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# The Christian Watchman

G. W. DAY, Printer.

BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE—BY LOVE UNFEIGNED.—St. Paul.

REV. E. B. DEMILL, A. M., Editor

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## Original Contributions

### For the Christian Watchman.

#### Studies for the Sunday School.

#### THE BIRTH OF THE CHRIST.

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The sun is placed in the centre of the system. There is no reason, upon the supposition of chance, why a vast luminous body should exist at all, or why it might not occupy the situation of Saturn or Neptune. In such a case, the present inhabitants of this globe could never have existed: The fact that there are creatures on this globe, and that there is a central body which dispenses the light and heat necessary to their existence, shows an adaptation, and consequently a designer.

Again, Even if the sun were in the centre of the system, the earth could not be filled with its present inhabitants unless it rotated on its axis. If it were stationary, or revolved around the sun without rotating, one-half of its surface would be a burning desert, the other a region of perpetual ice, each day would be a burning summer, each night a frozen winter.

All these prove a powerful, wise, and benevolent designer. In this connection other marks of design might be adduced, but space will not permit. If we contemplate the solar system, we find a vast mass of luminous heated matter surrounded by planets, some of which have satellites revolving around them. These planets are quite small when compared with the great central body, and their revolutions around it are in orbits more or less inclined to each other, and with greater or less eccentricity. Now, it has been demonstrated that these conditions are essential to the permanence of such a system. Here then is an exhibition of design.

It is necessary that these planets should be in motion, and accordingly they are in motion. Now, suppose matter eternal, could it form itself into a spherical shape, and then start itself around the sun with such regularity that astronomers can tell its situation in almost any period of past time, and foretell where it will be at any given moment in the future?

Planets must revolve on their axes, or else life could not be sustained, nor could their revolutions around the sun proceed harmoniously. We have already seen that some hand must have projected the newly-formed planet into space, but moreover, it was necessary that this force must have been directed against any other than a spherical shape, and then start itself around the sun with such regularity that astronomers can tell its situation in almost any period of past time, and foretell where it will be at any given moment in the future?

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whether long or short—upon which she can look back with pride. There must be a past on which great deeds have been done and mighty men have striven, and heroes stalked across the stage, or if this be absent, there must be a past of suffering, in which the tyrant prevailed, where the scene was dark and the low voice of wailing could alone be heard. Better still if there be great suffering, and great action combined—when the people had been crushed by oppression, and where their own heroic deeds had delivered them.

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## Father Passaglia on the Roman Question

I send herewith a copious analysis of Father Passaglia's recent work on the Roman Question: "Who does not see (Father Passaglia observes) that the Italian people are hastening to that unhappy situation in which there is imminent danger, not trifling, but very serious danger; that a vast number of Italians, either by open and corporate, or by secret and spiritual separation, become removed from the paradise of the Church, and leave the Church itself deprived of its most chosen sons? Already a great part of the clergy are in open discord with the majority of the laity; already almost all the shepherds are separated from their flocks, whilst the shepherd of the shepherds, the successor of Peter, the venerable Vicar of Christ on earth, hurls against the kingdom of Italy, and against Italian society, the dread thunderbolt of its censures. One might be tempted to believe that of the double power to bind and to loose, our bishops now retain the first alone, such concord do they exhibit in condemning, repelling, excommunicating whatever the whole nation desires and is striving to obtain. Wherefore this spectacle? Are the Italians renouncing the doctrines of our orthodox faith? No: on the contrary, they all revere that faith, and observe its rights in the most minute particulars. Are they assailing the rights of their legally constituted bishops in all that relates to sacred and religious matters? On the contrary, they all agree in professing for those rights the reverence which is their due. Do they despise the supreme and spiritual authority of the Pontiff? Far from it. Do they attack that freedom which was secured to the Church by the precious blood of Christ? On the contrary by proclaiming the principle of a 'free church in a free state,' they seek out every possible means of settling these difficult questions; even though repelled in the attempt they return a second and a third time to the search for peace, and they protest by all the means in their power that they will preserve the Catholic faith.

In the opening part of his treatise Passaglia reminds the Bishops of the divine duties to which their mission is limited; and he then goes on to prove, with a clearness, with a force of argument, with an array of patristic authorities, absolutely leaving no hope of reply, that the Roman Catholic Bishops, by their addresses, by their pastoral letters to the clergy and their flocks respecting the temporal authority of the Pope, have betrayed their duty, and have furnished the world an occasion of gross scandal. The preaching of the Gospel, the teaching of Christian morality, the inculcation and example of Christian love, these constitute the legitimate tasks of Bishops, ministers of God; whatever goes beyond these is wrong. But to stir up by the deeds which we all deplore, especially during the last three years, a religious schism which the Church must weep over to the end of time—this is a truly deplorable course of action, and one that can never be sufficiently condemned. It is an act for which God, at his day of judgment, will assuredly summon the perpetrators to render a terrible account. In truth, the Church consists only of the clergy and their flocks. If the clergy remain isolated, if they drive away the flocks, and if the latter finally leave the clergy because they find themselves treated as enemies, where is the Church? Does it not altogether disappear? The unity of the Church is not possible without mutual concord.

Passaglia accordingly concludes that the authority of the Roman Catholic Bishops on subjects unconnected with moral and theological doctrine possesses no importance whatever; that the chief end of that authority by divine institution, is to preserve the unity of separate churches in the Catholic Church, and to combat schisms and heresies.

But the Catholic Bishops, adds Passaglia display hostility to the kingdom of Italy for two reasons—for the alleged injustice by which lawful sovereigns have been stripped of their dominions, for the alleged impiety by which the Roman Pontiff has been deprived of his temporal sovereignty Passaglia hereupon asks, who has given to the Bishops the authority to erect themselves into the judges of the peoples and of the princes of the earth? Their authority was not conferred for earthly, but for heavenly purposes. And resting on the authority of St. Bernard, so frequently quoted in this controversy, he observes: "I have read that the Apostles were brought up to be judged, but I have never read that they assumed the character of judges.

"But," says Passaglia, "the Pontiff has pronounced his famous *non possumus*, and the bishops only follow the example of the Pope. A futile argument. The Papal declarations to which the *non possumus* refers do not touch the dogmas not derived from holy writings or from the traditions of the Church. They are not obligatory, therefore; they are liable to change, therefore; one must, consequently, hope that, with the view of averting the immense calamities by which religion is menaced, the Pontiff will see the danger of confounding obstinacy with firmness, and will return to better counsels, and that to obtain this result the prayers of the bishops will be united to remind the common father of the course which his holy predecessors followed, and which the exigencies of religion now require."

With the view of this before us we cannot wonder at the magnificent achievements of the Greeks in the richest profusion. Possessed of every thing which could fill the soul with poetic fire they used well their high advantages and sang songs which have been the admiration of the world. Hence the old masters of Grecian Song swept the lyre with such power and to so many measures that their strains re-echoed in the heart as long as the nation existed.

And now, if, coming nearer to the point in view, we look at the life and literature of the Hebrew people, we find all these causes existing in the richest profusion. An origin as noble that it needs not to be covered with the veil of fabulose; gigantic wrong endured, sublime deliverances effected; great sufferings, great actions, great heroisms—the stage crowded with wonderful beings, the scene alive with countless miracles, and, behind all, the dim outline of the Almighty disposing all things and governing all. If therefore we have found the history of Greece to have been a great one, we shall find that of the Hebrews greater still; if among them we have found all the causes of poetry abounding, here we shall find them still more abundant. Compare them at any stage in their respective histories and we shall see the superiority everywhere manifested.

The nation must have had a career, a past—