

The Church.

"HER FOUNDATIONS ARE UPON THE HOLY HILLS."

THEREFORE I WILL NOT BE NEGLIGENT TO PUT YOU ALWAYS IN REMEMBRANCE OF THESE THINGS, THOUGH YE KNOW THEM AND BE ESTABLISHED IN THE PRESENT TRUTH.—2 PETER 1, 12.

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Poetry.

TRUTH.

WRITTEN AFTER SPENDING AN EVENING WITH ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

Come sit thee down, and we will sing
The thinking days of old,
And days that future times shall bring
When we lie dead and cold.
We'll sing mind's winter and its spring
In man's progression on;
How subject, king, and meaneer thing
Must kneel to Truth alone.

We've read of man in ages past,
When reason was a child;
His world the woods, his God the blast,
Untutored, poor, and wild.
Behold him now, in every sphere
Of intellectual skill;
'Tis Truth that onward led him there,
And onward leads him still.

The king, arrayed upon the throne,
From whom injustice flows,
How weak the hand can bring him down,
When Truth directs the blows!
The peasant, low in worldly gain,
E'en shoeless though he trod,
While Truth directs his massive brain
He rises to a God.

From earth and water, sun and air,
Sweet blessings on us fall;
But where is that so bright and fair
Reigns monarch of them all?
The sun without it were a blot;
This life a weight of care;
The earth, but an unsightly spot,
If Truth presides not there.

Then let us look, and smile, and sing,
And think in our own way;
Our clay may rot—our souls take wing,
Truth never can decay.
'Twill live when this our world shall be
Made perfect every span;
Oh! Allan, could we that but see,
What would we wish for then?

Alexander Hume.

SCIENCE AND CHRISTIANITY.

From the British Critic.

There is a certain class of men of science who are constantly on the watch for the merest shadow of a new phenomenon, which may seem to contradict all facts, to unsettle principles, and encourage vague anticipations of coming changes. If a new bed of rock is brought to light, suspicion is thrown at once upon the 1st chapter of Genesis. If an insect is hatched by electricity, why may not man have been hatched without any intervention of the Creator? If shells or bones and pebbles are collected, it is for the purpose of denying a deluge. The regularity of the heavenly bodies is made to argue their eternity; and the development of organized bodies, to supersede the necessity of a Providence. What, in the mean time, has been the conduct of many sincere friends of religion? Have they not shown signs of timidity, very unlike the possessors of an impregnable post? Is there not a tendency to check and fetter science, as a father would prohibit a child from approaching a spot where he would discover something, which his father does not wish him to know? Have there not been attempts to suborn physical science as a reluctant witness to the truth; as if men, who denied the Bible, would confess to a Bridgewater Treatise? Do not men grasp too eagerly at the concurrence of philosophy with revelation, as if evidence to the word of God were a thing to be tolerated by a Christian, except as an additional condemnation for those who reject it? Most assuredly the position which is now occupied by the main body of the defenders of the truth is anything but safe. We have transferred the foundation of our belief from testimony to argument, from persons to things, from others to ourselves, from faith to reason. Even those who are most attached to the Church, if asked why they believe in its doctrines, will answer, because they are true. But ask them why they believe them to be true, and of those who are able to assign a reason, not one in a hundred will assign the right one. The ignorant peasant will probably come the nearest to the answer of the Gospel. "I was born and baptized in the Church, and the Bible tells me to stay in the Church, and obey its teachers; and till I have equal authority for believing that it is not the Church of Christ, as it is the Church of England, I intend to adhere to it." Now such reasoning as this will appear to this rational age very paltry and unsatisfactory; and yet the logic is as sound as the spirit is humble. And there is nothing to compare with it either intellectually, or morally, or religiously, in all the elaborate defences and evidences which would be produced from Paley, Grotius, Sumner and Chalmers, and still less from the Bridgewater Treatises, which, as if the God of the Bible were not the God of Nature, have studiously dropt from their pages all mention of the Gospel, and confined themselves to illustrate the existence of vague undefined power above us. We bog most strongly to protest against any more such evidences of religion, against any evidences whatever, which are to draw off men's minds from the true basis of their belief. It is very true that we are to be able to give a reason for the faith that is in us. But this is no command to give a wrong reason—and it is a wrong reason, however true it may be in itself, when we believe Christianity, not because the Church has told us, in recognition of her authority and in obedience to her commands as our lawful and natural superior, but because its doctrines are conformable to our own individual reason, its laws agreeable to our own personal feelings, the History of the Bible reconcilable with the History of Herodotus or Livy, its mysteries improved repetitions of the theories of Aristotle and Plato, its physical narrations borne out by appearances in stones and planets, its whole scheme

precisely what we should expect from our knowledge and notions of the Deity. These are the reasons on which the reasoning portion of the religious world rest their religion at this day. That is, each man by himself trusts implicitly to his own view of the case; and, if by chance his view is right, he adheres to the Church. The Church will do wisely and safely in looking on her rationalising children with jealousy and distrust—at the same time, she must set their duties before them. Till this be done, there can be neither quietness nor confidence. A man cannot rest without a resting-place distinct from himself, nor feel confidence except in a power other and higher than his own; but when he appeals to the truth, reasonableness, morality, and consistency of Christianity, to any thing but testimony over which he exercises no control whatever, he is, after all, only appealing to himself, to what seems true and reasonable, and consistent to himself: give him a new fact, or change a passing feeling, and his whole scheme is deranged in a moment; another standard is formed, and another class of truths, probably direct contradictions to his former principles, is now to be professed. Against this vacillation there is but one security, *testimony and authority*; and, if the Church will consent once more to take its stand here, nothing can shake it; till another Church has been established, and stood for 1800 years, there can be no argument against Christianity, or against any part of the Church's doctrine, sufficient to counterbalance the argument which we now have in its favour. Testimony is only to be overthrown by testimony; and all other objections are to be met with the simple question,—How can we know what is truth except by testimony? It is really necessary to suggest considerations to those timid minds which are alarmed at the pretensions of our modern discoverers, and to the discoverers themselves who may be meditating attacks upon the faith—and for those who rejoice in every hope of forcing science to witness to the Church, we may suggest the following anecdote:—While the Duke of Wellington was reconnoitering with his glass at Waterloo with the greatest anxiety, to see if he could discover any sign of the approach of the Prussians, a body of troops were observed in the distance. Every eye and telescope were strained in the direction—every heart was beating;—but whether they were French or Prussians it was impossible to distinguish. When all at once a voice exclaimed, "They are Prussians!" "Who are you, Sir?" said the Duke, not at all pleased with the interruption. "May it please your Grace," said an officer, "that man is called Long-sighted Jack, he can discover objects at a great distance." The soldier was immediately called up, and declared that he could distinguish the Prussians by the tips of their feathers. Now, if the Christian Church were in a similar situation with the English General at that eventful moment, unable to distinguish between truth and falsehood, we should be exceedingly obliged to any quick-sighted philosopher who could contribute the slightest particle of assurance to assist our belief. But after the Prussians had come up in sight of all the forces, and were recognised by them all to be Prussians by their dress, language, music, and especially by their falling on the French and pursuing them over the field of battle, if a man had come up to the Duke with a profound declaration that he had discovered them to be Prussians by the tips of their feathers, we suspect his reception would have been the reverse of cordial. We rather fancy that the poor man would have received a much sharper reprimand than the Church is in the habit of giving to the Chemist, Botanist, Anatomist, Geologist, and other Long-sighted Jacks, who, in the heat of the conflict, while the whole army of the Christian faith, comprising the hosts of eighteen centuries, is fighting with the Bible in their hands, come up gravely with a pebble or a butterfly, and beg to assure them of the truth of Christianity by their recognising "the tips of its feathers."

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.*

No. V.

THYATIRA.

"And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezabel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into her; and I will kill her children with death; and all the Churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."—Rev. ii. 18—29.

It has been supposed by some commentators that the Gospel was not improbably first carried to Thyatira by Lydia, a seller of purple, whom St. Paul met at Philippi, and "whose heart the Lord opened," that she attended unto the things which were spoken, by the apostle. How far this supposition is correct, it is in vain to inquire, as we have no scriptural authority for it; but it is certain, that when the epistle was addressed to the angel of this Church, Christianity had here many consistent disciples.

The epistle opens with an address from "the Son of God," whose eyes are declared to be like to a flame of fire, and his feet like fine brass. These expressions denote his

omniscience, and his infinite power and strength. With his eyes he discovereth the secrets of all hearts; with his feet he hath power to tread down his enemies. Both expressions declare his divine character, and are calculated to inspire us with awe and reverence towards a Being so infinitely wise and powerful.

The first testimony borne to the Christians of Thyatira was highly honourable to them as professed disciples of the Son of God. Their charity, or love to their fellow-creatures, that great evidence of a passage from spiritual death to spiritual life: their service to the Church at large, and to every individual member thereof; their faith not only in God's word and promises, but their fidelity towards him as their heavenly Ruler and Master; their patience, or submission in all things to the Divine will; and the trials to which they were necessarily exposed on account of their steadfast adherence to the truth,—these were among the works which gained for them the merited commendation of the Saviour. And it is worthy of remark, also, that they are spoken of as having made advances in this state of dutiful obedience. Their last state was better than the first. Religion was a progressive principle in their souls. They were not only in a gracious state, but they were growing in grace; they did not only possess some knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord, and count all things but loss when brought into comparison therewith, but they kept growing in the knowledge—continually adding some new attainment to that already possessed. And yet in this garden, so fair and so fruitful, noxious weeds were to be found. While the language of commendation is passed, the language of reproof is not withheld, on account of some of the professors of religion being led astray by the abominations of the "woman Jezabel."

"There has been no slight diversity of opinion," says Mr. Milner, "respecting the reference of this term, whether indicating a person or a sect. Grotius and Calaneo understood it to signify a woman of rank and influence connected with the Church in Thyatira, who corrupted the faith, and seduced some of its members to the practice of heathen impieties, after the example of the idolatrous queen of Israel (1 Kings, xvii. 31). The term was common with the early Christian writers as one of reproach. Justin, a patronus of Arianism, had the epithet bestowed profusely upon her. Others, and especially the ancient commentators, supposed the 'woman Jezabel' to point out a sect of false teachers who infested the Church; because, in the language of Scripture metaphor, it is not uncommon to represent a people or party under the general designation of a woman. There is a third interpretation, which supposes the wife of the bishop to be intended.

"The errors," continues Mr. Milner, "taught by the person or party alluded to, were identically the same as those we have noticed in the Nicolaites heresy." And whether it was a person or a party that was referred to, there can be no question, that, as the impious queen of Israel had sought to profane the pure worship of Jehovah by the admixture of impious rites and observances, there was now a similar attempt to draw the followers of the Lord Jesus from that Gospel purity which was required of them. The punishment threatened against this woman and her children, testifies the indignation of the Almighty against her. It contains a solemn warning to professors of every age, not to have any fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but to seek in all things to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, who did no sin.

There was for some time a doubt as to the precise spot on which Thyatira stood. From several inscriptions, however, which have been discovered at Akhisar, or Akiessat, containing the ancient name, there can now be little question but that it stood in the same situation as the modern city, which is at present a place of considerable importance. "The Turks," says Mr. Parsons, in 1820, "have destroyed all remnants of the ancient Church, and even the place where it stood is unknown. At present there are in the town one thousand houses for which taxes are paid to the government, besides two or three hundred small huts; there are about three hundred and fifty Greek houses, and twenty-five or thirty belonging to the Armenians; the others are all Turkish. There are nine mosques, one Greek church, four or five Greek priests, and one Armenian. The Greeks know something of the Romance, and the Armenians of the Armenian; but the common language of all classes is the Turkish: the Greeks write it in Greek letters, and the Armenians in Armenian letters."

"The appearance of Thyatira as we approached," says Mr. Arundel, "was that of a very long line of cypresses, poplars, and other trees, amidst which appeared the minarets of several mosques, and the roofs of a few houses to the right: on the left a view of distant hills, the line of which continued over the town; and at the right, adjoining the town, was a low hill, with two ruined windmills." . . . The air of Akhisar is peculiarly salubrious, and not less so its water. "These," Sir Paul Rycout says, "in conjunction with its trade, have been one cause why Thyatira has so flourished, and been more happy than her other desolate and comfortless sisters." The waters still deserve the commendation this traveller has bestowed upon them when he represents them as "crystalline, cool, and sweet to the taste, and light on the stomach;" but the trade has greatly decreased during the last century.

Mr. Hartley thus describes the present state of the Church:—"Akhisar" is about four hours distant from Mermer. On the way we observed many columns and antiquities, notifying an ancient town. Mr. Arundel discovered an inscription containing the words 'from Thyatira.' Akhisar is situated on a plain, and is embosomed in cypresses and poplars. The buildings are in general mean; but the khan in which we are at present residing is by far the best which I have yet seen. The Greeks are said to occupy three hundred houses, and the Armenians thirty. Each of them have a church.

* Here we witnessed a fine Turkish spectacle. The new

muscle of Aïm arrived from Constantinople, with a retinue of two hundred horse. They were all extremely well dressed and mounted; their turbans were white as snow, and the renowned scymitar of Turkey hung gracefully behind them. I was much struck with the lordly air which they displayed. It is well, I thought, for Europe, that such cavaliers have no discipline.

"We paid a visit to the church of the Greeks: it is a wretched structure: upon opening the door, we had to descend four or five steps into the body of the building. We found a priest, a native of Milo, who was engaged in hearing the confessions of the people. On returning to the khan, I conversed for a considerable time with four or five Greeks on the study of the Scriptures—the predicted apostasy from true Christianity, and the means which were furnished for detecting it—the utility of alms for the salvation of man—the necessity of forsaking sin, &c. Nicolas afterwards sat up with the same party till midnight, reasoning with them on the most important subjects. I presented the most interesting of these young men with the New Testament; and cannot but indulge the hope that a useful impression has been made on his mind.

"The sacred writer of the Acts of the Apostles informs us that Lydia was a 'seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira'; and the discovery of an inscription here which makes mention of 'the dyers' has been considered important, in connexion with this passage. I know not if other travellers have remarked, that, even at the present time, Thyatira is famous for dyeing. In answer to inquiries on this subject, I was informed, that the cloths which are dyed scarlet here are considered superior to any others furnished by Asia Minor; and that large quantities are sent weekly to Smyrna, for the purposes of commerce."

Mr. Hartley visited Thyatira a second time, and makes the following remarks:—"We forded the Hornus considerably above the bridge: at this place and at this season the water is scarcely above the knees of the horses. A second time I crossed the field of battle which was fatal to Antiochus. A very different army is at present ravaging the whole territory. I allude to the locusts; and I am perfectly astonished at their multitude: they are, indeed, as 'a strong people not in battle array; they run like mighty men; they climb the walls like men of war.' I actually saw them 'run to and fro in the city of Thyatira: they ran upon the wall; they climbed up upon the houses; they entered in at the windows like a thief' (Joel, ii. 5, 7, 9.) This is, however, by no means one of the most formidable armies of locusts which are known in those countries. Near Thyatira we still find very beautiful vegetation; the neighbourhood has a most fertile appearance; the white rose is extremely abundant, and scents the air with a most delightful odour. At Thyatira we had very delightful intercourse with the bishop's procurator and with five priests. Christ crucified was the subject of our conversation; and Mr. King addressed the children of the school, forty-five in number. We also distributed many tracts, and gave away two new Testaments; and regretted much that we had not with us a larger supply of books, as a great desire for them was displayed. No one surely will doubt the importance of distributing useful books, after hearing the following fact, of which we were informed by a Greek of this place. Two missionaries, he said, who were doctress the Rev. Messrs. Fisk and Parsons, had visited Thyatira five or six years ago, and distributed books; they had presented him with one, which he had actually lent to more than two hundred persons."

Mr. Hartley thus speaks with reference to the important spiritual instruction offered by the peculiar circumstances of this Church, and by the tone and tenour of the epistle addressed to it.

"The language addressed to Thyatira is rather different from that of the other epistles: the commendations are scarcely surpassed even in the epistle to Philadelphia, while the conduct of some was impious and profligate; the Church thus exhibited a contrast of the most exalted piety with the very 'depths of Satan.' In too many parts of Christendom we observe a similar state of things even at this day: how important, then, the admonition, 'That which ye have already, hold fast till I come!'"

"And this language is not only designed for those who have recently been brought to the knowledge of Christianity; it is a caution very needful for those who have long been acquainted with its infinite value. The most ostensible danger to Christians is rather after a perseverance of some years, than in the commencement of their Christian career. When religion appears to have become habitual, we are in much greater danger of being thrown off our guard, than when we have just been awakened to observe its great importance and our own weakness. Let the follower of Christ be therefore especially careful, lest he lose his crown, after he has won many victories. Let the joy which he feels, under the conviction that he is approaching nearer to the end of all his wishes, be ever tempered with the recollection that he is still possessed of a heart which is 'deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,' and that he is still encompassed by a 'world' which 'lieth in wickedness.' When the disposition of 'fearing always,' is united to the character of watchfulness, courage, and simple dependence on the Divine aid, then will be realised obedience to the caution, 'Hold fast that which ye have.'

"The address to the unfaithful part of the Church at Thyatira is at once alarming and inviting. It contains one of those many denunciations of Divine anger which place it beyond all doubt, that 'God will by no means clear the guilty.' Nothing will save them from the indignation of Him who has revealed himself as a consuming fire to the wicked."

May God impart to us such a measure of his heavenly grace, that we may deserve the commendation bestowed on the faithful of Thyatira; that we may abound more and more in the cultivation of every Christian virtue; that our zeal in the cause of God's truth may go on to burn with a

* From the Church of England Magazine.