

she may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee on the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me!" —Is. xlix. 15, 16.

Should she err, she must be corrected. She may, for a season, be delivered over to the power of her enemies, but never utterly cast off; and when the object of her chastisement be secured, then again will she be visited with His reviving mercy.

To Him who died for her, the Eternal Father hath committed all power. In Him, the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily. What He has done and suffered, and is still doing for His Church, should place His love for her beyond suspicion. Is not His voluntary sacrifice of Himself for her at first, a security for His favour afterwards? Can it for a moment be supposed that He can reflect on His own cross, as an ill-directed and useless expenditure of ignominy and pain? Has He taken flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, and though exalted, still retain His human nature, and yet be indifferent to her interests for whom He assumed them? Is she not His Bride, and shall He break faith with, and desert her? But, in addition to what the Son is doing, the help, guidance and advocacy of the Holy Spirit are promised. In her He will dwell, and consecrate her as His Temple; and, with God as her Protector, Jesus Christ as her Beloved, and the Holy Spirit as the Advocate of her cause on earth, surely "the gates of hell cannot prevail against her."

III. The History of the past is a sufficient security for the future safety of the Church.

From the days of the "righteous Abel," down to her present history, the artillery of the Church's enemy has never been silenced, as gory sword not sheathed, the smouldering embers of his persecuting fires never yet extinguished. The experience of every past generation was combined with the ingenuity of each succeeding one, to devise weapons for her torture, and, if possible, for her utter destruction. The depravity of morals, the blasphemies of the ignorant, the sneers of philosophy, the malice of a cunning priesthood, and the violence of tyrant kings and emperors, have all been arrayed against her, yet she has returned from the battle-field, flushed with victory, having her garments dyed with the blood of her enemies. Fire and sword were made sad havoc in her midst, yet did not lay her waste. The guillotine and inquisition have done their deeds of horror, yet the lone valleys and mountain fastnesses re-echo the song of triumph. Oft has she been wet with her blood by thieves and robbers, yet in every age has a good Samaritan been provided to dress and pour oil on her wounds.

Long had she lain in the "sackcloth and ashes" of the dark ages, but the dawn of the reformation saw her receive "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the gar-

ment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." On the troubled waters of bitter controversy she has been rudely tossed, yet still she braved "the battle and the breeze," and though *press* and *platform* laboured hard to sink her, proudly o'er their waves she rode. Though those of "her own household" have in modern times become her bitterest foes, yet can she afford to pity and forgive, and, for their return, leave her gates open still. And though a Newman, a Recnan, a Strauss, and such like, may labour to destroy her fair fabric by their rude and impious attempts at sapping her foundation, yet will their efforts fruitless prove, because the *Rock* on which she stands is proof against such puny worms. In the past, she has "passed through the waters, but they have not overflowed her; she has walked through the fire, but was not burned; neither did the flame kindle upon her;" and "because God in the midst of her still doth dwell," let us be animated and encouraged with the thought that, when all institutions contemporary with her, or others of subsequent origin, shall have either perished, or betray symptoms of approaching dissolution, God's ransomed Church shall ever stand secure—that neither the "floods of death, nor the gates of hell, shall ever prevail against her."

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### The Integrity of Samuel.

A third element in the character of Samuel was his Integrity. He was, in every action of his life, the true patriot. He had but one end in view: to uphold his country's honor—to defend it from foreign invasion and intestine feuds. He loved his country more than himself. Well might Saul's servants, as they were approaching the gates of Ramah in search of their stray asses, say: "Behold, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honourable man"—(1 Sam. ix. 6.)

His unworthy sons, so strangely unlike the noble example set them from their youth, seem to have been displeased that he had not been less scrupulous. Of them it is said "they took bribes and perverted justice." Never was there one so guiltless of ambition for family aggrandisement. Hear his great address on the heights of Gilgal, where he had assembled the tribes for Saul's public inauguration as king: "I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. Behold, here I am; witness against me before the Lord, and before His anointed. Whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you"—(1 Sam. xii. 3). It was a glorious testimony to the justice of this appeal, when the shout of an assembled nation echoed back, "Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us."

Can we, each of us, say the same? Can