

The Church.

"HER FOUNDATIONS ARE UPON THE HOLY HILLS."
STAND YE IN THE WAYS, AND SEE, AND ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS, WHERE IS THE GOOD WAY, AND WALK THEREIN, AND YE SHALL FIND
REST FOR YOUR SOULS.—JEREMIAH VI. 16.

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Original Poetry.

For the Church.

OLD CHRISTMAS.

Old Christmas! Merry England's sons can hear no dearer name
Than thine, fair relic of the past,—a thousand years the same;
Bright harbinger of joyful eyes, glad sounds of household cheer,
Welcome, old friend of British hearts, once more we greet thee here!

High festival in stately fane, the chequer'd light is streaming
Thro' the old rite's gorgeous tints, in sun-flush'd splendour gleaming;
Now soft the Aeolian numbers breathe—now sweep toward Heaven away—
As the chauters raise the triumph-burst,—“Our God is born to-day!”

Joy to the altar of the poor! the village house of pray'r;
The voices of the hamlet sing all sweet and pleasant there:
The rites are done,—rejoicing joys speed from the sacred dome
To the gladness of the festal hearth that lights each freeman's home.

Old Christmas! round the ancient hall thy yearly honours glow,—
The holy-branch, the “ivy-green,” brave oak and mistletoe;
Sweet sounds the voice of placid age, fair childhood's gleeful tone,
And the blessings ask'd for England's pride,—“The Altar and the Throne!”

Then age its legendary tales of ancient lore will tell,
How patriots once for freedom bled, how holy martyrs fell;
And plain those glistening eyes express, that kindle at the strain,
That stalwart men are ready now for the same good fight again.

Come, gladder of our forest home, our unforgotten guest,—
Come, with thine ancient joys to cheer thy children of the West!
For here true hearts of British mould thine honour'd rites will greet,
Here lives our Fathers' glorious faith, here stands their altar-seat!

“Old Christmas!” round thy sacred name, a time-worn glory's
past—
Link of the changeful present, with the splendour of the past;
Blest be each thought thine advent brings, each hallow'd word and
sign,
That breathes of Fatherland and fame, of monarchy, throne and
throne!

Voice of our home! it matters not though pulse and hope be cold,
Some glimpse of early joy must dawn where thy fair name is told;
And pleasant thoughts of youth will rise in Earth's remotest shore
When the Briton's and the Christian's heart “Old Christmas” hails
once more!
Toronto, December, 1839.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

By THE REV. T. HARTWELL HORNE.

With regard to the evidence which we have for celebrating the festival of our Saviour's nativity, we may remark that the observance of this commemoration is justified by reason; it is grounded on the Scriptures; it has actually been celebrated by Christians in all countries from a very early age; and we are authorised by the practice of ecclesiastical antiquity to conclude that the twenty-fifth of December is the day on which God was manifested in the flesh by the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

1. The observance of a day of solemn and devout rejoicing for the nativity of our Saviour is justified by reason. “It has been no small part of the wisdom of nations to perpetuate the memory of salutary events and of illustrious personages by various methods. For this purpose, the pencil of the painter, the chisel of the sculptor, the bold designs of the architect, and the loftiest strains of the poet, have all been put into requisition; and for the same reason have the wisest nations set apart particular days to commemorate illustrious personages and events in their history. Christianity addresses itself to man as he is; and the means, by which the doctrines of the Gospel are perpetuated, are adapted to the laws of the human mind. Hence, on the same principle, but with infinitely greater propriety, the universal Christian Church, with a very few exceptions, has set apart particular days, in order to keep alive in the forgetful memories of her children the recollection of the principal events connected with the establishment of our holy and divine religion. And if it be deemed just to perpetuate the memory of the patriot who liberates his country from the yoke of foreign bondage, how much more proper is it to cherish the memory of Him who delivered the world from the servitude of Satan! If he who bestows temporal blessings on his country is justly recollected with gratitude, much more should the noblest feelings of our souls be called into action, and the most fervent gratitude be kindled in our hearts, by the recollection of Him who purchased for a fallen and guilty world the blessings of eternal life!”

But there is another aspect of this subject deserving of notice. Christianity is a religion designed for the whole mass of mankind. Now, matters of fact, the truth of which rests on the testimony of the senses, are most intelligible to the great body of men; and, for obvious reasons, arising from the structure of the human mind, are best calculated to make an impression upon them. Hence the very pillars upon which Christianity was wisely made to rest, are matters of fact, intelligible in every language, suited to the capacity of every nation, and equally applicable to all future generations. Without admitting these facts, no man can be a Christian; and a sincere and cordial belief of these matters of fact is closely connected with the character of a true disciple of our Lord. Hence every rational method, actually tending to diffuse and to perpetuate the knowledge of these facts, must exert a salutary influence on Christianity itself. The disorders and dissipation which in some places occur on these days are remnants of *papal corruption*, and have no more connexion with the devout observance of Christian festivals than with a fast or thanksgiving day appointed by the highest authority in this country.

2. The celebration of the feast of our Saviour's nativity is grounded on the Scriptures. I do not say that it is enjoined or authorized in so many words, but that it is grounded on the Scriptures.

(1.) That a day was promised when the Messiah should be born, we may infer from the divine declaration made to our first parents, when it was promised that “the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head” (Gen. iii. 15).

(2.) The patriarch Jacob in effect foretold this day, when he prophesied that “the sceptre should not depart from Judah until Shiloh,” or the Messiah, should “come.” (Gen. xlix. 10.)

(3.) The prophet Isaiah marks this as a wonderful day. “Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (i. e. God with us; vii. 14). Nay, “in spite of future times,” he was so impressed with the consideration of it, that he rejoices with the Church, as if the day of Christ's birth were then actually come. “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined....

far is this event from being a matter of great uncertainty, that “few historical facts of equal antiquity are better authenticated; and so far is the Christian world from being generally divided on this subject, that there are few, if any, points on which they are better agreed. Those, indeed, who think proper to keep no day may question the certainty of this day; but their number is comparatively very small.” Both the Greek and Roman Churches are united with the great body of Protestants, in all parts of the world, in its devout and grateful observance.

Could it, however, be shown that we are mistaken in this particular day, yet, as the matter of the mistake would be of no greater moment than the erroneous calculation of a day, it certainly would be very pardonable in those who think that they are not mistaken, as, in fact, it is of no real moment. “The purpose of the Church is, to celebrate the event on account of the honour which she thereby testifies for the Almighty, and of the benefit which the contemplation of it is calculated to produce in her members; and that purpose may be as well answered, whether or not the event actually took place on the day of its commemoration.” The identity of the day does not affect the influence of the solemnity, or the manner in which, and the dispositions of mind with which, we should commemorate the nativity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The manner in which this festival was celebrated in the ancient Christian Church testified the greatest veneration. It is always mentioned by Christian writers in the highest terms, as the principal festival, and the occasion of all the others. Chrysostom, in particular, styles it “the most venerable and awful, and the metropolis or mother of all festivals;” adding, that from this both the theophany (so he terms the epiphany), and the holy paschal feast, and the assumption or ascension, and pentecost, derived their origin.⁶ The day was observed with the same solemnity as the Lord's day; and in order that its religious character might be more universally marked, servants were allowed to rest from their ordinary labours; and all public games and shows were strictly prohibited, as they were on the Lord's day. Sermons were constantly preached, numerous examples of which are extant in the works of many ancient writers: nor was the day ever suffered to pass without a solemn communion. The coincidence in this respect between the rule and practice of our own Church and those of the universal early Christian Church, is too obvious to render it necessary for me to dwell upon it. I will only add, that the special office for “the nativity of our Lord” is admirably adapted to excite and to assist our devotions. In the first lessons we read the clearest prophecies of Christ's coming in the flesh; and in the second lessons, epistle, and gospel, we behold the completion of those prophecies in the history of that great event. In the collect we pray that we may be partakers of the benefits of his birth; and in the proper Psalms we praise and glorify God for this “great mystery of godliness.”

* Homily xxxi. de Philogonio, cited in Bingham's Antiquities, book iv. chap. iv. sect. 5.

BETHLEHEM.

We started again at noon, following the ancient road, along the base side, and between corn-fields, olive groves, and vineyards, each with its watch-tower, the stones carefully gathered out, and fenced in with a stone wall as in the days of David, Isaiah, and our Saviour.—At two we stopped at a place called Derwah, evidently an ancient site, and continued for some hours winding among hills, presenting the same monotonous but pleasing scenery. It was a lovely evening, the birds were singing sweetly, and numerous flocks of sheep and goats were cropping their evening meal as we drew nigh to the city of David, who so often must have fed his flocks on these very hills,—the scene too, just as probably, of that apparition of the heavenly host, who proclaimed to the humble shepherds of Bethlehem the birth of the good Shepherd, David's namesake,—“The Beloved” of God—in those blessed words, “Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.”

At half-past seven, that evening, we reached Bethlehem. It stands on the slope of a hill, of difficult ascent, at least by night. The stars were out, but it was still unusually light as we entered the town, and proceeded to the Spanish Convent, a large fortress-like building, where we were kindly welcomed, and ushered into a very handsome apartment. The venerable Superior presently came to see us, and grew very talkative. He honoured us with his company to breakfast the next morning, and afterwards visited the church, and the supposed cave of the Nativity, gorgons all—but what most touched me was the simple tribute of several little children, who by common consent, to worship the star of Israel at its rising, but, alas! it was St. Mark's worship they were celebrating that morning, and the prostrations I witnessed on the spot said to have been knelt upon by the Magi, were to the Virgin Mary—not to our Saviour.—Lord Lindsay's Letters on the Holy Land.

THE TESTIMONY OF PAGANISM TO THE TRUTH OF REVELATION.*
NO. I.—THE PROMISE OF A DIVINE REDEEMER.

“I observe” says the Chevalier Ramsay, “that the traditions of all nations foretell the coming of a hero, who is to descend from heaven, to bring Astraea, [or justice,]—back to the earth. The Persians call him Mythras, the Egyptians Horus, the Tyrians Adonis, the Greeks Apollo, Hercules, Mars, Mercury, or Jupiter the Conductor, or Saviour.”

In the crude Discourse on the Mythology of the Pagans, appended to that work, he says more fully, “All the poets speak to us of the golden age restored, as of a time when Astraea was to return upon earth: when justice, peace, and innocence were to flourish again with their original lustre, and when everything was to be restored to its primitive perfection. In a word, they sing on all occasions the exploits of a son of Jupiter, who was to quit his heavenly abode and live along men. They give him different names, according to his different functions; sometimes he is Apollo, fighting against Python and the Titans; sometimes he is Hercules, destroying monsters and giants, and purging the earth of their enormities and crimes. One while he is Mercury, or the messenger of Jove, flying about everywhere to execute his commands; another while he is Perseus, delivering Andromeda, or human nature, from the monster that rose out of the great deep to devour her. He is always some son of Jupiter, giving battles

and gaining victories.” I may add, that the divine hero is often slain; indeed we have before seen that the chief feature of nearly every Pagan theology is a slain God, a thing so contrary to human reason, that we cannot imagine any man absurd enough to have invented it, nor any people foolish enough to have received it, if it had been of man's invention. They must have known it as a divine tradition, a miraculous thing, and not a human fiction. That they did know and believe it, universally, let Osiris, murdered by Typhon,—Odin, killing himself, or devoured by a wolf,—Baldur, slain by Hoder,—Bacchus, torn by the Titans,—Hercules, sacrificing himself,—Adonis, slain by a boar,—all testify.

But it will here be objected to me that, even in the book of Genesis itself, there is no mention made that the Deliverer, “the seed of the woman,” should be slain; it is only said that “his heel” should be “bruised” by the serpent. I make answer, with Spearman, (p. 103.) “There never would have been any doubt from what fountain the heathen drew their mythology, had it not been for that strange notion which has possessed the heads of our great men, that the Jews had no knowledge of the Messiah but from the occasional hints of him in the prophetic writings; and if the Jews had no prior knowledge of that affair, the Gentiles could have none. Which is just as absurd as if they should say that the Romans, Corinthians, &c. to whom the apostles wrote, knew nothing of Christianity but from those epistles. The prophecies were delivered to the Jews during their captivity, to keep up the original revelation of a Redeemer to come. And even those prophecies which more immediately relate to Christ and his kingdom, are not to be considered as the measure of their knowledge in this doctrine; or to be written to inform them of that about which they knew nothing, before the delivery of the prophecies; but only to put them in mind of these things, to keep up their faith, and that they might look forward to him who was to redeem Israel from all their sins. And as the knowledge of atonement by a Saviour to come was of equal interest to all mankind, it was handed down by an uninterrupted tradition from Adam, and propagated by his posterity wherever they settled,—as we can easily and abundantly prove; for however corrupted may be the mythology, still the Divine Hero, or slain God is prominent in it; and the latter, after death, is again restored, though often under another name, or in the form of his Son.

God, slain by the wicked, and resurrected under the form of his Son; could we expect to find a clearer narrative of events, yet future as to their fulfilment, deep and mysterious as to their nature? Let us now examine more particularly these heroes and slain deities of antiquity; for they were many.

In Egypt, we have the murder of Osiris by Typhon, or the Evil Principle; the grief and wanderings of Isis to seek the fragments of his body; and his restoration under the form of his son Horus, who is so far confused with him, as to be represented as also slain by the Titans, and found dead, though afterwards revived to immortal life.

In the Persian mythology we find a constant conflict maintained between Mythras, the Divine Hero, and Arimanius, the Evil Principle; which is hereafter to terminate in the destruction of the latter, and the restoration of the golden age.

In Scandinavia, some writers represent the great Odin as killing himself, in order to become an immortal god; while others say that he was to be devoured by Fenir the wolf, “in the twilight of the gods.” At all events, his name was to be added to the list of slain deities. Baldur, also, the son of Odin, who seems to be the northern Apollo, is killed by the blind Hader, at a time decreed by fate.

In the Tyrian system of theology, we find that celebrated fable of the death of Adonis, or Thammuz; the lamentation for whose untimely fate was profound, even by the women of Jerusalem, (see Ezek. viii. 14.) But the weeping was not the whole of the performance: funeral obsequies were also celebrated, and the next day the god was said to be alive, and ascended into heaven. Julius Firmicus says that an image was laid in a bed, as dead, while the mourning continued; and then torches were brought, and the priest announced the lips of the weepers, and whispered, “Salvation is come—deliverance is accomplished,” when immediately the image was taken up, and great joy and feasting succeeded.

In India we do not find a murdered deity; but we have Krishna, the serpent-conqueror, and Vishnou, under ten different incarnations, destroying giants and monsters. We have also what seems to be another tradition of the same future Redeemer, a descent of Vishnou into the infernal dominions of “the king of serpents.” I have before said that Vishnou may clearly be traced to Kriumph, or Osiris; and this descent into the infernal region of serpents looks very much like a parallel story to the descent of Osiris into the shades, whither Hercules, Orpheus, and Bacchus also went. And although the circumstances of all these descents vary much from each other, yet they are too similar in their nature not to be drawn from one common source—the foreknown exploits of him whom we perpetually confess in our public worship, as having “descended into hell,” and risen again “the third day.” I might satisfactorily elucidate the variations of these several legends; but it is only a branch of our present inquiry, and would occupy too much of our time.

The slain gods of Greece are numerous, besides those personages who must be considered as derived from the same origin, by their exploit of a conquered dragon, or a descent into hell. Of the first class we have Bacchus, Hercules, Orpheus, Adonis; of the second, Apollo and Hercules again; and the third class comprehends all the first-mentioned, excepting Adonis.

It will perhaps be said that these are mostly demi-gods or heroes only, and not deities of the primary order. I reply that they were all sons of gods. Bacchus and Hercules were sons of Jupiter, Orpheus of Apollo, and Adonis of the supreme Belus; for he is the same with Thammuz. And this parentage, half divine, half human, which makes the hero a god-man, is much more to my purpose than any other would have been.

It would take too much time and space to enter into the history of all these personages; I will only say that Bacchus, under the name of Iacchus, bore the same part in the mysteries of Ceres that Heros did in those of Isis; and he is plainly said, by Herodotus (Book ii.) to be the same as Osiris. Spearman quotes an account of a coin struck at Maronea in Thrace, inscribed, “Bacchus Saviour of the Maronites;” and of another belonging to the island of Thasos, which bore the inscription, “Hercules Saviour of the Thasians.” Hercules indeed a demi-god, the destroyer of all monsters and giants, and more especially of the hydra, (another version of the dragon conquest, who descended into hell, and returned, bringing captive the guardian of the infernal gates, and who finally sacrificed himself, and became immortal,—possesses too many tokens of identity to require any further explanation.

Orpheus again bears many marks which stamp him as another version of the same character; the descent into hell, to recover his serpent-slain bride, his victory there, the uncertain manner of his death, (some affirming that he killed himself, and others that he was murdered by a mad multitude of Bacchantes), and his subsequent immortality, are all striking coincidences with the usual exploits of the divine hero.

Of Adonis we have already spoken; for the Greek fables of his human parentage, the love of Venus for him, &c. are mere pe-

tical additions to the more simple legend of the Tyrian Thammuz.

We must conclude the Grecian list with a glance at Apollo, one of the most prominent among the divine warriors; who was at once a god and a hero, the son of a god and a nymph, and the destroyer of the dragon Python. We have an admirable paragraph in Spearman concerning Apollo. He says, (p. 85.) “Apollo is the acknowledged symbol of the material light, as light is of Christ, the light that came into the world to lighten every one. So the fable of Apollo and Python may have aimed at prefiguring the conquest of Christ over Satan. The banishment of this deity from heaven, and his feeding the flocks of Admetus upon earth, whence he had the name of Nomius, or the herdsman or shepherd, appears to me the broken tradition of that person who came down from heaven to feed the sons of Adam, whom he calls his sheep, his flock; from which Hebrew name (Adam) Admetus naturally enough forms itself. And how ridiculous and unintelligible soever this and the other fables may seem to reasoners and the wisdom of this world, they told the people, in a language plain enough to be understood, that the Deity was to descend to the earth, to dwell there amongst men, and to instruct by precept and example; and they kept up the expectation of that great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, until his advent in the flesh.

Nor is it in Europe and the west of Asia only that this legend is found; it is quite as prominent in Chinese mythology. Ramsay (p. 339.) mentions “a hero called Kinu Tse, which means Shepherd and Prince, to whom they also give the titles of the most Holy, the universal Teacher, and the Supreme Truth.” In his sufferings and conflicts he is exactly parallel to Osiris, Mythras, Apollo, or Hercules, and is the divine hero of that nation.

Thus then we see that Paganism, from east to west, and from China to Scandinavia, is full of the exploits, victories, and death of a divine warrior, or God-man.

Let the Socinian say, if he will, that the crucified Messiah was only a human prophet. “Blind Egypt with her gods, withstands him to the face: the Greeks, the Chinese, the Persian, the heathen Dane, the Indian, the Tyrian, all rise up against him, and declare, as one man, that they were so far certain of the descent, conflicts and death of GOD HIMSELF, that they even put the past for the future, and enrolled the expectations of prophecy among the finished facts of their national history.” X. Q.

FURTHER EXTRACTS FROM HUME AND OTHER HISTORIANS, RELATIVE TO THE REIGN OF JAMES II. DESERVING OF PUBLIC ATTENTION AT THE PRESENT CRISIS OF PARTIES AND OPINIONS.*

“We are come,” said the Quakers, in their address on his accession, “to testify our sorrow for the death of our good friend Charles, and our joy for thy being made our Governor. We are told thou art not of the persuasion of the Church of England; no more are we; and therefore we hope thou wilt grant us the same liberty which thou allowest thyself, which doing, we wish thee all manner of happiness.”—Hume.

“He told the privy council, in his first speech, in very positive words, that he would never depart from any branch of his prerogative. He expressed his good opinion of the Church of England, as a friend of monarchy; therefore, he said, he would defend and maintain the Church, and would preserve the government in Church and State, as it was established by law.”—Burnet.

“The King began to say that he would not be served as his brother had been. He would have all about him serve him without reserve, and go through in his business.”—Burnet.

“The nonconformists were ground between the Papists on the one hand, and the High Church clergy on the other; whilst the former made their advantage of the latter, concluding that when the Dissenters were destroyed or thoroughly exasperated, and the clergy divided amongst themselves, they should be a match for the Establishment, and be capable of introducing that religion they had so long been aiming at. Swarms of Jesuits and regular priests were sent for from abroad, Jesuits' schools and other seminaries were set up in London and the country, mass-houses were erected in the most considerable towns; five Roman Catholic bishops were consecrated in the Royal Chapel, and exercised their functions under the characters of vicars apostolic; their regular clergy appeared at Whitehall and St. James's in their habits, and were unwearied in their attempts to seduce the common people. The way to preferment was to be a Catholic, or defendant for the prerogative, for all state affairs were managed by such men.”—Neale.

“This opened the eyes of many of the clergy, and put them upon preaching against the Popish doctrines, that they might recover the people, and rescue the Protestant religion, &c. There was hardly a week but some sermon or small treatise against Popery was printed and dispersed among the common people. The chief writers were Tillotson, Stillingfleet, Tenison, Patrick, Wake, Whitty, Sharp, Atterbury, Williams, Aldrich, Burnet, Fowler, &c.”—Neale.

“A parliament was summoned, and all arts were used to manage elections so that the King should have a parliament to his mind.” &c. “In some boroughs they could not find a number of men to be depended on, so the neighbouring gentlemen were made corporation men, and in some of them persons of other countries, not so much as known in the borough, were named.” It was resolved to bring up petitions against some elections which were so indecently managed that it seemed scarcely possible to excuse them. But there were to be judged by a majority of men who knew their own elections to be so faulty that, to secure themselves, they would justify the rest.”—Burnet.

“Some of the Dissenters grew insolent, but the wise men amongst them perceived the design of the Papists was now to set the Dissenters against the Church.”—Burnet.

“To humble the clergy, his Majesty created a new ecclesiastical commission. Though the act which took away the high commission of 1641 had provided that no court of that nature should be created for the future; but the King, though a Papist, assumed the supremacy; &c. “The Archbishop of Canterbury was afraid to act in it. Durham was so lifted up that he said his name would not be recorded in history; and Sprat, Bishop of Rochester, in hopes of further preferment, went with the stream. Some Roman Catholics were in the commission, and consequently the enemies of the Protestant religion were to be its judges.”—Neale.

“The Papists thought, by raising them (the Dissenters) who had been so long depressed, to have inflamed them with revenge against their brethren,—to have widened the animosities amongst Protestants, that they might all thereby be rendered the more sure and speedy sacrifice to their malice and cruelty; but they did but drive the contending parties nearer to each other, and make them at last more vigorous in their united efforts to avert the common ruin.”—Calamy.

“That the surer way might be made to establish universal toleration by act of parliament, changes were made in all the corporations, and a certain sort of men called regulators, who were persons of mean fortunes and abilities, but of great forwardness, were sent into all parts to examine men's opinions. They that would promise to use their interest in elections to bring in such as would comply with the King's designs, were preferred as mayor, alderman, &c.”—Calamy.

“In Ireland things had a still more favourable aspect for the

* From the Christian Lady's Magazine.

* From the London Morning Herald.