

# THE WESLEYAN.

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IN CONNECTION WITH THE BRITISH CONFERENCE.

"LET US CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER TO PROVOKE UNTO LOVE AND TO GOOD WORKS."—HEBREWS X. 24.

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## DIVINITY.

### THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

It has often been objected to the Wesleyan Methodists, that the doctrine of the direct Witness of the Holy Spirit to the minds of believers, assuring them of their adoption into the family of God, and of their consequent title to heaven, is peculiar to themselves, and not countenanced by orthodox and learned men of other denominations. This charge has often been refuted by an appeal to the writings of several of our most eminent theologians, both Episcopalians and Nonconformists. The following passage on this very important subject, by Thomas Case, a man of no mean note among the Puritans, is worthy of attention, and cannot easily be misunderstood: "Another office of the Spirit is that which our divines call immediate, and it is a bright irradiation of the Holy Ghost, beaming out upon the soul, not only giving it a clear and distinct discerning of its own graces, but immediately witnessing to the soul its adoption by Jesus Christ, and right and title unto the kingdom of God, wherein God speaks to the soul in some such language as this: 'I am thy salvation—I have blotted out thy transgressions—Thy sins are forgiven thee,' &c. Now this act is usually called immediate, i. e. without any mediation of signs and evidences—not but that there are signs and evidences in the person testified, but that the Spirit makes no use of them in the act of justification; there are gracious qualifications in the soul, sufficient to distinguish and justify it from all the false witness of the lying spirit, but the Spirit of God doth not refer to any of these qualifications in the act, but immediately darts in light and comfort, which fill the soul with joy un-speakable and full of glory."—Case's Mount Pisgah.

### SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATIONS.

Acts xiii. 48.

'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.'

This text has been most pitifully misunderstood. Many suppose that it simply means that those in that assembly who were *fore-ordained*, or *predestinated* by God's decree, to eternal life, believed, under the influence of that decree. Now, we should be careful to examine what a word means, before we attempt to fix its meaning. Whatever *tetagenoi* may mean, which is the word we translate *ordained*, it is neither *protetagenoi* nor *proorismenoi* which the apostle uses, but simply *tetagenoi*, which includes no idea of pre-ordination, or pre-destination of any kind. And, if it even did, it would be rather hazardous to say that all those who believed at this time were such as actually *persecrated* unto the end, and were saved unto eternal life. But, leaving all these precarious matters, what does the word *tetagenos* mean? The verb *tallo* or *tasso* signifies to place, set, order, appoint, dispose; hence it has been considered here as implying the disposition or readiness of mind of several persons in the congregation, such as the religious proselytes mentioned ver. 43, who possessed the reverse of the disposition of those Jews who speak against those things, contradicting and blaspheming, ver. 45. Though the word in this place has been variously translated, yet, of all the meanings ever put on it, none agrees worse with its nature and known signification than that which represents it as intending those who were predestinated to eternal life: this is no meaning of the term, and should never be applied to it. Let us, without prejudice, consider the scope of the place: the Jews contradicted and

blasphemed; the religious proselytes heard attentively, and received the word of life: the one party were utterly indisposed, through their own stubbornness, to receive the gospel; the others, destitute of prejudice and prepossession, were glad to hear that, in the order of God, the Gentiles were included in the covenant of salvation through Christ Jesus; they, therefore, in this good state and order of mind, believed. Those who seek for the plain meaning of the word will find it here. Those who wish to make out a sense, not from the Greek word, its use among the best Greek writers, and the obvious sense of the evangelist, but from their own creed, may continue to puzzle themselves and others; *kindle their own fire, compass themselves with sparks, and walk in the light of their own fire, and of the sparks which they have kindled; and, in consequence, lie down in sorrow, having bidden adieu to the true meaning of a passage so very simple, taken in its connexion, that one must wonder how it ever came to be misunderstood and misapplied.*—Dr. A. Clarke.

Dr. Hammond has a copious, learned and highly satisfactory note on this text, in which the same interpretation is given. Parkhurst, also, in his Greek Lexicon, under the word *tallo* or *tasso*, understands the expression in the same sense; and Dr. Doddridge, in his exposition of the passage, says, "The meaning of the sacred penman seems to be, that all who were deeply and seriously concerned about their eternal happiness, (whether that concern began now, or were of longer date,) openly embraced the Gospel; for surely none could be said to believe who did not make an open profession of Christianity, especially in such circumstances."

### ON THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PUNISHMENT OF THE JEWS,  
AND ON THE PREDICTIONS OF JESUS CHRIST  
WHICH POINTED THEM OUT.

Translated from Bossuet's "Discours sur l'Histoire d'Israël."

WHILST I have endeavoured, my Lord,\* to lay before you, without interruption, the order of God's counsels in the continuation of his people, I have rapidly passed over many facts which deserve deep reflection. May I now be permitted to return to them, that matters of such importance may not be lost to you.

And in the first place, I beg you to consider, with more particular attention, the fate of the Jews, all the circumstances of which bear testimony to the Gospel. These circumstances are handed down to us by Infidel, Jewish and Pagan writers, who, without understanding the course of God's counsels, have related those important facts by which it has pleased him to make it known.

We have Josephus, a Jewish author, who was a faithful historian, and well instructed in the affairs of his own nation—the antiquities of which he has illustrated in an admirable work. He has written an account of the last war, in which it was destroyed, after having been an eye-witness of the whole, and having served his country in a high military capacity.

The Jews furnish us also with other very ancient authors, whose testimonies shall be laid before you. They have ancient commentators on the Scriptures, and among others, the Chaldee Paraphrases, which they print with their bibles. They have also a book which they call the *Talmud*, that is, *Doctrine*, for which they have not less respect than for the Scripture itself. This is

\* These Discourses were written for the instruction of the Dauphin, and were dedicated to him. See introduction to this work.

a collection of tracts and sentences of their ancient Doctors; though the parts of which it is composed are not all of the same antiquity, the latter authors cited in it, having lived during the first ages of the church. In this book, among an infinite number of ridiculous fables, which we see beginning for the most part after our Saviour's time, we find some valuable remains of the ancient traditions of the Jewish people, and proofs sufficient to convince them.

And first, it is certain, from the confession of the Jews, that the divine vengeance was never more terribly, nor more strikingly displayed, than it was in their last destruction.

It is a certain tradition, attested by this Talmud, and confirmed by all their Rabbins, that forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, and soon after the death of Christ, there were continually seen in the temple the most strange appearances. Every day there appeared new prodigies, inasmuch that a famous Rabbi one day exclaimed, "O temple, O temple, what disturbs thee, and why dost thou fear for thyself?"

What can be more remarkable than that frightful noise, which was heard by the priests in the sanctuary on the day of Pentecost, and that audible voice which proceeded from the bottom of that sacred place: "LET US GO HENCE—LET US GO HENCE." The holy angels, the protectors of the temple, declared aloud, that they had abandoned it, because God, who had for so many ages fixed in it his abode, had given it over to destruction.

Josephus and Tacitus have both related this prodigy, though it was heard by the priests only. But there was another, which all the people beheld, and such as had never been seen by any other people. "Four years before the war was declared," says Josephus, "a peasant began to cry, 'A voice is gone forth from the east, a voice is gone forth from the west, a voice is gone forth from the four corners of the earth—a voice against Jerusalem and against the temple—a voice against the newly married—a voice against all the people.' From that time, neither day nor night did he cease to cry, 'Woe, woe unto Jerusalem.' He redoubled his cries on the feast-days. No other words proceeded out of his mouth; those who pitied him, those who cursed him, and those who administered to his necessities, never heard any thing from him but that terrible sentence, 'Woe to Jerusalem.' He was taken by the magistrates, examined, and condemned to be scourged; to each question and to each stroke he replied, without ever complaining, 'Woe to Jerusalem.' Being dismissed as a madman, he went over all the country, incessantly repeating his mournful prediction. He continued for seven years to cry in this manner without intermission, and without feeling his voice weakened. During the last siege of Jerusalem, he was shut up in the city, and was continually going about the walls, and crying with all his might, 'Woe to the temple, woe to the city, woe to all the people.' At last he added, 'Woe to myself;' and in that instant he was killed by a stone thrown from a machine."

Shall we not say, my Lord, that the divine vengeance seemed to be rendered visible in this man, who lived only to pronounce its decrees; that it had killed him with its energy, that his cries might be descriptive of the miseries of the people; and that at last he was to perish by an effect of that vengeance which he had so long announced, in order to render it more affecting, and more striking, when he should become, not only its prophet and its witness, but also its victim.

This prophet of the miseries of Jerusalem was called Jesus. It seemed that the name of Jesus,