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THE ACTIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

(Concluded.)

In the two cases of stilling the storm, the same connection with the Prince of the Apostles is to be found. In his boat our Lord appears to slumber, and awakes to reproach His followers generally, for want of faith, or confidence in Him, and for fear that the vessel could founder, in which He was pleased to abide. In the second instance, He seems to them to be further off, to be out of the ship, and the storm goes on, till He and Peter have shown themselves on board.

Finally, not to repeat what has been so lately described, Peter is taught to tread fearlessly the waters alone; and is reproved, in particular, for want of confidence in his powers to do so, in the very words addressed to all the Apostles in the first storm. As though it were said to him, "If the others showed weakness, in doubting of their safety in the boat, thou dost the same, in hesitating about thy security independent of it. Besides the assuring presence of Jesus in the ship, thou hast His right hand supporting thee, in personal safety, over the abyss. This can no more swallow up thee, than it." And this assurance is confirmed to him by the miracle.

We certainly do not mean to deny, that our Lord may, in the course of His Galilean mission, have entered other barks, besides Peter's. But this we claim as proved, that the Holy Spirit has been pleased to select for our special instruction, out of no matter how many, those occurrences in which St. Peter is specially concerned. A Protestant will say—this is merely accidental and secondary; what matters it if the boat were his, or anybody else's, the miracles and lessons were independent of this consideration. Now a Catholic has too much reverence to treat inspired writings so. With us there is no chance, no accident, in what God does or says. We cannot consider it a mere result of blind chance, that every evangelist should have given us narratives of our Lord's "going down to the sea in ships," and yet have, in every specific instance, been careful to let us know that Peter's was the chosen bark. Moreover, we cannot consider it accidental, that every single miracle wrought on board, should have been connected with him. If it was matter of indifference whose the boat was which Jesus took, if no lesson depended on it, why are we distinctly told, that there were two boats, and that he selected one, which was Simon's?

All this is unimportant to a Protestant because it bears on nothing in his system. When even he may be disposed to allow, that the ship tossed by the storm was an emblem of the Church, and Jesus subduing the war of elements no unfit symbol of His ruling presence in her, he will not see any connection with the destinies of the vessel, in the presence of Peter. He gives no definite meaning to those clear and most dogmatic passages, in which supremacy is bestowed on him. And so all the beauty and interest of a minute application of each detail, which we have drawn, perhaps tediously forth, is lost upon him.

But the Catholics have begun by taking in their literal force, those passages in which Peter is as closely bound with the constitution of the Church, as the foundation is with a building. The safety of one is the security of the other. He becomes an essential, not an accidental part, a primary, not a secondary element, in its formation. The Church of Peter is also the Church of Christ, because the fold of Christ is likewise the fold of Peter. These principles laid down, in obedience to other positive teachings of Christ, all the narratives which we have analysed have a consistent meaning, as well as a definite object. They not only cohere most admirably, but they complete, and illustrate, most beautifully, the constitution of the Church.

According to this view, the Church is but one; for though there may be other, and stately looking ships, launched upon the ocean, there is necessarily only one in which Jesus is pleased to abide, and that is Peter's. To it alone is given assurance of safety, whatever storms may assail it; for in it alone is He, whom winds and waves obey. All are safe who are embarked in it, none who are without it. To it alone is committed the work, not only of mastering, but still more of gaining, the world. It is not a rich argosy laden with treasure, nor a lofty galley rowed by captives, nor a fierce war-ship, bristling with instruments of destruction, but a fisherman's craft, intent on filling itself with living spoil, snatched from the gulf of destruction. Now when the Catholic reads all this described in allegory, by our Saviour's actions on the sea, and notes how exactly it fits his theory of the Church, whereof Peter is the head, his faith is strengthened and his heart consoled. For he discovers a purpose in every detail, in every word; and sees that each has been registered for his sake. These lesser coincidences serve to confirm a belief,

based upon direct teaching; they fill up the picture, they add to it color and life. If the Catholic view is right, and if Peter was meant to occupy in the Church of Christ, the place which it assigns him, then every smallest particle of these narratives has its significantness, and was studiously recorded for an important purpose. Remove him from it, and there is no intended meaning in the details of their histories; or rather, we reverently say it, they are calculated to confirm, what the Protestant must consider, an erroneous system.

And not only is the Catholic strengthened in his dogmatic convictions by these corroborative, and supplementary arguments, but he derives from them most comforting assurances. It is no fancy-picture that comes before him, when he thinks of the tempest-tossed fisherman's bark. He looks at its trials and its triumphs, through the very mist of ages. Afar, as if leaving the distant coast, its first harbor, he beholds it steering straight for the very port of the earth's capital, in serene confidence. It is not long before the gates of hell let forth, a blast more fearful than Aolus could command from his cavern of storms. The abyss is upheaved, and the might of earth sweeps over it, to destroy the daring invader.

*"Ponto nox incubat atra
Intonere poli, et crebris micat ignibus aether;
Præsentemque viris intentant omnia mortem."*

But death from such a tempest has charms for the valiant crew. On, the fearless little bark holds its course; now it is almost lost to sight in the war of persecuting elements, now it crests nobly the topmost wave, till we find it safe riding in smooth water. Peter has been acknowledged the spiritual conqueror of Rome. Yet he must not rest. After the Resurrection he said, "I go a fishing," and this is his occupation, and his delight, till the end of time. What a glorious employment it has been to him! How his heart rejoiced, much more than on taking a hundred and fifty-three large fishes, when Patrick drew in his net on Erin's coast, or Augustin in England's, or Boniface in Germany's deep streams, and brought into the ample ship their willing inhabitants! Nor was this calm and peaceful pastime for him. High in the regions of the North commenced a swelling surge, which broke, in successive waves, over the toiling bark. Hun, Vandal, Goth, and Lombard, in rapid course followed each other, and seemed to overwhelm it in their turn. And still the fisherman went on; while his tempest-tight skill shook off the cataract of waters, he plied his net in its very depths, and carried from them their living prey. And now again came the calm, and the ocean seemed still. But soon the storm began again. The rude assault of a rough, indocile age, of the world of an iron chivalry, broke loose again, and again, against the charmed ship of Peter. For centuries the conflict lasted, and the gallant vessel held on its course, dashing the spray from its prow. Then came a trial, forgotten for ages—since Arius and Nestorius divided the Church. Mutiny on board, insubordination, rebellion. Treacherous crews, from its own decks, man a hostile fleet; its own skill and prowess, learnt within it, are turned against it. Able foes, armed with all the powers of earth, threaten her destruction, and swear implacable hatred. And still the noble vessel fears them not, but goes undaunted on her errand. She sees them tossed to and fro, by every wind, sailing apart, without compass to guide them, quarrelling with one another, and only combined when they agree to assail her; and she notes how they have not been able to bear away with them the grace of her noblest functions; no shred of the Apostolic net has been allowed to be filched from her. She alone bears aloft the Cross as her banner; she alone boasts that Peter, in his successor, sits at her helm; nay, she alone dares proclaim that she has Jesus Christ Himself on board, as He was on the fisherman's craft on the sea of Galilee. Such is the Catholic's review of the past, and in it he reads the assurance of the future. When, a year ago, this country was agitated from end to end, in opposition to Catholic progress; when the Government, the Parliament, the Establishment, the Press, the aristocracy, seemed combined to thwart the purely ecclesiastical action of the Church; when all that clamor, eloquence, insolence, and calumny, addresses, speeches, meetings, essays, and journalism could do, to raise a storm, was unsparingly and perseveringly carried on for months, to overwhelm the new hierarchy; in what did we place our hopes, nay our assurance, that peace would return, and the Church would be justified, by results, in the wise measure which she had taken? Not merely in the knowledge that such a step had been long and wisely considered, not in the high estimate which we had formed, of the virtues and gifts of the Supreme Pastor from whom it proceeded. But knowing that the Letters Apostolic which he issued were given under the "Fisherman's Ring," we could not be of little faith, or doubt that what thus was declared to

be the solemn act of Peter, partook in the promises made to him, and the assurances given, that his bark should not be crushed by the tempests of earth. And so when Pontiff after Pontiff, like the sixth, the seventh, or the ninth, Pius, seemed borne apart from the vessel which he guided, to experience, in his own person, the whole violence of the storm, and walk alone over the troubled and treacherous waters, never did the Catholic doubt, that the powerful right hand in which the Psalmist trusted, and which was stretched forth to Peter, would support them, and guide them, and bring them safe back, if necessary, to the faithful friends from whom, in body, they had been torn. "Exenim illuc manus Tua deducet me, et tenebit me dextera Tua."

IV. We will now briefly bring together a few passages, which refer to a point of secondary importance, but not devoid of interest. Among the puzzling inconsistencies of Protestantism is its Sabbatarian theory. After protesting, in every possible way, against tradition, and Church authority, the Protestant accepts, without a murmur, the change of the Jewish Sabbath into the Christian Sunday, of which the only voucher is tradition, and the only foundation ecclesiastical authority. Having thus admitted perhaps the greatest stretch of his power and of that testimony that exists, he begins to forget that any change has been made, and applies to the new day of rest, all the burthens and restrictions of the old. He tries to overlook that it is the first, and not the last day of the week; nay, if he become more solemn in his speech, through increased rigour of religious notions, he rejects the profane name of "Sunday," and studiously and emphatically styles it "the Sabbath." These two terms have become positively watch-words; a Catholic never uses the latter. "Sunday" sounds to his ears as a day of radiance and joy; as a day of smiles at home, and laughing peals of gladness in the air; as a day of cheerful service to Him who loves a cheerful giver, in canticles and hymns, and noble offices of prayer.

But "Sabbath" rings with Puritanism in the ears, and gives the idea of drawling sounds, and sour looks, of bitter theology and domestic gloom. There is no balminess, no sweetness in the name. It belongs to a dispensation that is dead, and to obligations which the law of love has abated or abolished. But singularly enough, that religious system which affects to put all its faith in Christ, and to loath the Law and its works, by a judicial blindness, clings to its very dearest branches, and tries to find there its most nutritious fruit. Having reduced all its practical worship to the compass of one day, it makes that a mere superstition; it condenses, only to corrupt.

What makes this strange infatuation still more amazing is, that in the New Testament, it is so clearly attributed, as a characteristic, to the Pharisee. A simple-minded reader of the Gospel would naturally ask, who defended Sabbatarian strictness, our Lord, or His enemies? Who there represent the strait-laced party? It is impossible to hesitate in answering.

Not less than seven times in the Gospel history, He lays down His doctrine of the Sabbath, in opposition to Pharisaical objections. Surely He must have considered this an important question of moral and ecclesiastical observance, so to expound it. But applying our often repeated rule, we must conclude that, supposing our Redeemer to have never spoken besides on the subject, there was a particular reason for recording so many different inculcations of one idea. If, on the other hand, we maintain that He much oftener argued the point, we must still conclude, that a strong motive led to so many repetitions of the same subject, in a record so limited as the Gospel. In other words, the selection of this topic seven times, in picking out the materials of that sacred history from a mass left behind, proves to be one on which the spirit of God was pleased, that we should accurately know the divine doctrine in the New Law. It shows an earnestness in guarding Christianity against a particular theory; and we may safely conclude, against one sure to be taught. We must therefore take actual, not imaginary systems; and judge which among them our Saviour taught, and which he excluded. Without entering into the details of each case, we will analyse the evidence before us, and reduce it to distinct heads.

1. First therefore, we will remark, that all the Gospels give more than one instance, of attack upon our Lord for laxity on Sabbath observance. St. Matthew and St. Mark gave two cases; St. Luke gives four, two being the same as those evangelists record; and St. John three, perfectly distinct ones. This concurrence of the inspired writers on a secondary topic is very striking.

2d. Of these cases, three directly accompany in the performance of miracles, three are directly connected with miraculous works, and one relates to an ordinary occurrence.

3d. We will proceed with the first class. A

withered hand is cured in the synagogue. This is done with previous attention called to the fact of its being the Sabbath day; the Pharisees put the question, whether it be lawful to heal on that day; and Jesus first defends the propriety of doing it, and then confirms His assertion by the miraculous cure. A man sick with dropsy comes into the house of a Pharisee, where He is a guest. It is again the Sabbath, and His enemies "watch Him." He, this time, puts the very question to them which, on the former occasion, they had put to Him—"Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" Again he argues the point, and performs a miracle to prove His doctrine. A woman bowed down by an ailment of eighteen years' duration is in the synagogue on the Sabbath; she does not ask to be relieved; but Jesus calls her, and lays His blessed hands upon her, and she is made straight. "The ruler of the synagogue (being angry that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath) answering said to the multitude," (that is, not liking to address our Lord, with whom, in reality, he was displeased, reproved Him through the people) saying "six days there are wherein ye ought to work, in these therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day."—Luke xiii. 10. Again our Lord replies, vindicating what He had done, and beginning His answer by the significant words—"Ye hypocrites!"

The next instance is also one in which the attack is first made through the subject of the miracle. Jesus cured a man at the pool of Bethesda, saying to him—"Arise, take up thy bed and walk." He obeyed; "and it was the Sabbath that day." Immediately he was told, "It is the Sabbath, it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed." Upon discovering that Jesus had given him the command, the Jews transfer their hatred to Him. "Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, because he did these things on the Sabbath." And when He again defended Himself, saying, that as His Father worked until now, so He worked; that is, that as His Father, on the Sabbath, went on with His beneficent work of Providence, so did He, who had the same power; the Jews only redoubled their hatred. "Hereupon therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He did not only break the Sabbath, but also said God was His Father, making Himself equal to God."

After this discourse, our blessed Lord left Jerusalem, where it took place, and taught in Galilee; on His return to the holy city, he again returned to this subject, in the following singular terms: "One work I have done, and ye all wonder. Therefore Moses gave you circumcision—and on the Sabbath day you circumcise a man. If a man receive circumcision on the Sabbath day, that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry at me, because I have healed the whole man on the Sabbath day?"—John vii. 22. Now, no miracle has preceded this speech, in the Gospel narrative; and as we can hardly suppose the allusion to be made to the miracle wrought at a former visit, nor could that be called "one work," for many signs had been wrought between, we are naturally led to suppose, that St. John, or rather the divine Spirit, considered the record of this instruction more important than that of the miracle. The latter was therefore omitted, and the former preserved.

Again the Pharisaical spirit is roused, when Jesus performs one of the most severely tested of His miracles, the cure of the man born blind. He might at once have restored his sight by a word or touch. He preferred performing the cure, by what might be called a mechanical, or manual labor. He made clay, and therewith anointed the man's eyes. "Now it was the Sabbath, when Jesus made clay, and opened his eyes." This is sufficient ground with the Pharisees for rejecting the miracle. "This man is not of God, who keepeth not the Sabbath."—John ix. 14.

One more instance remains, wholly unconnected with any miraculous operation; yet three evangelists have recorded it. The incident is trifling, but its instruction very great. The Apostles going through a corn-field on the Sabbath, pluck the ripe ears, rub them in their hands, and eat the grains. This mechanical operation is construed by the Pharisees into a breach of the Law, and reproved as such. Our Redeemer defends them, in the same manner as He had defended Himself. What gives particular interest to the case is, that each evangelist who records it proceeds immediately to the narrative of the cure of the withered hand, as though our Lord wrought this miracle expressly to confirm His vindication of the Apostles.

4. From all these facts we conclude, that in seven cases, two views of Sabbath observance were discussed between our Saviour and the Jews; and that in every one, He represents and upholds the lenient and moderate side, they the intolerant and oppressive. Now, a similar discrepancy exists at the present day,