaic law. And if they did, we should hardly be able to get up a solemn debate in Convocation or Conference about the business.

We read that the Apostles and elders actually met, *v. 6*, "for to consider this matter!" There is no hint given that the insolent objectors to the Gentile brethren were reminded that their bigotry was a rebellion against Christ's great commandment of love, nor that the sacrifice of his death had abolished for ever, both for Jew and Gentile, the old carnal ordinances. We are informed, *v. 7*, that, "when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good

while ago God made choice among us that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel and believe, &c." He alludes to the miraculous conversion of Cornelius, a divine lesson given in vain at least ten years before. No pleader on either side is named but Peter. His words seem addressed not to a presumptuous and condemned minority, but to an audience which all required to be convinced; and the argument which he urges is not the notorious teaching of Jesus and the Apostles about the nature of Christian faith and brotherhood, but an appeal to the purely Jewish experience of themselves and their fathers: "Now, therefore, why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"

Apostolic inspiration and infallibility appear to have counted for little there! This Jewish argument had weight. Then all the multitude (not an abashed minority) kept silence, and Paul and Barnabas were heard; after which the president, James, summed up and gave sentence.

The test of a correct hypothesis, either in history or science, is, that it fits all the facts under observation. The reader must judge for himself which of these two hypotheses best fits the facts before us: first, that the Apostles and elders, with the main multitude of believers, were all sound along with Paul and Barnabas in the faith of the reader's special orthodoxy, while the objecting party were a handful of zealots in direct conflict with the heads and the majority on the first foundations of Christian truth and love; or, secondly, that the entire College of the Apostles and the whole multitude of the Jerusalem Church, excepting Paul and his few followers, and Peter as a cowardly trimmer, were as arrant Jews as they had ever been before the crucifixion of their Lord, and intended to remain such, differing in

nothing of Mosaic ritual or Hebrew arrogance from the rest of their countrymen, but bound together, as a peculiar sect of Jews, by the simple confession that Jesus was the Christ. As to the title *Christian*, that belonged to the low Gentile party at Antioch! It will add a new interest to the theory of Creed-growth, and to the perusal of the New Testament, if the reader has a wish for further thought, to ponder the relative value of these two hypotheses; and, by patient, honest, meditation, he may, in time, enrich himself with the priceless gems of truth, even if neither hypothesis satisfies him.

The second hypothesis harmonises well with the speech of James: "Simeon hath declared how God, at the first, did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name; and to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written, After this I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up, that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. Wherefore my sentence is, &c." The well-known decree follows. The above quotation from Amos ix. 11, 12, is thus given in our authorised version correctly from the Hebrew: "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof, and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom and of all the heathen which are called by my name, saith the Lord of Hosts." The author of the Acts writing in Greek, or, at least, the obliging editors, through whose transcribing fingers and vigorous pokers our few ancient manuscripts have come down to us, have given us the two verses

of the prophet nearly as they stand in the Greek of the Septuagint, which has a less Jewish tone than the Hebrew. It is very absurd to pretend that James quoted at Jerusalem anything to his audience out of their prophets in a foreign tongue, and in a version so different in sense from the native Hebrew. Every Jew there knew by heart those cherished Hebrew words of Amos. From his infancy he had heard them repeated with rapture by his mother and by the aged members of his family, and, most of all, at the moments in which his father or his brothers were giving vent within the home circle to their rage at the hated Roman. No word of the Old Testament was more literally believed or more frequently recited than this inspiring promise of the restoration and extension of Hebrew dominion. It was a masterly turn which James is described to have given to the debate. The admission of the Gentiles into the fold of the Church on easy terms of ritual observance is made a preparation, not for the gradual abolition of the Jewish law, a notion which Peter, perhaps, would have countenanced, nor for the abatement of the Hebrew claim of universal supremacy, but for the final dominion over all the heathen, which was the exulting faith and vision of every Jew, both in the Church and out of it.

I know that I shall be censured for reading here a tone of hateful pride and selfishness which the document before me does not utter. The document before me! Of all the pages in this book of Acts, this history of the first infallible Council, this debate and decree of assembled Apostles and elders, all, by the confession of every sect and Church, speaking under the direct inspiration of God, and competent to say, "it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us,"—this, I say, both ought and must, if honest men had been the keepers of it, have been handed down to us with scrupulous

and reverential care, every word and syllable as it was first placed on record. But we have already drawn attention to two undeniable proofs that it has been tampered with, in the striking variation of the Codex Bezae, and in the softened version of the prophecy of Amos. Now look at the words following the quotation, *v.* 18: "Known unto God are all his works from the foundation of the world." This is very true; but in its connexion here what is it but a truism *à propos* of nothing? Would you be surprised to learn, gentle reader, that this verse is a more decisive evidence of that tampering than the two preceding ones? Griesbach has left *γνωστὰ ἀπ' αἰῶνός* doubtful, the first three words of the verse, and has thrown the rest of it out of the text. Almost any edition of the Greek Testament shows you this. The importance of this little token lies in the obvious remark that, while we know what the wise and prudent priests, the keepers of Holy Writ, have stuck into, we do not know what they have left out of, the primitive document. I hope my reader is not wicked enough to say that these three evidences of priestly handiwork, to speak nothing of arguments still more convincing, drawn from the comparison of the Acts with Paul's Epistles, especially with the Epistle to the Galatians, are sufficient to justify the doubt to which so many of the learned have come, whether Paul ever suffered himself to be dragged before a Council at Jerusalem at all. Whether he did or no, we have abundant proof that the fiction of an infallible and unanimous Apostolate is without the slightest historical foundation, and that our Church pedigrees are contemptible rubbish, as they are exhibited and expounded in all our schools of theology.

We take another peep at the Acts of the Apostles. In the twenty-first chapter we have an account of

Paul's return to Jerusalem, after one of his great missionary tours among the heathen, at a later period, about sixty years, as the margin tells us, after the birth of Jesus, or ten years after the first Council of Jerusalem which has occupied us. At verse 17 we read : " And when we were come to Jerusalem the brethren received us gladly. And the day following Paul went in with us unto James ; and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they heard it they glorified God and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe ; and they are all zealous of the law : and they are informed of thee that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it, therefore ? the multitude must needs come together : for they will hear that thou art come. Do this, therefore, that we say to thee."

There are thousands of us believing Jews, and we are all zealous (or zealots) of the law ! No hint is given of any shade of distinction as to Mosaic zeal and observance, either between the believers and non-believers, or between the infallible Apostles and the rest of the Church. There is no place here for a section of fanatical Judaizers as distinct from the better-informed believers ; where the question is, not the obligation of the Gentiles to observe the law, but that of Jews, all are unanimous : converted or unconverted, Christian or non-Christian, they all were alike zealots, nor does a single one come forward, of any rank or culture, high or low, inspired or not inspired, to say a word for that wretched, renegade, infidel Broad-Church man Paul ! For thirty years the infallible College had been teaching,

as we pedigree-makers are always pretending, our Gospel, our special light, our Apostolic dogma, our terrific unbloody sacrifice, and, above all, our grand central doctrine of the "one oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross" (Art. XXXI.), and how "this man, after 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 his footstool; for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 12.) For thirty years the Apostles had been preaching this in exact accordance with the Thirty-nine Articles, in the full flavour of the infidel Westminster confession, and of the gory strains of Watts and Wesley, with all about Christ being gone up "To sprinkle o'er the flaming throne With his atoning blood:" under this preaching a generation had passed away, and babes had grown up to the ripeness of manhood; and in this Jerusalem were thousands of these Christian men, who all their lives had heard nothing but Bampton Lectures on Atonement and Papal allocutions about mass, with Calvinist railings and Methodist slurs upon morality, legality, and formality, from the lips of infallible Apostles; yet they were all of them still arrogant, unmitigated Jews, circumcising, ritualistic, sacrificing Jews, exactly as their fathers had been before them! Who were those enemies whom He that offered the one sacrifice for sins for ever, was expecting to be made his footstool? Those blood-sprinkling and atoning butchers of the temple. None else but they conspired to shed his blood, none else but they raised and sustained the cry,—*"Not this man, but Barabbas!"* And these Apostles and primitive saints of Jerusalem, whose names and effigies adorn the roots of all our Church pedigrees, were, in the year 60 after Christ, still fattening those very priests, and admiring those same Pharisees!

What say the commentators to this testimony from the lips of the Bishop of Jerusalem? They are simply dumbfounded. I will not condescend to quote a sentence of the hurried nonsense and contradiction with which they all wriggle away from it.

I have heard divines say boldly that though these Apostolic Christians did observe the law of Moses in many things, yet they never trod under foot the Son of God, nor counted unholy the blood of the Gospel covenant, by partaking in the sacrifices or accepting the atonement of the temple-worship. One of them once defied me to prove that the Apostles ever offered sacrifice as Jews after the resurrection. I have forgotten how he pretended to reply to what follows in our quotation, at verse 23 of this 21st chapter: "Do therefore this that we say to thee; we have four men which have a vow on them; them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads; and all may know that those things whereof they are informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself walkest orderly and keepest the law. . . Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them." The Greek is *ὑπὲρ ἑνὸς ἐκάστου αὐτῶν*, most literally *for every one of them*. It is first-rate theology here to pretend that Paul is not affirmed to have partaken in the temple rites and sacrifices both for himself and the four who were purified along with him. The offerings required by the law (Numb. vi.) were two lambs and a ram for each person, besides other expenses, including burnt-offering, sin-offering, and peace-offering. If the narrator had intended the reader to understand that Paul simply bore the cost of sacrifice and atonement for others in which he did not partake himself, it would have been

very easy for him to say a word to indicate his meaning. But at the time when the Acts were compiled, it was so notorious to all men that the Jerusalem Christians of the date were still temple-worshipping and sacrificing Jews, that it was vain to attempt, nor is it likely that any one would attempt, to disguise the fact. I leave the reader to form his own judgment of Paul's share and sanction of the temple sacrifices.

On the morality of this transaction, in which Paul is described as taking part in order to deceive the multitude, I shall say nothing. Honest Adam Clarke tries to relieve his distressed feelings about it thus: "However we may consider the subject, it is exceedingly difficult to account for the conduct of James and the elders, and of Paul, on this occasion. There seems to have been something in this transaction which we do not fully understand."

You look in vain for traces of distinction in this crowded narrative of Paul's adventures at Jerusalem, between the believing and non-believing Jews: all are lost in one multitude. There is nothing of sentiment or of action, either social or sectarian, to distinguish the party of the Apostles from the crowd, except the bare words, brethren and believers. The belief in Jesus as the risen Christ who was speedily returning appears to have been a purely speculative matter, which introduced no evident breach of contact or continuity between Christian and non-Christian Jews any more than while Jesus was living. All alike resented the Broad Churchmanship of Paul, and were furious at the notion that the Mosaic obligations, pretensions, and hatreds were to be interfered with, either at home or abroad, among the chosen seed. High Church Jews the believers were, and High Church they intended to remain, till Christ should come again. Down with all Broad Churchmen, was the universal cry.

I shall not enter here on the question, how far the discords between the Acts and Paul's Epistles throw doubt upon the historical value of the former. No words can exaggerate the importance of this inquiry. If the reader desires to see the matter briefly and lucidly handled, he will find all that he desires in plain English, in *The English Life of Jesus* (Introduction), in this series. And when he has read it, it will be an interesting occupation to run about inquiring of the *Christian Evidence Society* where he is to find a confutation of that book, or which of them intends to demolish that Introduction, and how soon.

