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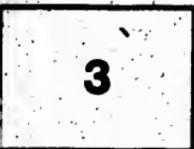
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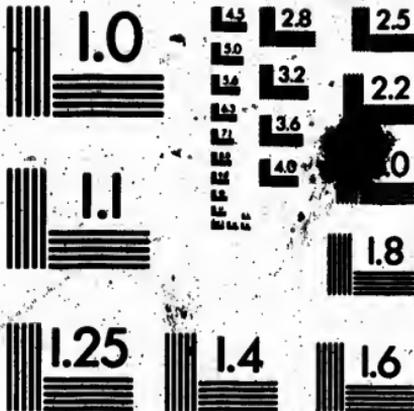
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Antichrist in the First Century,

OR

THE MAN OF SIN DISCOVERED

IN THE

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

— "The mystery of iniquity doth already work."—2 THESS. II. 7.

— "This is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world."—1 JOHN, IV. 3.

BY

WILLIAM THOMAS WISHART.

SAINT JOHN, N. B.
PRINTED BY GEORGE W. DAY, NO. IV. MARKET STREET.
1862.

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ANTICHRIST, &c.

Men are still essentially what they were when Homer and Herodotus wrote. Functional changes have taken place, but the basis of character continues what it was. So true is this, that it is received as a law or first principle. Men are so far from contesting the position that they admit it as an element into every conceivable kind of argument. Human nature is almost universally accepted as a *fixed fact*, and being so is employed as a reason to palliate crimes, excuse faults, and explain peculiarities of every sort. The antiquarian returns from his researches, delighted to inform his circle that in the remotest periods to which he has ascended, he has perceived the same great leading propensities that mark mankind in the present times. The moralist affirms the statement, and shows in well-reasoned disquisitions that the men and women of the Iliad felt and acted as men and women do now. The anatomist unrolls a mummy from Grand Cairo, and informs us that in the days of the Pharaohs the size and appearance of our species differed little from the present standard. The man of the world excuses his profligacy, by referring to propensities which he says are part of his nature, and which prevent him from acting otherwise than he does. The free thinker considers that he alleges a sufficient reason against revelation, when he says that its doctrines are unintelligible to the human intellect, and that its precepts are impracticable to human nature. So firm a confidence is there in an established fact called human nature, that it is taken as a rule, and applied to the measurement of that system which professes to be a direct emanation from the maker of the universe.

That human nature with few exceptions remains what it has been for ages, is a fact that may be derived from the admissions of two descriptions of persons,—of two kinds of men, who in most instances give out contradictory verdicts. The most pious and the most secular are at one here. The former mention it as a thing to be deplored, that mankind, in spite of the efforts of the gospel, continue for the most part unregenerate. Baptist Noel, in a work recently published, expresses it as his opinion, that out of the twelve thousand working clergy of the Church of England, ten thousand at least must be regarded as unconverted men, and knowing nothing of the gospel. The latter make the like assertion, but in a manner even more unreserved. They regard it as a *thing of course*, that human

nature has been, is, and will continue to be, the same rigid unchangeable fact. They admit the influence of secondary circumstances. They make much account of education and other similar causes. They acknowledge that there is a wide interval between a barbarous and a refined period; but they refuse to go further. They do not believe that it is intended that human nature should ever become radically different from what it is,—they do not admit that there is any influence in existence that is able to change its original texture. Saint and sinner unite in the declaration, that men are in the main what we see them to be in any past era. There is but this difference betwixt them, that the one contemplates it as a strange fact, considering how much has been done with a design to regenerate them, whilst the other looks complacently at the phenomenon, and believes that the features which he does not altogether admire will be softened down by the progress of science and refinement. In the middle of the fifty-ninth century since the creation of the world—in the middle of the nineteenth century since the birth of the Saviour, the two antagonistic men look round them: the one says that men are not renewed, the other, that it was never meant that they should be renewed. The conclusion must be that the work is yet to do.

It needs a strong faith to look forth steadily upon such a scene, because the first impression is that God has cheated us, and that religion, after all that has been said in its favour, is a pompous nothing. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" The mind that is really pious recovers from this dreary feeling, and knowing from past experience that it is a foolish thing to charge God with falsehood or any other sin, proceeds to debate such hypotheses as follow:—Are we not warned against supposing that God's ways are as our ways? Are we not expressly informed that the Almighty does not measure time as we do? Are there not statements in the Bible which authorize the opinion that the harvest of the truth shall occur late in the history of the world? May it not be that there are obstacles of great moment that have never yet been ascertained and allowed for? Is it not likely that the greater part of what has been called religion, has been but form and will-worship? When these suppositions, and others like to them, are weighed and long detained before the mind, it recovers from its prostration, it holds less tenaciously to the past and the present, it looks more wisely into the future, and it thinks it possible to take a fresh departure. If the Christian religion has been known to mankind for many centuries, and if its action upon them has been slight, it must either have less strength than it pretends to, or its energies cannot yet have come into operation. There is a class that would not accept this dilemma. Being persons of very moderate intelligence, they are easily satisfied, A well-sized

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Christian occurring once in a century or two, seems to them an absolute glut in the religious market. The history of the truth generally comes up to this level, and therefore it appears to them a golden chronicle. The fathers of the early centuries, the good men of the first and second reforming periods, are as much as they can digest. To expect that religion should have done more than this, would, in their view, be to cherish extravagant fancies. These complacent creatures will not accompany us in the course of thought which we are pursuing, because, according to them, things have gone as well hitherto as the most sanguine could have desired. Wherever intelligence is found a little more advanced than in this tame race, the admission can readily be procured, that human nature, as regards its essential character, has experienced no strong impression from the influence of religion. Since the supposition cannot be entertained that there is a want of power in religion, the other alternative must be adopted, that the energy has not been elicited. As obvious a method as can be used to illustrate this position is, to bring in the authority of sacred history. What did men do just after the day of Pentecost? The answer to this question ought to put the subject in an intelligible form. Did the Christian system receive no injury at the hands of the Apostles? Here is a momentous query at the outset,—one that has never yet been put,—one that even in this hour it would generally be esteemed blasphemy to propose. The Apostles no doubt wrote with absolute correctness; they could not have done otherwise, for in this they passively obeyed the motions of the Holy Ghost. But they have left us more than their writings, for part of the sacred canon consists of the acts of the apostles. Are these last to be judged by the same rule? Because certain men were chosen to be at certain times the channels of inspiration, are we to presume that in the whole breadth of their lives they were lifted up into the region of infallibility? It is to be distinctly noticed that this question has never yet been discussed. Moses wrote five books. We allow the whole five to have emanated from heaven; but that does not hinder us from noting certain deeds of Moses as sinful. David is the author of one hundred and fifty psalms. In composing these, it is allowed that he wrote every syllable at the instigation of the Spirit of God. This does not shut us out from believing that he sinned when he indulged Absalom in his evil ways, or, perhaps, when he murdered the messenger that brought him the news of the death of Saul and Jonathan, or when he committed adultery with the wife and slew the husband. Solomon contributes three books to the canonical writings. No believer in the Bible doubts their authenticity; and no mind capable of understanding a distinction regards the circumstance that he penned certain thoughts at the prompting of inspiration, as a reason why he should be thought

immaculate in every particular of his conduct. Persons even of a low order of intellect can reconcile the two facts, that the Spirit employed him occasionally as an instrument, and that the same man was guilty of loving many strange women.

Here is an absolute parallel,—using it as such, the question is fairly proposed, might not the Apostles also in their character of agents, say and do things, which when related are designed for warning and not for example? If they did one or many of such things, and if in doing these they were and are regarded as worthy of imitation, have we not in this circumstance the nucleus of what might eventually become a mass of corruption? It is not possible to propound a subject more novel, and it is hard to imagine one more important. The Jews when they quitted Egypt, carried with them the jewels of their former oppressors, which memorials of their bondage, no doubt had a share in creating that hankering after Egypt, which long after continued to affect the nation. The instance is probably more than an illustration, it is likely the same event in the form of type. If the twelve committed wrong and foolish acts, which have without enquiry been assumed to be models of the most perfect manner in which it is possible for men to behave, we obtain within a few days or years after Pentecost, that which must have affected the whole after-history of the Christian religion. Errors or sins at the outset of the New Testament,—these never suspected but accepted in each succeeding period as the wisest and purest acts that could have been performed, might attain to any conceivable amount of evil after the lapse of centuries. Such a career, if begun, could never by possibility rectify itself, because it contained an essentially vitiating element, that was not suspected. Nothing could purify it until a thorough analysis was instituted that would detect the impure ingredient, and would give rise to a new line of action differing from the former in vital particulars. To sit in judgment on the transactions of the religionists of such a period, is to perform as important a function as ever fell to the lot of man to fulfil. It is to try the case whether the fountain-head was pure, and in trying this to arrive at a rule, by which to estimate all that has ever flowed from it. Paul says, "If I be circumcised, Christ profiteth me nothing." Now if it can be shown that in the course of the book called the Acts of the Apostles, legal conduct repeatedly takes place, and if this has for ages circulated through the veins of the Church without a doubt arising that any noxious principle was imbibed, have we not a rule in Scripture to prove, that the preaching of Christ could not really edify in the circumstances supposed. If one legal ingredient is on revealed authority a dead fly that makes "the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour," the presence of many such will not certainly mitigate the evil.

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Again, the Bible scouts the doctrine that it is lawful to do evil that good may come. It goes so far as to name those blasphemers who broach such opinions. But if among the acts of the Apostles there be instances wherein these men incontestably went on this principle, the stream of influence that proceeded from them, and which must be expected to widen as it flows on; will naturally become very turbid when it has run on for many centuries.

After ages have passed by, we find ourselves sitting down to discuss the question whether "the first fruits were holy." Hitherto men have invariably assumed the point. Whilst some have been contented to receive the whole Bible in the letter, whilst others have insisted that parts should be spiritualised, whilst there have been persons who have taken the liberty to reject portions and others who have ventured to deny the whole, there has been no one that in a systematic way has attempted to draw the line of distinction between the *writings* and the *practice* of the Apostles. And yet admissions are made in a loose manner which really involve the principle. In one or two instances it is currently allowed, that the conduct of the Apostles was not faultless. The slightest admission of this nature, ought long before this to have led to the formation of a rule. Infallibility is not a thing of *degrees*—it is one and absolute. A fault, an error, however slight, reduces an agent to the category of fallible beings. Such fault acknowledged to have been committed by the Apostles, places them in a position in which their whole conduct is liable to be reviewed, and even warrants the expectation that being known to have fallen into some errors, they may be found to have erred more than was at first supposed.

Scripture mentions the "worshipping of angels," by which *messengers* are probably intended, as a sin that should occur in the annals of the church. If it has been perpetrated, and if this improper regard for the actions of the Apostles be an instance of the sin, we are dealing with an offence that has been anticipated, that has been branded with infamy, that has been described as the offspring of carnality, as the conduct of those who "intrude into the things that they have not seen," and are vainly "puffed up by their fleshly mind."

Of course the distinction which we draw would be seriously resented by those whose superstition would be exposed by it. Our remarks would have the effect to show them up, as men either positively beyond the pale of the truth, or, at the least, weak in the faith. They would naturally revolt at either alternative. They would represent their own opinions as the fruit of a deep catholic holiness, which desired to appreciate the piety not only of Christ, but of those whom he selected out of the world. They would describe our position, as that of a man, who, wishing to sap the foundations of religion, insulted the servants before he ventured to

attack the master. The point would be fiercely contested. Satan, aware that to expose this nucleus of evil, would go forth, "taking nothing of the Gentiles," would probably screen it with even more than his usual subtlety. The position of our antagonists is capable of much decoration, and they know it. With every association gathered from hoar antiquity, they would make it appear that they were defending an entrenchment, on the maintenance of which depended the existence of religion. They would have skill enough to set our view in such a light, as to cause at least nine-tenths of society to shudder with what they would suppose holy alarm. On their ground they would do well to fight a fierce battle, because it is not likely that they will ever have an opportunity to fight such another. This position once gained by us, means will be afforded to extricate the Christian system from every carnal element that has been so long and so cunningly mixed up with it. In the gaining of this position we expect more help at first from the very badness and brutality of men, than from any more honourable cause. We shall be believed in our argument that the Apostles improperly practised Jewish rites and so gave countenance and help to the ceremonial systems that have supervened,—we shall be credited in these statements, not so much because men desire in them the foreshadowings of a purer creed, as because they perceive that on our view they will save their money, their time, their feelings and their efforts. A band of Sybarites and egotists will pronounce us right, and pretending to concur with a small class that upholds these views from deep conviction, will impart to our opinions the only influence that our opponents ever understand and dread,—that of numbers.

What did they do immediately after Pentecost?—The direct reply will be to this effect: the men whom Jesus put into the garden had scarcely parted from their master, when they proceeded to eat the forbidden fruit. The persons whom he delivered from Egyptian bondage, had scarcely turned their eyes in the direction of the promised land, when looking round, their souls lusted after the flesh-pots and the burdens they had quitted.

Those have a great apparent advantage who take the opposite side from us. At first sight, at least, it seems much more pious to view the twelve as free from error, than to maintain the contrary. All persons who put religion in natural amiability,—all who are made up of a collection of prettinesses, all who delight in marvels, especially such as are shallow and of human construction, would on principles of mere physiology recoil from our position. These men of sentiments and twitchings, could not be propitiated. We might frame our argument as accurately as language could give it shape—no reasoning can reach those who are governed by the spinal marrow. That numerous class also which receives its

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religion by inheritance, or which estimates a creed by no other rule than the length of its pedigree, would refuse to listen to this dogma. On the whole, then, society is anything but prepared to close with the opinion. And when the argument is adjusted and brought to bear on mankind, the hateful "sect of the Nicolaitans" or conquerors of the people step forward, and throwing some fallacy among the herd, afford to those who were predisposed against conviction, the shadow of a pretext for resisting the truth.

At an advanced point in the history of Christianity, evil is beheld as having attained to a vast size. The man of sin is represented as sitting "in the temple of God," shewing himself that he is God. The beast is portrayed as obtaining the victory over "all nations and peoples and tongues," those only excepted, "whose names are written in the book of life." This must grow from a root. It must have a beginning somewhere. To increase the likelihood that it begins at the point which we have named, John in speaking of Antichrist says, "and even now already is it in the world." It was in being when the last contributor to the canon wrote his epistles. If the "root of bitterness" sprang up in consequence of the teaching and practices of some person *not* an apostle, would not that individual have been specified, and would not his evil tenets have been categorically exposed? If, on the contrary, as we maintain, the mischief proceeded from the apostles, it would not be requisite that this should be stated *in so many words*, since these men have left a narrative of their actions, and have also provided us with a rule in their epistles, by which to ascertain the character of their acts.

It is not necessary in order to our argument, to prove that the apostles committed gross crimes, although we derive from the old testament that to do so is not necessarily incompatible with being chosen to be a vehicle of inspiration. Indeed offences of such a nature would not be likely to furnish the origin of that spurious system whose beginning we seek to find. Flagrant crimes would have stood out too obviously to have been received into the framework, especially at a time when there were some who had great sincerity and strength of faith. Acts that possessed a show of rectitude, and a form of godliness, would be the elements that would be the most likely to give rise to a false start. Thus if the apostles in any case shewed themselves punctilious about times and places, if they laid down any regulations about meats and drinks, if they retained some of the rites of the dispensation that had been abrogated, if at any time they exhibited an inclination to tamper with their bigoted countrymen, if on any occasion they were actuated by that Pharisaical spirit which ruled Judea, and sprang at results without the nicest regard to the means,—acts of this complexion might readily have been received as canonical. If, humanly

speaking, it was natural, that these first teachers of our religion should slide into such practices, it was quite as natural that their converts, whether in Judea or in other countries, should consider that it was rightly done. If the error was not perceived and resisted at the very commencement, another element soon fell in to render detection less likely. Time, that hallowing agent, declared the deeds to be at once wise and venerable. When men eminently holy have passed away, when they leave behind them the good report that they suffered and that they died for their opinions, sentiments terribly strong and intolerably jealous are evoked, and the objects of adoration are lifted up at least to the level of divinity. If the idea can be entertained that the apostles when not recording, threw a tinge of Judaism into their doings, all the rest is easily made out. They threw in what men relished, and what they considered wholesome because they liked it. It was just that form of evil which, while it did not stagger, was of all others the best suited to become the parent of every kind of sin. If the twelve had in any case fallen into such sins as drunkenness, fornication, or assault and battery leading to culpable homicide, the question would have been understood. Even the instance in which Paul and Barnabas fall out by the way has been perceived, and whilst no system has sprung from it, still it is probable that no one has derived from it the doctrine of the canonical excellence of bickering. Men can understand overt acts of this nature; but actions which are quite insignificant in themselves, and yet are the result of imperfect analysis, of double-mindedness or want of firmness, cases wherein a formal act has been done that should have been left undone, where a rite has been practised that did not belong to the gospel, where a good end has been sought without due regard to the means,—Christianity has never yet been so far appreciated as to enable men to think sanely in such instances.

If the supposition be allowed, that it was possible for the apostles to err, another probability comes in in an easy way, that their errors would naturally be of the sort which would proceed most directly from previous education and habits. They are, for argument's sake, supposed to be fallible, their peccability would most naturally lead them to do things congenial to that Judaism in which they have been reared. Until thirty or forty years of age their lives had been passed in formal practices, which they did with a good conscience and by divine command,—that they should carry with them into the new economy some remnants of their former religion, is not the most unreasonable hypothesis that could be formed. This is precisely what we should expect that men would do, whom we surround with no preconceived ideas. They declare that they are men of like passions with ourselves. Peter shews this by prevaricating in one case in so plain a manner

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that Paul rates him before the others. Paul proves it by quarrelling with and parting company from the associate that had been appointed for him by the Holy Ghost. Men who retained enough of natural evil to commit these faults, are in the predicament to be considered capable of other errors not morally worse. Perhaps this is to ask too much. They are allowed to have done what involves some degree of moral pravity,—whereas all for which we contend, is that they should be considered to have committed certain faults that perhaps infer nothing more than some mental obscurity. When they cast lots—when they frequented the temple,—when Peter said “can any man forbid water,” and performed the ceremony of baptism by water—when the college commanded the Gentiles to abstain from “things strangled”—when Paul circumcised Timothy—when the same apostle must needs go up to Jerusalem, although warned by a prophet not to repair thither—when Paul performed the vow of a Nazarene, and went into the temple along with other votaries—when he took advantage of the circumstance that “the one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees,” to introduce a subject which he knew would divide a meeting;—in none of these instances was the fault of the most heinous kind. In some of the cases the supposed offence was the result of want of light, in others it proceeded from an undue desire to propitiate those who could not be propitiated, in the worst case it was only justifying improper means because of the goodness of the end proposed. Men who are admitted to have shuffled; or fiercely quarrelled, are not theoretically incapable of faults whose badness is less obvious. It does not suit to confess them guilty of the graver transgression, and then to resort to some plea of impeccability in order to save them from the imputation of having committed the less. The Apostles, by the admission of our antagonists, stand charged with faults that bring them into the category of fallible beings, and we do not understand the mode of reasoning which says, they were fallible in the cases alleged, but infallible in all other particulars. Two may play at that game. To allow such a position would be to render infallibility a sliding scale. If our thimble rigging opponents choose to take the stand that the Apostles were infallible in the highest sense of the term, then we request them to explain how infallibility is reconcilable with some admitted roguery and a little acknowledged violence. If they prefer the other position, that these men were fallible in certain specified instances, but infallible in all others, then we ask to be informed where they procure this distinction, and how they reconcile their view of infallibility with common sense.

When we reduce them to this dilemma, they have recourse to such *sentimental* evasions as the following:—What certainty do you leave us if you bring the actions of the Apostles into a condi-

tion to be questioned,—or would you put the followers of Jesus on a level with other men,—or do you pretend to question the propriety of the conduct of those who wrote by inspiration and performed miracles,—or if you come forward with objections to some parts of the acts of the Apostles, what is there to prevent others from finding fault with more of their doings? We notice these childish quibbles in their order. It is not pretended that certainty can be arrived at by examining the conduct of any of the human personages of Scripture. But we are not on this account left in a difficulty. The example of Jesus Christ is an absolute fact. What he said and did is without blemish. The writings of the penmen of Scripture are absolute facts, and the rules which are laid down in them are subject to no error. By these criteria we are enabled to judge with rigid accuracy of anything in the shape of conduct. We are not, as our adversaries would feign, launched upon the ocean without a compass, but by means of what is fixed and certain, are supplied with an instrument to measure all that is doubtful and variable. It is not necessary that all Scripture should be *of one sort*. In order to its doing good it is not indispensable that every part should be intended for imitation. The purposes of God may be as well served by interspersing it with passages that are designed to supply us with warning. Provided that there be somewhere an absolute rule, it does not signify how much there be that varies from it. A true rule can measure much as well as it can measure little. With regard to the next objection, that we reduce the Apostles to the height of common mortals, we are not sure that it is correct, and if it be correct, we do not believe that it amounts to anything. If all that we ask for were conceded, the Apostles we consider would still have a pre-eminence. It would still be true respecting them, that the beginning of the work was assigned to them, that they probably had the most laborious and arduous task to perform, and that several of their number had the honour of contributing to the canon. To allow this much is to attribute something peculiar to them, and to give them that superiority which Jesus seems to make over to them, when he speaks of them as presiding over the twelve tribes of Israel. In reference to the next objection to our argument, viz: that the apostles wrote by inspiration and performed miracles, that is easily got over. Our answer is this, that our reasoning is founded on the very fact that they do write by inspiration. We go to what they bring forward in this capacity, and by attending to it we procure our argument. We find that in this capacity they condemn what they do in the other. We notice that their words impugn their deeds. We listen to what they say, and we do not, like our antagonists, render Scripture inconsistent, but we make an apostle recording the umpire and judge over the same apostle when simply acting. It is because we believe scripture that we view the apos-

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bles as wrong in certain of their acts. They say so themselves, they do so more than once, and that in cases in which it cannot be questioned that they spoke by inspiration. Relatively to the last objection which we supposed, we reply that if we are right in our position, we are not answerable for any wrong consequences to which it may be pushed. If some, following in our steps, discover points in the apostles' conduct that are blameworthy, points that have escaped our observation, we rejoice that we may help to embolden others to do what must prove salutary. If some, actuated by ignorance and irreligion, should attack what is really correct in the acts of the apostles, we answer that it is no concern of ours that Satan should send out impostors, and that they should get fools to listen to them.

The idea that the apostles were impeccable, is resisted, not merely by their own affirmations, but likewise by what may be termed the reason of the thing. To have been so would have been to be lifted out of the position of responsible agents. In this case it would have been useless to narrate their lives, inasmuch as they ceased to have any affinity with common men. Acting under circumstances different from those in which other men are placed, their case ceased to afford any useful parallel. They would stalk across the scene as virtuous phantoms, faultless prodigies, with which humanity had no points in common. They might minister to wonder, but they could not minister to godliness. They might be thrust between the professor and his God, but they could not be surveyed as good and useful examples of how well men might act, in spite of a few errors and failings. To put these men into this category, is to place them in a position in which no other mortals ever stood, to do it in spite of their own declaration to the contrary, and to do what does not enhance but impairs their moral influence. To make the apostles infallible in spite of themselves, is to treat them more cavalierly than we do who take them at their word, and believe them when they affirm that they are men liable to error, and also when they comment on the particular faults into which they fell.

Those who hold the opinion which we assail will not be driven from it by argument, because they have generally a felonious motive for adhering to it. The only circumstance that would force them from it is one which we cannot in the meantime bring up,—numbers. With an eye however to those whose opinions are yet to be formed, we think it our duty to canvass this subject. The motive that actuates our opponents, is not the love of holiness, as they allege, but the love of what they call a *visible church*. They procure the chief materials of this edifice by pronouncing the *ceremonial* acts of the apostles inspired. It is easy to pretend that they ascribe this character to them because of the holy awe in which

they hold the immediate followers of Christ. We do not for an instant suppose that this is the real motive of the leading Pharisees. Some of their weaker partisans probably believe all that is taught them on this article. But the guides of opinion, since the reformation at least, have adhered to it with tenacity, because it supplies them with beams for the scaffolding of that visible church, which is the only point in which they feel much interest.

Those who stand up so stoutly for the inspiredness of the formal acts of the twelve should try to be consistent. Their system should embrace all the actions of this nature. Why then do they not make it imperative upon the churches still that things strangled and the blood of animals should be rejected as articles of food? Why do they not make this a cardinal point, seeing that the apostles thought it deserving of a decree? And why do they not insist that all members of churches should be circumcised, if Paul did right in circumcising Timothy? They tell us with much solemnity that Timothy was of Jewish descent on one side of the house. This, if it means anything, would prove that circumcision is still binding on Jewish converts, at least. And why do they not exact that all should shave their heads and perform the vow of a Nazarene, since they affect to see so much beauty and propriety in the conduct of Paul? This is a somewhat arbitrary method of dealing with the Bible. They inform us that the apostles acted by inspiration, and then they allow, when pushed, that there was a little roguery in the behaviour of Peter, and some improper irritation in the demeanour of Paul, and then they admit by implication that ignorance, perhaps double-dealing were displayed in some of their ceremonial doings, and then they take a determined stand on the cases in which they practised baptism by water, or assembled on the first day of the week, and they say of these that they were dictated by inspiration, that they are designed as examples for all time, that it is impious in the extreme to question their correctness. If our opponents would lay down some plan, and stick to it, we would think more of their intellects. Thus if they would say that the acts of the apostles are subject to review and criticism when they have respect to the ordinary events of life, but that they lie beyond the province of criticism when they have regard to ceremonial matters,—if they were to draw this distinction, we would consider them intelligible, although we would think them absurd. But they adhere to no one line of argument. They cannot make good their position on either one or other of these two sorts of objections. If they attempt to pretend that the apostles were immaculate in their moral acts, we ply them with the question, how does it happen that Peter and Paul in this capacity did what even you do not venture to defend? If they shift their ground and say, we give up the moral, but maintain that they were immaculate in the

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formal, then we ask them why they do not insist on the sinfulness of things strangled and blood?—why they do not lay the vow of the Nazarenes upon all flesh?

An argument that we have heard used by our opponents is the following: We do not uphold the Apostles as absolutely sinless in their acts, we allow that in certain instances they erred and did wrong, but we insist that it should not be said of them that they are in error in any instance, unless distinct scriptures can be brought forward to prove it. In appearance this statement is reasonable, but it is so in appearance only. When their offer is accepted, it turns out that no text that can be quoted is of the degree of distinctness to satisfy them. After debating with them for some time, a man at length finds that what they want is not argument but authority. The passages which you allege would convince them, if you could show that they have been advanced for a century or two, and that people generally are disposed to receive them: But ten times the proof which you allege would be rejected, unless it were backed by these other circumstances. They affirm that they believe Peter to have erred wrong, when he attempted to conceal the fact that he had eaten with the Gentiles, because Paul says that he was to be blamed. But would they admit this were the statement brought forward for the first time? In addition to the declaration of Paul there is the other consideration, that it has been long received, it has become orthodox through time. This, to carnal minds, which can never initiate, but which always follow suit in theology, is an indispensable ingredient in every argument. Paul says that Peter was to blame, and Peter is accordingly blamed. Are there not instances as pertinent as this? Is there not a case in which Paul censures Paul? When in the first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul says, "I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius," and when he adds, "for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel," have we not an example in which an apostle condemns himself? This apostle in common with the others had the commission laid on him to go and teach all nations, baptizing them. But in the passage just quoted, he thanks God that he had baptized but a few persons in the church of Corinth, and affirms that he was not sent to baptize. Either then he rejoices that he had not executed the commission which he was sent to fulfil, or he censures his own acts of baptizing with water. In one sense he was undoubtedly sent to baptize, but if he rejoices that he had baptized few with water, that was not the sense. If that was not the sense, then he blames himself for supposing in certain previous instances that it was the sense. The commission given to Paul either meant that he should go and convert men, or that he should go and wash them with water. He rejoices that he had baptized but a few persons in Corinth. Are we to suppose that it

was cause of joy to him that he had converted but few? If that view be untenable, what other remains behind but this, that he is glad because he had seen into the real nature of his mission,—glad, because he had used the rite but in few cases,—glad, because aware of the character of spiritual baptism, he had furnished the occasion to a few only of mistaking a Jewish ceremony for a Christian reality? Paul censuring the conduct of Paul, is a case quite as relevant as Paul censuring the conduct of Peter. He thanks God that he had practised a rite only in a few instances, which argues that he considered that he had done wrong in the cases in which he had used it. A man does not thank God that he has done an act seldom, unless he thinks that it would have been better if he had not done it at all. And then the sweeping declaration that he was sent to baptize, makes the subject even plainer. He was sent to baptize, it was an essential ingredient in his commission. His declaration, therefore, must mean that he was not sent to perform the rite of baptism. But if he, an apostle who was expressly sent to baptize, was not sent to administer the rite of baptism, on what pretext is that rite retained as if it were an element of the gospel. For Paul to exult that he did not baptize, when he was commanded to do so, was either to glory in being an unbeliever, or to declare that he had nothing to do with the ceremony. We are aware that some things which it is usual to call arguments, are employed to give a different construction to these texts last cited. We leave it to those who read, to judge between our opponents and ourselves.

There is another case in which Paul may be said to censure his own acts; we allude to the passage in which he says, there is "one baptism." We know of but one class that deals with some show of consistency with this text,—they are those who do not believe in the spirit and in the doctrine of regeneration. Those who say that they hold to the baptism of the spirit and the baptism of water, and try to make it appear that two baptisms are but one, evince a mental Jesuitry, or at least an incapacity to reason, that is quite wonderful. Scripture speaks of the rite, as the "baptism of John," or the baptism of water, and as a fact by itself. It speaks of the baptism of the Spirit, as a fact by itself also. It appears to put the two in opposition. It seems to associate the one with the mission of John, the other with the mission of the Son of God. How does it happen that these two become one, that two facts, apparently heterogeneous, are forced to coalesce into one simple homogeneous element? When Paul affirms that there is but one baptism, he surely as much as declares that there is but one baptism, and believed in *two*. But he does not say so in these very terms, and therefore our shuffling opponents would see no argument in what we advance.

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science toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ," and when he says of it that it saves, is he of the same mind as when he exclaims, "Can any man forbid water?" Paul informs us that there is but one baptism, Peter, adds the circumstance that it saves.—does he but in this justify, or does he condemn the rite which he was so eager to administer, when after Pentecost he began the work of an Evangelist?

When Paul gives the following description of the features of the law: "which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation"—does he not include in it one or two particulars that the Apostles at the outset of their mission considered to belong to the Gospel? When he says that the law stood in meats, he surely cannot mean to vindicate the conduct of the Apostles when they shewed themselves punctilious on this head and sent forth a bulletin relating to things strangled and blood. If the law stood in meats, those who promulgated a mission for abjuring meats, had wandered from the gospel to the territory of the law.

It is often supposed that the conduct of the Apostles favours the doctrine of a day specially holy. Allowing that there is ground for this supposition, we again pass from their actions to their writings, and gauge the one by the other. Paul says to the Galatians, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years," "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." A round statement such as this, is more than sufficient to overweigh a hundred instances, if they could be procured, in the Acts of the Apostles, in which these men are found in an upper chamber on a particular day. The visible church, however, when an ordinance is in question, would much rather infer and surmise than take the doctrine from a downright edict. Paul says to the Colossians, "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbaths: which are a shadow of things to come: but the body is of Christ." Where there was no prepossession to influence the mind, a man would derive from this that the Gospel has no connection with any ritual matter. If he did not draw a conclusion quite as extensive as this, he would at the least consider that none of the circumstances expressly named, could be received as an element belonging to the New Testament. Meats can have no share in it, for they are mentioned. Drinks cannot appertain to it, for they are specified. Above all, a religious regard to days, can have no concern with it, because such an ingredient is excluded with peculiar precision: To debar the subject under so many designations, is to do so in good earnest. To say to Christians that they are free and beyond criticism, in relation to "an holy day, the new moon, or the Sabbaths," is to deal thoroughly with the question. It is a stronger enactment than if the Apostle had said, let no man judge you in respect of any day. It is as if Paul had striven to shut out controversy by going into details. He seems to have written under the impression, men will wrest a mere general ordinance to suit their own purposes, I will prevent this by specifying a variety of instances. When I have told them that the Gospel takes no account of holy days, of new moons, or of Sabbaths, I have illustrated the principle by so many cases, as to leave them without excuse if they refuse to see it. But Paul does more than this. He does not merely prescribe a reverence for days with much minuteness of specification, he assigns the reason. These days in common with other matters of an external nature do not belong to the present economy, because they have

served their purpose. They represented facts which were once remote but are now present. They were types, but they have ceased to be of obligation because their antitypes are come. They are shadows which have been done away by the manifestation of Christ the substance. To illustrate the principle by naming different cases of days and to back it by stating a reason of a nature so intelligible, is to deal thoroughly with the question. Yet such is the morbid inclination of mankind for a mode of worship that requires neither mind nor piety, that if they can find or conjecture that the apostles were wont to meet on the first day of the week, they raise this trivial circumstance to the rank of an argument much more conclusive than the one which we collect from the epistles of Paul. True, Paul in various cases where he wrote under the unquestionable power of inspiration, declares that the religious observance of days is a circumstance that belonged to the old covenant. It is a suspicion he raised that Paul and the others when in a category wherein they were exposed to error, convened on one day rather than another, that is enough to lay an obligatory formal Sabbath upon us, enough too to change it from the seventh to the first day. And as to the texts that we have cited, they are stripped of their force by some such incoherent unmeaning jargon as this,—they are not levelled at the precious institution of the first day of the week, but at the doctrines (of what are euphemistically called Judaising teachers), who wished to revise the practices of the law. It is possible that it may be gathered from the book of the acts that the apostles were wont to assemble on one day in preference to others,—it is also possible that it may be proved that they made religion of so meeting, although this appears very dubious. On the other hand, it is certain that in their epistles each and all of them lay down principles which are utterly subversive of a reverence for set seasons. Once more then, if, as the profane world maintains, a reverence for a particular day can be procured from the book of the acts, we set this down as another of the cases in which the apostles were unquestionably wrong. We do not make the statement that the acts warrant the conclusion, but we say that if it can be got from the book, it must be regarded as a point to be scrupulously avoided, not one which is to be accepted. The reason on which we proceed is, that whenever we find a record at variance with an act, we invariably prefer the record to the act.

To select another case. Paul is seen to circumcise Timothy, and this he does because of the Jews; for they knew all that his father was a Greek. But the same apostle, when he registers what the spirit tells him, says in one passage, "neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." In another he writes, "neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love." In a third case he lays down what is even more to the purpose: "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law." Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." We do not think so meanly of the philosophy of this passage as to consider it to state that the simple rite of circumcision will prevent a man from receiving the truth, or will denote him as one who has finally cast off allegiance to it. It contains a thought juster and more profound than this. Circumcision here stands for the system of which it was a leading ordinance. The amount of the statement is, that faith and legality are

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incompatible facts, and that the doing of one rite implicates a man in the doing of them all. When Paul circumcised Timothy, he did not in that fact prove that he was devoid of spirituality, nor did he in that act throw an insurmountable barrier in the way of his catechumen, nor did he even effectually preclude the witnesses of the transaction from embracing spiritual religion. But he certainly compromised the principle which he enunciates in the Scriptures quoted above. He carried legality over into the domain of the gospel. He justified the vicious mixture of the two dispensations. He lent his sanction to all the incongruities that have since been introduced. He gave rise to the formation of the nucleus around which errors have kept gathering ever since. Although he may have damned no souls in the doing of the act, he indirectly contributed to the perdition of the millions who in consequence of such acts have fallen victims to false religion.

There was more than this in the action. It was done "because of the Jews." A dead rite was performed because there were persons present who wished to be saved by ceremonies, and did not wish to be saved by faith in the Son of God. To circumcise Timothy because there were bystanders of this description, was to behave as if it were possible to split the difference with the devil. It was to be ignorant enough to suppose that carnality may be propitiated, by meeting it half way. In how many thousand shapes must this act have re-appeared! Of the immeasurable chicanery that has prevailed in the visible church, how large a part may have lineally sprung from this one deed! If in our own times in which there is certainly more intelligence than was found in preceding periods, men turn to this action of Paul in order to comment upon its beauty, how likely is it that it must have been admired and followed in previous ages? No one even now looks at it to say, here is a case where an apostle contravenes the principles that are stated in his writings, he trafficks with ceremonies, he compromises the liberty of the gospel, he panders to the prejudices of Pharisees. It is adverted to so as to furnish a theme for such comments as these,—see how tender the holy Paul shows himself to human frailties, learn from his conduct that ordinances which do not belong to the New Testament may be rightfully performed when by such compromise it is possible to propitiate the feelings of those who live by rites. We regard this action and one or two like it, as the undoubted parents of all the formalism and all the double-dealing that have existed since in connection with theology. We admit that the children have wonderfully improved upon the parent; but that was to be looked for. A slight deviation from the right line made by an illustrious man, becomes in the lapse of centuries an absolute tangent. We are far from meaning to allege that the apostles foresaw this, and foreseeing, rejoiced in it. Nevertheless, they originated the evil. What may have been the amount of light possessed by Paul when he did this act, what were the precise motives with which he did it, are questions to which we do not pretend to give an exact answer. It is enough for our present purpose that in doing it he transgressed against two principles that are clearly laid down in his own writings. He violated his own doctrine that rites do not belong to Christianity, and that they defile it. He sinned against his own position that we should overcome evil with good. Prepossession apart, it was the most likely of all events that Paul should err in this very manner. He had been not merely a Pharisee, but one eminent for the rigidity of his tenets. There had been a time when he thought it the

best of good works to put to death the followers of Jesus of Nazareth. He had remained a member of this crooked set up to a period of life when the character in general is matured. He was converted, but regeneration is a gradual process. Unless in his case regeneration changed its method, and lifted him above the possibility of error, was it not to be anticipated that the habits of the Pharisee would occasionally come forth? If the instance under review be one of those cases in which Paul was actuated by principles which he had learned not from Christ but from Gamaliel, it is high time that its real complexion should be understood. It is the height of ignominy that men who profess to be taught by that spirit who promises to make all things possible to their faith, should at the distance of eighteen centuries be worshipping bad acts because done by those who generally did good ones. To stand poring and wondering and paraphrasing over deeds which the very doers condemn,—to see marvellous comeliness and fitness in actions that are at decided variance with the canonical principles of the New Testament, is to carry the worship of men to a monstrous height, and to prove that the intelligence and religion of the visible churches may have attained to the *ne plus ultra* of drivelling baseness. This is the point at which to assail ceremony and time-serving. It is quite bootless to attack it at any point farther down, because in that case the root still remains. Many clever and forcible things have been stated against duplicity both in the Popish and the Protestant churches, but it ought to attract the notice of those who make such statements that the evil never does anything more than change its form. Since the days of Skelton, and even long before his time, sarcasm and argument have been used in each generation to expose the trimming and duplicity of the different sects, but the utmost that comes of it is that the juggling spirit is more on his guard. There is little pleasure in lopping off the heads of a brute that can reproduce them as fast as they are cut off. If legality and expediency are principles hostile to the Christian religion, there must be a means of attacking them that will produce an influence. If they are from hell, the Spirit of God must be able to put his converts on the way to overthrow them. In our opinion, must be to strike at the root. Accept the Act of Toleration as things to be invariably followed:—the root can never be reached. On the contrary, show that the germ of the vice referred to is contained in the doings of these men, and the false church is upturned from the foundation. It will be a difficult step to take. Tactics of strange character will be used to hinder the movement. Fifty years of hard fighting will be necessary to secure the ground. But once secured, the work will be comparatively easy. An opportunity will then be afforded to start. The church will stand on ground which it has been long occupied. It will be able to go forth upon its journey under circumstances better than it has ever yet known, because it will proceed on it "taking nothing of the Gentiles." There is no error more fatal than to depend upon a false rule, and to be in a state of mind which is incapable of listening to any argument that would shew the inaccuracy of the instrument. For ever to fall back upon certain actions as infallible guides, and to be under the hallucination that nothing which may be advanced can shake their credit, is the situation of those condemned spirits that were doomed to fill a tub that was pierced with holes. Nor is the predicament of those who impugn the evils in question, much more agreeable. They assail that which is quite as bad as they term it, but

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they do it no injury. They force it to change its name, but they do not oblige it to change its nature. They hunt a shadow, they drive their weapon through a mist. How different will it be when the friends of the truth shall be bold to say to impostors, We deny your premises; we impugn your cooperation, we refuse to entertain the question whether or no the apostles acted as you do, and we nail you down to the fact, that the acts of the apostles themselves are by the evidence of their writings, tainted by ignorance, by superstition, by anger, by formalism, by double-dealing.

The conduct of Paul when he persisted in going up to Jerusalem is, we believe, commonly viewed as an instance of his wonderful devotedness to the gospel. If it can be shown that he acted improperly, that will not go to prove that there was no devotedness in his feelings, but it will make out that he took a wrong way of displaying it. An act to be all that it ought to be, should combine warmth of sentiment with accuracy of judgment. If the latter element be wanting, the mere strength of feeling cannot make it admirable or fit to be imitated. Men may be martyrs by mistake. A mere-willingness to risk life in a cause, is not necessarily the best feeling that can be entertained. Strong emotion excited by improper reasons may be the very worst state of mind in which a man can be. Feeling, to be respectable, should be set in motion by worthy reasons, and should bear a right proportion to these reasons. Feeling, when it exists under conditions different from these, may prompt to any crime that can be named, and it is no justification that the subject of the emotion makes life or fortune on the venture. We first hear of the resolution when Paul was at Ephesus.—“And he came to Ephesus, and left them here: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. When they desired him to tarry longer with them, he consented not, but bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will.” The motive which induced him to refuse the invitation to tarry in Ephesus was, “I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem.” We impugn the motive. As a Christian he had no concern with a Jewish feast. In his Epistles, and in passages already cited, he has fully shown that such matters were abolished by the death of Christ, and that they could not be practised without sin and danger. He who informs us that the first covenant stood in such circumstances as meals and drinks which were imposed only until the time of reformation, was not in harmony with his own principle when he made it an affair of high import that he should repair to Jerusalem to celebrate an obsolete festival. He who forbids the church at Colosse to let any man judge them “in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day,” was in flagrant discord with his own edict, when he withstood solicitations from eager disciples because of a Levitical feast to be held in a distant city. We may be told that it was not the feast, but the concourse of people and the prospect of doing good, that influenced the Apostle. We reject petty fancies when we are confronted by downright assertions. Paul says, “I must by all means keep this feast,” and this plain statement renders all hypotheses on the subject impertinent. That he may have contemplated the other circumstances is the most probable thing that can be named, but he does not mention them. We are called upon to deal with the reasons which he actually gave, and not with those which he may have harbored in his breast. Or it may be argued, that good came from his going to Jeru-

sales. Good came by the treachery of Judas,—good comes out of all the stratagems that Satan employs to defeat the purposes of the Almighty. The beneficial result belongs in all its extent to the wisdom of God, the pernicious means belong in all their extent to the wickedness of men, and the Devil. And yet educated theologians, when other arguments fail them, are constantly in the habit of resorting to such anilities as this,—it turned out well, therefore we must not condemn the conduct of the actor. The connection between Tenterden Steeple and the Goodwin Sands is quite as logical as this.

The next mention of the incident is thus,—“After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying,—After I have been there, I must also see Rome.” As the passage now stands, our argument could not be sustained. If Paul purposed in the Spirit of God, to go to Jerusalem, not only must we resign the discussion, but we must consent to believe that God gives contrary orders. Rather than take this attitude, we prefer adopting the reading which we see received by some authorities, viz: that Paul purposed in spirit. They who read *en to pneumati* in this manner, had no such object as we have to serve. They have taken it because it appeared to them the most accurate translation of the Greek. From the hands of those who would resist the conclusions at which we aim, we accept the rendering of the original. The next allusion to the circumstance is in these words,—“Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia; for he feared if it were possible for him to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.” The next reference to the event is in these words,—“And now behold, I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.” The Greek here, even less than in the preceding instance, demands the use of the article. Criticism is not violated by understanding that Paul went bound in his *own* spirit and not under obligation of the Holy Spirit. The truth of God would be outraged by the other supposition. We select that reading, therefore, which breaks no law of grammar, and leaves the Word of God in harmony with itself. The next case is more remarkable,—“Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden. And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul, through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.” Here there is not the same room for doubt as to the translation. In the previous case, the sentence as far as the Greek is concerned, might be rendered as if Paul purposed in the Holy Spirit,—and there to prevent such a reading, we are obliged to shew that it would lead to a theological absurdity. In the present instance the *dis tou pneumatos* is susceptible of no other possible sense than that in which we find it. Finally the circumstance is spoken of in the following passage,—“And the next day, we that were of Paul’s company departed, and came unto Caesarea; and we entered into the house of Philip the Evangelist, which was one of the seven: and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophecy. And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul’s girdle, and bound with it his own hands and feet, and said, thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth

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this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, the will of the Lord be done."

This is the most significant part of the narrative. A prophet comes to Paul when he was within a short distance of his destination, to give him the last and the most solemn warning. He delivers his message with a —thus saith the Holy Ghost. He was entitled to credit, for his reputation was of long standing. Sixteen years before, we find this same man exercising the office of a prophet, and uttering a prediction which was fulfilled. "And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar." A prophet comes forth to meet Paul, and warns him in the name of the Spirit to desist from his intentions —This happens in the house of an Evangelist whose four daughters were wont to prophecy. The companions of Paul and the people of Cæsarea added their entreaties to the warning of Agabus, and added them in vain. This was either a marvel of religious heroism, or it was sheer insatiation. The Apostle begins the chain of particulars by declaring that he must needs be present at the approaching feast of Pentecost in Jerusalem,—he repeats the resolution in several instances,—he forces all obstacles to give place to his intention,—he admits that in each city which he enters, the Holy Ghost apprises him of what awaits him should he persist in his purpose,—he stands out against the solicitations of hearers, the entreaties of fellow-labourers, and the solemn message of a prophet. Against all this no more can be urged, than that two of the passages that mention the design of Paul describe him as purposing it in the spirit. If they are to stand in this form we have here a clear case of the spirit sending *contrary* messages. But as this hypothesis cannot be entertained, theological truth is vindicated by understanding the two texts to state, that Paul purposed in spirit and was bound in spirit, to attain which sense no violence has been offered to the Greek. That Paul viewed the feast of Pentecost as something more than a festival we are quite willing to believe. That he hailed the prospect of a great concourse as an occasion in which he might exercise his gifts to much advantage, we think natural. That having long wandered through different regions, he felt strong yearnings to revisit the scenes of his youth, we can readily imagine. That he may even have thought as many other less celebrated preachers have thought since his time, that his talents were poorly appreciated among provincial audiences, to whom he needed to begin with the very alphabet of religion, and that he panted for the intelligence and the excitement of a large metropolis, we could conceive to be possible. Probably none would think it more impossible than the class that sit on Moses' seat in most countries, which always act upon this principle, which always float on the crest of the billow because they are of the very lightest materials, and which always talk as if there were no such thing in the visible church as insatiable ambition badly plated over with evangelical pretensions. If we are right in our estimate of this act, it contained ignorance, superstition, and wilfulness. It may have contained other ele-

ments, but we feel tolerably sure in reference to those which we have named. That Paul should have conjured up many reasons that imparted an aspect of much importance to the step which he wished to take, is noways opposed to ordinary experience. A strong mind when it has once allowed itself to form a wrong idea, is always ingenious in devising arguments to sustain itself in the improper course of action. That while really obeying the improper course of action. That while really obeying the impulse of legality or ambition, Paul should have staved off reason, by dwelling on the readiness which he truly felt to die for the truth, is a case that has occurred frequently. Because he was conscious that he really bore within him the spirit of a martyr, therefore be supposed that he must be going in the right direction. Looking at this act in the light in which we have represented it, we do not find it hard to explain the bad reasoning, the morbid sentiment, the formalism, and the dictating to Providence that have characterized the churches in all periods. Regarding it as it appears to us, it seems large enough to produce any conceivable amount of all such evil results.—This sect is soft and tender in regard to places,—how can you shew it up, nothing would hinder righteous Paul from repairing to Jerusalem! This other is sentimental in the article of feasts, what can you say to it, the great apostle of the Gentiles must by all means keep the feast of Pentecost! All sects are in the habit of reading providences their own way and of finding that they point to great cities and large assemblages, and things agreeable to nature; Huntingdon, the half starved itinerant, conceives that he has a distinct call to London, because in a dream he thinks he hears the command “prophecy among the thick boughs!” Arrived there, his method of decyphering signs conducted the uneducated hind to fame of its own sort, and some thousands of yearly income. How can such well meant juggling be exposed so long as Paul is admired when he took providence into his own hands? There was slavery in the thought I must keep the feast of Pentecost. It made the man who uttered it a debtor to do the whole law. If there was an obligation on Paul to keep this feast there is an obligation on us to do the same. If we are right in thinking that such questions of meats do not concern us, Paul was wrong in supposing that they concerned him. If as an agent he did not see that feasts were exploded by the death of Christ, then decidedly he did not understand the line of separation between the law and the gospel. If he did not know this distinction, then it is a monstrous opinion that his conduct is a model in every respect. There was unsound thinking when he preferred his own design of keeping a Jewish feast to the urgent entreaties of eager acolytes that he should continue with and instruct them. It was like a thousand acts that have been done since, and in which a sentiment has prevailed over a duty. However accurate his mind might sometimes be, it was in a perverted state when he thought it of more moment to keep feasts than to teach those who felt an appetite for his instructions. The quakers and other religionists have been much censured for assigning a preference to what they believe an inward light and for alighting plain duties. The root of such practices cannot be extracted whilst the church stands ogling and extolling the conduct of Paul. No moralist can lay it down with any distinctness that philanthropy is to be preferred to ceremonies, so long as theology maintains that Paul judged wisely when he thought it more incumbent on him to keep the feast of Pentecost than to tarry at Ephesus and feed hungry souls. I will have mercy and not sacrifice, says

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the scripture, but the full meaning of the maxim cannot be appreciated whilst we are in the habit of admiring an opposite principle in the doings of an apostle. All the countless and foul instances in which churchmen have obeyed emotion and deserted principle, must stand before us half and sometimes wholly justified, whilst there is a case in point which we persist in commending. The affair becomes more complicated by the admission "that the holy ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." This would give us to understand that more intimations had been made than are fully related. That the Holy Ghost should warn Paul that sorrows awaited him at Jerusalem, is not a reason to cause him to desist from proceeding thither, *provided always* that the Holy Ghost had commanded him in the first instance to go. That after such an original command the spirit should interpose with significations of danger in the enterprise, would merely prove that the man was *graciously* forewarned in order that he might be forearmed. That he should go forward in spite of the knowledge that he was incurring peril, would only show that his faith was strong. A man is fully entitled to brave consequences when he is obeying orders. But when the enterprise is suggested by *inclination*, when the object of it is to celebrate an obsolete feast, the case is altered. The intimation from the spirit of God that there are bonds and afflictions on the path, becomes equivalent to an injunction to desist. To go forward under such circumstances is not faith but fatuity. No man has the right to incur imprisonment and afflictions at the instigation of a bad or foolish motive. Another feature is added to the case, when he lands at Tyre, and finds *disciples* there who tell him "through the spirit that he should not go up to Jerusalem." The intimation came from a quarter deserving of credit, and Luke, who writes the book, says that it was "through the spirit." Was a man justified in slighting such a warning because he could say I have strong inward promptings in favour of Jerusalem and the feast of Pentecost,—besides liberty or life are things that I am always willing to stake? Has a man the right to say that he is exposing himself to danger for the truth's sake, when the author of the truth tells him in different ways not to run the risk? Paul in reasoning thus put *sentiment* above God. He justified himself in a wrong course of action by thinking and speaking of his contempt of peril. Every mincing licentiate who wishes to rise and has not manliness enough to say so, has, as he imagines, scriptural authority for going in the way of inclination. Taste leads him to the capital, to wealth, and to a dirty sort of renown, and he finds piety besides in his conduct by turning to the acts of the Apostles. Nay in all the long dark story of the corruptions of the truth and in all the indescribably horrid deeds that have owed their origin to the preferring of sentiments and longings to distinct principle, there is not one so foul but may pretend to a lineal descent from the act of an apostle. By far the most important link in the chain is what occurs at Cesarea. A prophet, and one known as such for sixteen years, comes from Judea to bar the path, he gives his message distinctly and with solemnity, he is supported by the remonstrances of the people of the town and the companions of Paul. An inclination, a legal prompting, a suggestion of ambition, is promoted above all this, the man continues his route, and we look on and adorn the subject with tawdry rhetoric, and do meaner acts in the same style, and bless God that the lines are fallen to us in pleasant places, and call him a blasphemer that would prove not from fancy but by the epistles of this same Paul that the action deserves censure!

I must go to Jerusalem, says Paul, and partly from this reverence for places has come down through successive centuries, and rules men to this hour. I must keep the feast of Pentecost says that apostle, proceeding from which source, the law and the gospel are mixed up to this day, and as all men can observe feasts, all men believe themselves to be Christians. I cannot allow believers at Ephesus, nor disciples at Tyre, nor intimations from the Holy Ghost in every city, nor a prophet, fellow-labourers, and friends at Caesarea to turn me from my purpose. Liberty or life are things that I am willing to peril, and from this has been derived Quixotism, fighting with wind-mills, and above all the superiority of inward yearnings and animal emotions to the Word of God.

Of the three fallacies contained in this act,—a regard for places, a respect for rites, and a preference for feeling over revelation, the last is the most insidious. Perhaps it has not often occurred that men have acted *arcededly* in this way. Sophistry generally avoids the distinct enunciation of motives and principles. But unexpressed, it has had great sway over men's minds. Sometimes folly has been bold enough to acknowledge it. In the two centuries during which the quakers have existed, it has been avowed more than once. A few years ago a controversy turning to this question agitated that sect, the members of which found themselves split into two parties, of which one maintained the supremacy of the written word the other of the inward light. It is folly to pretend that this is the question of the holy spirit or the word. The two can never be opposed. In the definition of the functions of the Holy Ghost it is expressly affirmed that he teaches by the word, and that it is by this criterion alone that men can ascertain whether he be with them. To advocate an inward light that is independent of and that may be opposed to the written word, is to defend as pestilent a heresy as it is possible to name or imagine. We do not know whether the partisans of this error have made use of this action of Paul to support their views. Even if they have not, the presence of such an incident, not censured but lauded, must have a tacit influence in helping the error. Let it stand on record that an apostle thought fit to slight repeated injunctions to desist from a purpose that he had formed, and let it continue to be the fashion to extol him as a noble devotee in this act, and we are deprived of a fixed rule for measuring right and wrong. Any one who is accustomed with some integrity of mind to look out upon the doings of the different sects, will see our remarks to be reasonable and to be called for. In every one of them a man has only to say I feel a strong inward prompting toward a particular line of conduct, in order to command the sympathy of the sentimental herd. Let there be some peril or loss connected with the course of action, and enthusiasm rises to its highest pitch and "the man of feeling" is classed with the "noble company of martyrs." We admit the existence of what are called *ganglia fasciculi*, or bunches of nerves in the human structure. We coincide with all that is usually alleged as to their utility in the acts of nutrition, respiration, digestion or generation, but we cannot allow them to be the criteria of right and wrong, the umpires in theology. We once heard a grave educated divine maintaining that baptism by water must be an ordinance belonging to the New Testament, because he had often experienced delightful sensations whilst celebrating it. We are constantly in the habit of hearing, that the ceremony called the Lord's Supper, must be agreeable to scripture, because those who observe it do

ponse that their minds are mightily lifted up during the services. The love of offspring is a strong feeling in man and in the lower animals, and some degree of it is necessary for the continuance of the animal kingdom, but this does not prove that it is necessarily a religious emotion, since such reasoning would bring quadrupeds, birds, fishes, and insects into the boom of the church. It is therefore no infallible mark that an oration is from God, because this very common and very jealous feeling has been strongly excited during its delivery. An ecclesiastic does not afford incontestible proof that his head is sound and his soul sincere, because he takes up little children in his arms, and ignorant that it was a symbol, reminds his flock that Jesus did the same, and draws all maternity in leading strings after him. There are certain qualmish sensations associated with child-bearing in the human species. These are very properly regarded as unpleasant tokens of the fall, and it is right that they should be tenderly soothed with hartshorn and other cordials. But they are not essentially spiritual. They cannot be received as criteria of the soundness of a sermon or treatise. We are not bound to consider that a revival, as it is termed, is real, because helped by close air, it has given rise to many cases of spasms. The dissection of such matters in connection with the rise and influence of the *beast*, or spurious Christianity, remains yet to be made. The disclosures that a discerning mind can foresee in this direction are stupendous. It will yet be shown up to the conviction of men, that mere brute emotions arising out of ceremonies, and pomps, and sacraments, and galvanic appeals, have been the principal ingredients in the annals of what we call the churches. Vast consequences will grow out of these great yet nasty revelations, and mind instead of nerves will aspire to the direction in theology. In the meantime there are obstacles in the way of such researches. We cannot enter the stable, much less clear it of its filth, so long as false feeling is canonized on system. To persist in saying that Paul did nobly when he went up to Jerusalem, is to put a barrier in the way of wholesome enquiry.

If it be just in any degree to judge an act by its consequences, this journey was not undertaken by divine command. The very next transaction was a case of temporising and legality, in which Paul as well as James were the principal actors. "And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they heard it they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law; and they are informed of thee that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children; neither to walk after the customs. What is it, therefore? the multitude must needs come together; for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee; we have four men which have a vow on them; them take, and purify thyself with them and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads, and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. Then Paul took the men, and the next day purify-

ing himself with them, entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them." This transaction displays either the height of ignorance or of duplicity; or what is more probable, it contains a mixture of the two. The men who could act thus are not models for absolute imitation, and to state the contrary is monstrous. They shew themselves profoundly ignorant of the distinction between the law and the gospel,—they construct different codes for Jew and Gentile,—they make a ludicrously foolish scheme for the Gentiles, wherein they throw together things of moment with others that would suit Hindoo or Chinese theology,—they appear to regard the Levitical ceremonies as still binding on the Jews, and they seem to consider truckling to popular feeling as very legitimate. This act is the epitome of all the petty, false and bad elements that have entered into the composition of the churches ever since. With the mind resting on this, one is enabled to understand the rise and progress of Popery and of the Greek church. With this to guide us we have a clue to every case wherein mankind have deified the form and rejected the spirit. With this solution we can readily explain how the sects have invariably displayed an infatuated fondness for practices of infantine smallness, to such a degree that vigorous intellect could scarcely co-exist along with the profession of christianity as it is. Assisted by this joint transaction of Paul and James, there is no instance of infernal time-serving and holy roguery in the whole black chronicles of the Popish and Protestant churches, but what we can explain how it came into existence. And helped by this incident we can solve the problem why it is that five centuries of assault, elapsing between Wickliffe and ourselves, have not sufficed to inflict a mortal wound upon the beast. Wickliffe, Jerome, Luther, Calvi, Fox and Barclay have enunciated principles that would long before this have abrogated ceremonies, but for one circumstance. They did not strike low enough,—they admitted wrong principles, they received the deeds of the Apostles as of canonical authority,—they did not allow themselves to suppose that the commencement of all the Jewry was among the immediate followers of Christ. No wonder that the churches take so firm a stand at this point: one might as well expect that the foxes would assist the hunters in blocking up all their holes, as that sectaries would allow the rightness of those actions to be questioned which justify them in all their perversions of the truth. The incident which we criticise contains, (1.) Improper subservience to prejudices; (2.) Deep ignorance of the true nature of the gospel; (3.) Intense legality; (4.) Double-dealing; (5.) Inane and petty distinction. And yet men with the writings of these Apostles in their hands, wherein all such feelings are pointedly reprobated, sit brooding and cooing over the act. We rather think that the few who take the trouble to look at the acts of the Apostles, have something which they call an argument wherewith they pretend to vindicate this transaction. We even imagine that we have heard it mooted or muttered. We feel tolerably sure that it brought no intelligible idea to our mind,—and of this we are certain, that no man who has a regard for his time or his sanity, would allow himself to name or to refute it. There are many thousand Jews zealous for the law,—therefore, says James to Paul, you must seem to reverence it, whatever be your private opinions. They have heard that you teach the Gentiles that they are free from the law,—therefore you must do what will turn their minds in another direction. You must so act as to

declares that the temple-worship, and the ceremonies of the law are still in full force. This is the line of conduct which you must adopt in reference to the Jews. In regard to the Gentiles we are not so strict. We have a hodge-podge for them, which debars them from "things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication." This will be a code sufficiently rigid for those, who have not been accustomed to our severe regulations. We are willing to lay hold of either horn of the dilemma. If the sects insist upon it, we are not averse to ascribe this to deep ignorance, and then to put the question, is this mental darkness the thing that has been so long set forth, as a perfect model to the churches? If they prefer it, we are almost ready to adopt the other alternative, and to admit that the root of the evil was not so much ignorance as it was the fear of men, and the lust of popularity. Upon which we would propose the query, if the object of the gospel be to produce Christians and not to manufacture intriguers, how happens it that these acts have been so strongly upheld and so universally followed? If left to ourselves, we would prefer the theory that there was a mixture of motives:—A large amount of ignorance, a strong infusion of time-serving, would in our opinion best explain the transaction,—but this does not any more than the other views entitle it to be looked upon as an example to mankind.

If when Jesus said it is finished, and when the veil of the temple was rent in twain, the ceremonial law was properly ended, then the whole of this transaction discovers an ignorance of or a desire to cloak this fact. If the gospel be of the catholic character, that in it "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all,"—if this be a true delineation then it was absurd to make one rule for the Jews, and another for the Gentiles. If the apostles give us to believe, that to practise the law is virtually to deny Christ, we are entitled to bring their own rule down upon themselves, when they evidently infringe it. If the Christian religion is described as a system that is not congenial to human inclination then it is a poor recommendation of the conduct of its first teachers, that they endeavored so to shape it as to accommodate it to human prejudices. If the morality of the Bible inculcates that which is straightforward and downright, then we have clear cause to censure its first teachers when they adopted crooked methods. There are many very bad points in this transaction! After the apostles had been engaged during *twenty-seven years* in the office of ministers, it is a poor thing to see two of their number behaving as if the law were still in full force, at least in reference to the Jews. If they acted thus near the close of their ministry, what is to be said of us who unhesitatingly receive as canonical, the things which they did near the commencement of their ministry in regard to baptism by water? When they had been so long conversant with the religion which they preached, it was ignorant in the extreme, or it was paltry, that they should make the taste of Pharisees a rule to guide them in their conduct. When they had so long dealt with a system which declares itself to belong to no peculiar nation; it was a grave error to draw a line between the regulations that should be adopted toward different races. When they had long been familiar with a revelation, that is as great as God its author, it was woefully to narrow their mind, to publish missives concerning blood and things strangled. When they had had time and opportunity enough to have learned how to weigh matters in the balance

of the sanctuary, it showed a gross want of a fine moral perception to put fornication on the same level with blood and things strangled. For centuries past, it has been an article in some churches, and a rule of action in all, that teachers should adapt their conduct to varying circumstances, and avoid offence by causing the truth to bend to the occasion. He who perceives this universal tendency must also see that it cannot be shaken in the meantime, because it is based upon a foundation that is received as canonical. Every church that has been erected as yet has gone into the storehouse of the law to procure articles for its scaffolding, —but Paul entered into the temple and took the vow of a Nazarene, and it is the fashion to think he did right, and until his conduct be disposed of, we cannot deal with those who act upon the same principle. The doings of the churches are generally astonishing by their pettiness. Centuries are consumed in discussions relative to sprinkling and immersion, the shape of buildings, the mode of ordination, the colour of surplices. The strongest minds of each age look contemptuously on, and acquiesce not from conviction, but mercenary interest. We are condemned to be pitiful and stunted race, until it can be shewn that the founders of our faith forsook their own principles, when they took a stand upon such "beggary elements" as things strangled and blood. If we find among our canons one that we receive, and which would make cock-a-leekie a sin, and hare-soup a crime, and black-puddings an abomination, we have merely to improve upon our authority to become as absurd as the Greeks, whom Socrates sneered at, and the Egyptians whom Juvenal satirized. Every true ecclesiastic rates the rites of his sect as the highest concerns with which he deals. He always succeeds in imbuing his flock with the same opinion. To him and to them what are called the ordinances, are matters of quite as much moment as any one of all the really moral duties of religion. And yet again we are debarred from complaining. These formal sinners can fall back upon authority. They can urge a rule in favor of their accursed system, — the apostles in conclave put the abstaining from fornication in line with abstaining from things strangled and blood. Viewing the question from the side of common sense, it looks a dark error to mix God up with things insignificant and vile. To the minds of all who can reason clearly, it tells against the whole code. It enables the sceptic from the parts of revelation which he does receive, to frame a religion and a first-cause, better on the whole than the ceremonial God of the bigoted sectary. Almost in the degree that the deity of the Greek philosopher, was a more respectable being than the Jupiter or the Bacchus of the multitude, almost in the same degree is the God of the modern free-thinker, a more estimable personage than the God of the rite-loving professor. The one, although after all he is not the God of the Bible, is a person put together with many of the fine attributes that belong to the living and true God. The other is a being patched up from old types and paltry rites, a "Bartlemy fair" king, a scare-crow deity with garments motley, heterogeneous, and ragged. Things do well as emblems that are monstrous when turned into facts. The abstaining from things strangled and from blood, contains a deep good thought, and therefore the *antitype* is valuable. But the mere type, the "beggary element" puts the screw on where it is of no service, places virtue where there is none, and leads men of fair capacity to estimate the system by what is reported to be one of its parts. The apostles forbade the Gentiles to eat blood and things strangled, the enactment is accepted as canonical, or, what is almost as

bad, is left unexplained, because churchmen wish to shirk the question implicated with it, and the point tacitly becomes the parent of an unlimited number of similar practices. The fathers of the faith in some cases made religion of empty rites: by so doing they favoured a natural tendency: to what may not the offspring drive down in future ages? Is there anything in the annals of monkery, is there any triviality of our own day, but comes by lawful descent from such an origin? A mind of moderate power of fancy could imagine a pedigree thus begun ending in imbecillity, dwarfishness and rickets. It could believe that men after dwindling during centuries, might become a pigmy race, like that people six inches high, whom Swift describes, and are split into factions on the clashing dogmas of high-heeled and low-heeled shoes. The pope baptising horses and washing beggars' feet, the glorious controversy respecting sprinkling and immersion, the paper covenant of Scotland, the fall-stools and architectural religion of Mr. Pusey, the figment of apostolical succession, the discussion between the railroad buffers and the sleek sabbatarians of the land of cakes: these are insect topics round which asses bray, and on which the tall mind scowls down with contempt; but small, as they are, they are of lineal descent from what is received as canonical, or at best is not contradicted. It is not a light offence to represent the great God in such an aspect as forces the most reasonable among his creatures to think him a whimsical and trifling personage. The heaviest thrusts that have been aimed at the Christian religion, have been through the side of cruel or paltry rites, and those might have been avoided had Christians done their duty, by shewing that the object assailed was but an emblem whose meaning or antitype was high and moral. That the apostles debarred the Gentiles from eating blood and things strangled, proves that they were not infallible guides in their conduct. That churches should have grown up, and should continue to this day, which make religion to consist in "bodily exercise," and are blind to its bearing upon vital matters, we consider to be not an anomaly but a natural consequence.

We cannot allow another feature, to which we have already referred, to pass without some comment. The apostles, in the passage quoted above, put eating of blood and things strangled in company with fornication. The time is not yet come for men to perceive the full extent of this error, because most minds have been accustomed to see ceremonies and duties placed on a level, or rather they have seen ceremonies elevated above duties. In stating this point one is obliged to address himself to a very few minds, and this being done, to cherish the hope that more may grow up to feel the truth of the statement. To abstain from fornication is to practise a moral rule that is intimately connected with the well-being of society. It is a duty of so clear a kind that even those who violate it can generally be induced to own its inoumbency. Most men could be brought to acknowledge that the infringement of this rule degrades the mind, injures the body, carries contamination into the existence of the female, and foment almost every other crime. In regard to the refraining from the eating of blood and things strangled, the same remarks cannot be made. They are insignificant matters so far as human happiness is concerned. As *emblems* they are of course susceptible of an adventitious utility, but they cannot be classed among those facts that in themselves are promotive of the welfare of men. There is no essential affinity between them and the human constitution that makes the observance of them its own

reward. But in the case of every practice really moral, one perceives an actual congeniality between it and the laws of human nature. To ponder it is wholesome to the mind, to put it into action is advantageous to the body. A circumstance not essentially good may be clothed with that character by virtue of a divine appointment, and in that case may take rank with any other enactment. In the times of the first covenant, the man who refrained from eating blood and things strangled, may perhaps have been doing acts of so much virtue in the eye of the Almighty as he who abstained from fornication. But when that covenant became obsolete when its externals passed into doctrines, it was an anachronism of the most mischievous sort to rate its obsolete types as of the same value with a moral practice that is virtuous under all circumstances. The churches do not enjoin this edict upon the people, but neither do they contradict it. Standing uncontroverted, it must exert a tacit influence. It probably has had its share in building up churches, constituted half on doctrines, half on ceremonies. With this confronting him a man is more easily reconciled to the notion that the adoration of a day, a place, a formal priesthood, the taking of bread and wine, and the washing with water, are practices really belonging to the New Testament.

But perhaps the greatest part of this transaction between Paul and James is duplicity. The one apostle advises that things should be so arranged as that the Jews may disbelieve facts which had really occurred, and facts that should have been distinctly preached to them. The other acquiesces in the plan, and along with other Jewish devotees enters the temple and goes through a lustration that occupies seven days. The worse actions done by the followers of Ignatius Loyola, were nothing more than an extension of this rule. Some sceptics, perhaps, might be induced to take our view of the transaction, but no ecclesiastic or partisan of any one of the sects would admit that it contains anything deserving of blame. Did the law expire at the death of Christ? If it did, the Jews should have been distinctly informed of that fact. That they should have had it disclosed prudently, tenderly, and perhaps gradually, we pretend not to contest; but they ought to have learned it. If it had been kept from them for twenty-seven years, it was full time that it should have been revealed to them when they came to ascertain that Paul had been preaching to the Gentiles freedom from the law. To seek to cloak this truth from them by adopting legal practices, was what James should have blushed to counsel and Paul to perpetrate. If the transaction be adopted, it follows of course that it gives rise to a rule in casuistry, which will run thus: Christians must be guided by circumstances, and it is right to deceive men when they are not ripe for the disclosures which you have to make. The Bible never regards the natural man as ripe for its disclosures. It contemplates that the truth, at whatever time it be announced, will offend him. It prepares believers that they may be ready for all the unpleasant effects which plainness of speech may draw along with it. The Jews were not ripe for being told that ceremonies had ceased; at the end of eighteen centuries and a half the churches are not prepared to learn the same truth, and if he who proclaims it is to wait until men shall be disposed to hear it, he may wait till doomsday. To evade such a dilemma, the churches at present have a favorite shift in the shape of a ready-made millennium that is to drop down from above, and spare men the trouble of mending either their doctrines or their lives. Two apostles taking counsel together to deceive their countrymen on a question of primary

importance,—the fact permitted to stand unexposed from their time to ours,—in this we have the seed to produce duplicity on principle, and to any amount. We consider not merely that this act has been imitated, but that the history and character of the churches have been made up of an uninterrupted succession of such acts. That peculiar cast of mind which all agree in assigning to the ecclesiastic and the professor, that complexion which at once points him out under all circumstances, that tendency to be ever studying the tide, ever-adapting himself to it, ever using Scripture so as to make out that time-serving and religion are equivalent: that mode of character, which is generally known and which men will eventually hate, must have its prototype somewhere. We maintain its apostolic descent. The men who exhibit it would not believe this, because they cannot see evil either in their own character or in that from which they derive it. Professors will voluntarily own that intemperance, fornication and violence are vices, but they never in right good earnest attack double-dealing. The best things that have been written against it have been by men naturally candid, who attacked it from taste rather than from any principle. Honesty has been commended,—but seldom by zealous sectaries. By them it is generally spoken of as a casual quality, that goes to exclude the operation of grace. In the course of many years intercourse with ecclesiastics, the writer can recollect a multitude of instances in which the comeliness of time-serving has been inculcated upon him, but scarcely one in which he has heard honesty frankly recommended. When honesty has been discussed in his presence, he has always seen tokens of fear displayed, but it should be supposed that they were so little evangelical, as to lay much stress upon a quality of very doubtful character. It cannot be otherwise: the vice is in the system. Duplicity is received as a cardinal virtue. It is accepted as canonical. It is far more a part of our current theory that James and Paul are to be imitated in this knavish transaction, than that Jesus Christ is to be imitated in his unullied purity. We are worshippers of angels or messengers, much more than we are worshippers of God. It is now acknowledged that the Popish church, with a few exceptions, was a system of intrigue. It begins to be allowed, in many directions, that the Protestant church differs from the other in little but the form. The two together make up thirteen centuries of mortal history. They have come fairly by their knavery,—they get it by inheritance. In order to strike it out the articles must be revised, the canons must be re-cast. Before a fair start can be taken, it must be set down in language that will become a proverb, that James and Paul, when they equivocated and knelt before prejudice, did what is scouted and abhorred by the precepts of the religion of which they were teachers.

Again, if conduct is to be judged by consequences, this action was displeasing to God, for evil results immediately happened to the chief actor. Subservience did not propitiate that which can never be propitiated, the hell-spawned spirit of legality. An infuriated mob laid hold of Paul, and would have killed him, but for the interposition of the Roman soldiers.

The next incident which seems to us deserving of criticism, occurs when Paul appears before the Sanhedrim. "And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary

to the law? And they that stood by, said, revilest thou God's high priest? Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." The conduct of Christ in a similar situation was perfect. "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." The behaviour of Paul, in speaking angrily to the insolent priest, was defective. It was not by any means the worst action which we see him commit, but it was faulty. Had no other error been narrated, it would have been sufficient to prove his peccability. It is another instance of the intimate immorality of the churches, that they can decry this error, but cannot see the graver sins of this apostle. They admit with great apparent candour that the blessed Paul was to blame, when all that can be alleged against him was, that he showed a little heat under circumstances of great provocation. They cannot see that there was anything to censure in his conduct, when with cool deliberation he went into a line of action that was intended to deceive men in vital matters. It reminds one of the story of the dying bandit, who procured absolution, and was canonised as a saint, by admitting in his confession, that once when he was a very small boy, he had disobeyed his father, and that the memory of this heinous crime, weighed heavy on his conscience. Paul did not show himself a perfect man, when he spoke angrily to the high priest, but if all his errors had been of this kind, he would not have been one of the founders of that spurious church whose fabric is so strong and so cunningly put together that it continues to stand in all countries, although it has been openly assailed for five hundred years.

There is a part of this incident which so far as we are aware, has not been looked into. The apostle says—"It is written, thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." The passage is in the Bible, and being so, is meant to be used. The question is, is it rightly used? Before Christ came, the high priest had a true rank and a rightful authority. After that event he became an anachronism. It would have been proper for Paul to treat him with politeness, as it would be proper for a Protestant to behave with civility in the presence of the Pope, or for a Presbyterian to act politely if he happened to be introduced to a Bishop.

Mere politeness compromises no man's integrity. But for Paul so to quote Scripture as to recognise the high priest to be a rightful authority, was not civility but falsehood. It was virtually to say that Jesus Christ had not been crucified, and that his priesthood had not begun. Paul himself says that the law is recognised by a compliance with even one of its ordinances,—that to submit to circumcision is to become a debtor to do the whole law. It does not affect the principle which one of these do that which you recognise. To acknowledge is the presence of the priest and council, that he had a scriptural authority, was to declare the whole system to be still valid. There is a sense in which a christian may be called upon to acquiesce in the existence of false authority. In such a case he feels that the influence, although a libel upon truth, is permitted by God. This feeling he properly expresses by that politeness which every man owes to every other. But he is not called upon to recognise the spurious authority by any overt word or act. On the contrary, if he does so, he is false to his cause, and implicates himself with the evil that is associated with the falsity which he sanctions. We are willing to attribute this to ignorance on the part of Paul. But that ignorance being admitted, we are not willing that he who evinced it should continue to be palmed on mankind as an infallible guide in his actions.

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We pass to another incident.—“But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead, I am called in question. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the multitude was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. And there arose a great cry; and the Scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying: we find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.”

There is a true line of distinction between politics and religion. The one addresses itself to men as it finds them, takes advantage of their prejudices, stirs up their passions, and seeks to attain its end without regard to means. The other holds that “whatsoever is not of faith is sin,” and maintains that no motives are to be made use of but such as are designed to purify and reform. In politics, the only point of consequence is success; in religion, the means are of as much importance as the result. A man consistently religious, if such a person may be conceived of, would consider that it was his duty, in whatever situation he might be placed, to employ no argument that would tend to keep human nature in its degradation. He would esteem liberty or life too dearly bought, if this was the price required of him. He would not be ashamed to tell his enemies that they did wrong to seek his life, or to retain him a prisoner, for in so speaking he would say what was wholesome for them to hear. If, listening to his exhortation, they acceded to his wishes, he would be well pleased, and would consider that God had sympathised with him and had melted the hearts of his foes. If by using salutary considerations he could remove from himself an impending danger, he would feel that he was called upon to do this much. But the most imminent peril must not be averted by what would infer the slightest pandering to evil. True, he might reason with himself that his own safety is of great moment, that God may have important work in reserve for him, and that the concession necessary to be made is trivial. Religion would put a stop to this special pleading, and would assure him that he had no right to arrive at prospective advantages by the least compromise of principle. It would suggest that God knows much better than he what is his own exact value, and will not sacrifice him, except for reasons of sovereign propriety. It will remind him that it is improperly to limit the Almighty, to imagine him to be so straitened as to have no other means of helping his servants than allowing them to have recourse to unworthy expedients. It will inform him that the point of time at which all apparent succour is wanting, may be the very point at which God may choose to interpose. It will sustain this by cogent examples, and it will warn him that to adopt worldly methods, may exclude the Most High from a glorious occasion wherein to honour himself and his faithful adherent. If Scripture be a complete guide-book to the believer, it will contain rules that are applicable to the various predicaments into which he may be thrown. If God demands of him a line of action that is characteristic in all its extent, it is reasonable to expect that the method which he is to employ in situations of peril should be peculiar also. It is no real objection that these methods may appear impotent to the natural mind. There is nothing in religion which commends itself to mere human reason. Its mysteries, its description of the character of God, or

of man, its account of virtue or of vice, its inducements, its pleasures, are all equally unintelligible to fallen man. It is not therefore singular that the weapons with which it arms the soldier in times of peril, should appear to the unregenerate, very impalpable. That prayer is a powerful instrument, that a man's true wisdom may be to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, that our temporal safety may be best promoted by using no arm of flesh in its defence, are points that have scarcely ever been believed or practised. They are frequently mentioned in Scripture, they are sometimes fully discussed, and they are copiously illustrated with examples of men who have practised them. With the trifling exception of a few Quakers who, at the origin of the history of that sect, stated these principles well, and perhaps vindicated them in some measure by their lives, they have been either overlooked or quite explained away. As men never do afford the Almighty an opportunity to prove what strong succour He is able to bring to his people, the fact that He does not signally interpose to help them, is used as an additional argument why no one is entitled to expect special assistance. Thus, all passages which place the strength and safety of the Christian in committing his way to God, are surrounded by such glosses as completely nullify them,—all instances that illustrate the tenet are described as facts peculiar to an economy different from our own, and the Church is turned into an insurance office that saves men from the unpleasant necessity of faith. To our own mind there can be no better exemplification of this than the fact that Paul's conduct in the Sanhedrim seems never to be questioned. If it were even doubted of, if men subjected it to some criticism, there would be the signs of something approaching to suspended animation. But the practice of eighteen centuries has adopted the incident, and we do not suppose that anything which man could write could induce ten grown persons of our period to regard it as even a problematical subject. In reply to the most able argument that could be constructed, the archons of our day would think it quite enough to say, that Paul's life was of too much value to the church to be risked for a punctilio, that he showed admirable tact in the mode of address which he employed, and that God's appearing to him immediately after, was an ample justification of his whole conduct. In all this discussion a man feels as if he had not only to run the engine, but also to make the rails. Scripture is not averse to the rendering even to the enemies of the truth, the praise that their industry or their cunning may seem to deserve. When it describes the prince of evil himself, with beautiful candour it comments upon the remarkable qualities that belong to him, saying, "I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion." If our antagonists can be satisfied with qualified praise, we freely tender it. There was cleverness in the action. It was in that style which Talleyrand and other diplomatists warmly admire. If they ask more than this we cannot yield it. To our mind, the foundations of the truth are not undermined, but deepened by the proving that an apostle acted like a politician, and that he has had eighteen centuries of imitators who have wonderfully exceeded their model. We do not account this dangerous doctrine, for it helps to explain what would otherwise be enigmatical,—the slow advance of true religion,—and it assists in showing how things may be improved. Churches based on the style of morality displayed in this action, will not easily allow their foundations to be disturbed. They will resort to many shifts before they will suffer the position for which we contend to become

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an established fact. We may here assign as another proof, that legendary has hitherto formed a part of the regular doctrine of the churches, that a text is allowed to stand uncontroverted in one of the epistles, which as now rendered, would make it a virtue. In the second epistle to the Corinthians our translation makes Paul say, "Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile." The circumstance that this has stood openly before the churches for more than two hundred years, proves that they consider roguery canonical. Who remembers to have heard this passage eagerly canvassed, who has seen it discussed as a point of primary consequence, who has heard an hypothesis uttered, that perhaps the sentiment of Paul may be improperly rendered. We ourselves have repeatedly mentioned the subject to ecclesiastics, and never in one instance did we perceive the smallest willingness to examine the question. We have pressed them with the argument that the sentiment apparently is quite at variance with the moral standard of the Bible, and that it is fraught with pernicious consequences, but any interest which they evinced was to stave off investigation. It was not until we looked into Dr. Conquest's new translation, which is in general a trifling Arminian production, that we became aware that it had occurred to any one to doubt the present reading. He inserts the words *say they*, and thus makes the sentiment to be, not a statement of Paul, but an accusation brought against him by his enemies. In this view, Paul rebuts two charges urged against him, one, that he had made the Gospel a means of living, the other, that he had used artifice to make converts. It is an alternative of vast moment, whether an apostle in an inspired writing openly avows that he practises intrigue, or merely states that he is accused of doing so. We consider the circumstance that no one ever hears the subject referred to, except as an argument in favour of a circuitous course of action, to speak volumes in the way of proving the intimate fraudulency of our present religionists. We shall find it a hard matter to prove to the conviction of men that Paul sinned in the way that he took to divide the assembly, because they are eighteen centuries gone in such juggling, because they have invented an argument in the shape of the assumed infallibility of the Apostles, and because there are few things more congenial to human depravity than a clever trick with a holy object in the distance. A man who knows that he has nothing but reasoning to advance in opposition to all this, is apt to feel that he has but a weak weapon. Falsehood is inwrought in the very constitution of human nature, and to help it out, a most plausible argument is reared up, that the conduct of the first followers of Jesus was immaculate, or very nearly so; the theory and practice of eighteen centuries helps to surround the subject with a halo fascinating to natural feelings, and all this is to be overthrown by a little dialectics. And then to augment the alarm of him who would do battle with the imposture, the thought occurs: my arguments will never be fairly stated; the holy rogues will induce all the beasts that they ride to believe that we are assailing the authenticity or inspiration of Scripture, instead of attempting to fix what that inspiration means. When Paul threw the apple of discord into the midst of the assembly, he became the parent of countless acts of the same description. He who really wishes to see the last trace of politics expunged from the church, will do well to think whether this can be effected, supposing the root to remain. When Paul took advantage of a difference of opinion which he knew to exist, he assumed the attitude of a politician, not that of an evangelist. The effect of his conduct was

to stir up feelings that do not advance but retard the progress of religion. Nay, there was more than this. In declaring himself to be a Pharisee, he either stated what had ceased to be true of him, or he admitted that twenty-five years' familiarity with the Christian religion, had failed to rid him of the principles of a sect diametrically opposed to the Gospel. If he affirmed himself to be a Pharisee when he really ceased to feel as one, he was guilty of a paltry artifice. If he meant exactly what he stated, then he owned himself to be under the influence of opinions and practices that the New Testament and his own writings repudiate. In the one case his duplicity would prevent him from being an infallible guide, in the other, his ignorance. In the style of a politician he stirs up sectarian feelings that by their means he may triumph, and in doing so, says of himself what was either untrue, or what, if true, proved his religion to be far from perfect. Had Paul acknowledged that he was once a Pharisee in order to prove to partisans of that sect that it was possible to exchange their tenets for those of true religion, he would have referred to his own former history from a motive that would deserve to be venerated. But he mentions the subject with a view to excite contention, he brings it up in order to state that he still belongs to that sect. It is far from being the worst act that was ever perpetrated, and it is, perhaps, equally far from being of the pure nature usually ascribed to it. Paul himself appears to own that the act was improper. In the next chapter, when he defends himself before Felix, he uses this language: "Let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council, except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day." He allows that there had been something to blame in his deportment, and so far as our intelligence serves us, the very act to which he refers is that which we now criticise.

Passing to another incident: Paul, in his speech before Felix, says—"there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship." We consider that our Lord Jesus Christ defines the character of the worship that distinguishes the New Testament in the course of his conversation with the Samaritan woman. "Jesus saith unto her, Women, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him."—According to this definition, worship under the new economy is absolutely independent of places. It exists wherever and whenever real spiritual intercourse occurs between man and his maker. It does not exist where this is wanting, nor can any circumstances of voice, gesture, costume or place, in any degree supply the absence of this one essential element. Paul, when he said that he went up to Jerusalem to worship, shewed that he did not understand this feature of the New Testament, and of course proved that, in the degree of his ignorance, he was under the dominion of legality. If this can be truly said of him it follows, by necessary consequence, that he could not be an infallible guide.

In the course of those vindications of himself that Paul makes before the Sanhedrim, before Felix, and Festus, he declares that he had committed no offence against the law of the Jews. On the last of the secca-

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sions he expresses himself to this effect: "Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar have I offended anything at all." If he had consistently preached Christianity without intermixing at all with legal matters, he might have used this language with truth. His reasoning would in that case have amounted to this, the gospel being the spirit of the law, in setting it forth I have, like my master, magnified the law and made it honourable. In commenting on love to God and man, I have not offended against the law, because on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. On the other hand, his defence of himself would also have been true, if, without meddling with Christianity, he had, like an ordinary Jew, observed all the ceremonies which the law required. In this latter case, he could have stated that he had not offended against the law, in that carnal sense in which his hearers viewed the subject. But as it was, he could not fairly adopt either line of defence. He had preached Christianity, and he had also meddled with the ordinances. He had declared the true doctrine that men are saved by faith in Jesus, and he had belied it by resorting to ceremonies which said that Christ had not yet come. In the carnal sense he could not aver that he had not offended against the law, for he had preached among the Gentiles that men are saved by faith. In the spiritual sense, he could not truly make the declaration, for he had circumcised Timothy, he had baptized Crispus and Gaius, he had gone into the temple with other men, and during seven days had submitted to a ceremonial purification. By mixing up the two dispensations he had deprived himself of the right to say that he had been true to either. We do not care whether Paul in making this statement was guilty of confusion of ideas or duplicity of heart. Whether it was an intellectual or a moral error is of little consequence to our argument. In either case there is fallibility involved, and a man falls below the level of a perfect standard whether he sins by the head or by the heart.

The next act done by Paul in the presence of Festus, also, in our estimation, contains wrong elements. We relate it in the language of Scripture. Festus says to him, "Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of those things before me?" Then said Paul, "I stand at Caesar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged; to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. For if I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if there be none of these things whereof those accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them: I appeal unto Caesar." A man is entitled to declare that which is true to any one who desires to hear it. Paul having by his own fault, as we maintain, fallen into the hands of carnal authorities, was justified in giving them an account of his principles if they asked it of him. Standing before Festus he would have done no wrong had he related to that governor the leading doctrines of the truth as it is in Jesus. Arraigned before him he would not have been out of order had he explained by what dereliction of principle he had been given over to the anger of his enemies. It might have afforded a theme that would probably have edified some of his auditors, to relate in what Christianity consisted, and how its liberty and purity had been sullied in his own instance and by himself. In so speaking he would have been quite in order, and would have furnished a fine example of the loftiness of the faith which he professed, by vindicating it even at his own expense. When Festus put the question, "Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of

these things before me?" he might have consented without sin. In so doing he might have reasoned thus, This is not what I have chosen, but it is not I that choose but the Roman governor who makes the proposition. I would not have offered to go to Jerusalem, but since he suggests it, I may consider that I am following the leadings of Providence in accepting the offer. True, the Jews are enraged against me, and will do all in their power to take my life; true, the governor may be so treacherous as to deliver me into their hands, but I have already declared myself ready to die for the truth's sake; I owe it to my countrymen whom I have defended at Jerusalem to tender me an occasion for such elucidations; God, on whom I lean, may turn the storm into a calm, and, at all events, I am not acting at my own suggestion, but assenting to what is offered me by the man in whose power I am. If Paul had argued and acted thus, he would, in our opinion, have exhibited not only frankness and courage, but holy wisdom also. A hearing is offered him in the very place which he had once been so anxious to reach, he owed explanations to that people whom he had recently helped to mislead. If the Jews were bigoted in a high degree, there were among them, according to James, many thousands who believed, and there was this peculiar advantage in arguing before that nation and in that place, that the hearers were acquainted with the historical and ritual facts upon which all his preaching must necessarily be based. How does he behave? He makes it a civil question, he throws himself upon his privileges as a Roman citizen, he appeals to Caesar. If in reply to the suggestion of Festus, he had even said, take me to Jerusalem if you will, but as for me I commit my cause to God; his conduct although it would have wanted explicitness, would not, perhaps, have contained much to censure. But he rejects the tribunal that is offered to him, and he selects another at least as ungodly. In the one that was proposed to him, making all allowance for the mad bigotry of the Jews, there was a familiarity with the facts on which he would found his argument. In that which he selected, there was the badness and the thorough ignorance of utter heathenism. Let it be well marked that we discuss his behaviour not as a lawyer but as a christian. We do not allege that he transgressed the principles of Roman law. We pretend not to deny but that his conduct would be justified by the Pandects. We do not mean to put any theological jurist to the trouble of finding out the particular section of the code Justinian, which treats of the rights of those colonies that had received the privilege of citizenship. We completely hand over to our antagonists that part of the argument which is founded upon the civil law, and we remind them that the question is not whether Paul was acquainted with the jurisprudence of the Roman empire, but whether his conduct in this case is in perfect accordance with the New Testament. When a man is dragged before a tribunal and required to state his case, he does not compromise himself, or affirm the sanctity of his judges, by giving a veracious account of his own principles and actions. In such a case he is not mixed up with the badness of those to whom he makes his defence. Being constrained to appear before the Sanhedrim, before Felix, and before Festus, Paul was no further implicated in the character of those judges than that his own errors had originally put him in their power. When he had fallen into their hands, he committed no fresh fault by consenting to give a true statement of his creed and his life. If they failed to hear him with candour, the sin was

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some of his. Even if he had consented to be taken to Jerusalem he could have incurred no blame. The proposition did not emanate from him, but from the Roman governor. He might have gone under protest, and his protest might have been to this effect, that while he agreed to state his case before the Jews, he referred it after all to God, the only just judge. This would have completely met all the circumstances,—it would have shewn that he did not wish to resort to any shifts, it would have proved that he viewed men as merely the instruments of a higher power, and that he trusted only the awards of a heavenly tribunal. Men could not have regarded him as contumacious, God would not have looked upon him as untrue. But it was different when he threw himself upon human law and selected his own earthly judge. He then ceased to be passive, and by becoming active implicated himself to a certain degree with the character of the court to which he appealed. God might put a believer in the position to argue his case before the devil in person. While he tells the truth so far as it is required of him, the defendant is not in the least tarnished by the presence in which he speaks it. But, if displeased with the audience which he receives from the prince of darkness, he carries his case by appeal into the court of some other evil spirit, he has changed his attitude, and has in a measure involved himself in the badness of the judge to whom he has appealed. We do not allege of Paul that it was unnatural or strange that he should adopt this very terrestrial mode of procedure. On the contrary we consider it quite what was to be anticipated from the school in which he was reared. But what we do aver is, that it is too atrocious that actions which bear upon them the teaching of Gamaliel, should be represented for ever as the finest results of the influence of the spirit of God. We understand how to make liberal allowances for early prejudices and influences of that kind, but what we cannot tolerate is, that actions which obviously need such allowance, should by a theological fiction be elevated into models for the imitation of the men of all times. The churches cannot have been admiring this act ever since it was performed without doing others of the same nature and improving on their model.

To stand gazing with delight at an act, especially if it be evil, is the way to give birth to many like it. Behold what tact and management our blessed Paul displayed, is the expression of the feeling of the true ecclesiastic. Can it be doubted that this sentiment will be the father of deeds,—can it be questioned that these deeds will gradually deteriorate,—can it be denied that what in the first instance had much to palliate it, will terminate in actions that seem to exhaust the contrivances of the bottomless pit? To admire is to imitate, and where the thing imitated is wrong, is to go on imitating until the offspring in its loathsomeness depravity presents few points of resemblance to the parent. Hence it happens, and has ever happened, that whilst the ordinary unconverted professor is capable of an amount of duplicity that altogether depends upon his own capacity and the nature of the temptation, the best christian of the age never scruples to admire and to practice what he calls *management*. He may not vindicate his conduct by quoting Paul, he may not even happen to have noticed that he could appeal to this authority, but what is the same thing, his principles have come to him by inheritance, he is a link in that chain of succession, of which the apostles were the commencement. In this universal admiration for management, the

churches are furnished with a principle which frequently leads them on to actions, that stagger even those portions of society which do not pretend to religion, which stupify large wigged judges, confound prime ministers, and supply writers of romance, with new illustrations of human badness. With its eye upon this circumstance, prophecy tells us of a time which we do not believe to be remote, when the course of spurious religion shall be arrested by the very worldliness for which it is too extravagantly bad. "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." In this love of management with apostolic example to help it out, the churches are provided with a rule, which so long as it is used, precludes the appearance of a tall man. Such a character can never arise in an era that recognises "divers weights," and "divers measures, a great and a small." He can only spring up where men try themselves by "a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure." By means of management, the sects can always keep themselves out of the circumstances that demand and produce greatness: By the help of this clever instrument, they can save themselves from the necessity of dealing roundly with sin and creating offence. By its means they can scarcely ever be poor, or despised, or hemmed round by foes. By its assistance they can hunt in troops, change with the wind and tide, and always find themselves on a pleasant footing with wealth and power. By its aid they can avoid the necessity of purging their code and augmenting their doctrine. By its help, they can contrive to make it not a sin but a magnificent virtue, that they think exactly as men did centuries ago. In a word, by its means they can be the Popish and the Protestant things that we now look out upon, and without theology, without progress, without worth, cause nations to bow before them, and ride upon the high places of the earth. Management, in the sense in which it is used, and true religion are incompatible facts. The one depends upon a form, a quibble, an equivocation to help it,—the other escapes by finding out that way which no fowl knoweth. Had management in every instance been used by religionists, there could not have been an eminent man, or a remarkable situation in the annals of the church, because there would always have been a loophole instead of a providence for men to escape by. Had management always been as touch admired as it is now, Abraham would never have left his country, nor Joseph been cast into prison, nor Moses have gone forth into the wilderness, nor David have fled before Saul, nor Jeremiah have been put into the pit, nor Daniel been cast into the den of lions. Management renders all such situations unnecessary, and indeed makes them appear ridiculous. By dint of it, most men are enabled to preach or profess religion without having it, and the very few who are truly converted, are by its aid dispensed from the necessity of any thing high and chivalrous. Management means to walk on the way of faith, when it coincides with that of sight, to desert it at the first prospect of peril, and to prove that this is right by perverting scripture. It is the politics of hell applied to the purposes of what is called the visible church, backed by texts that are not canonical in the way in which they are employed. Management, since the time of the apostles, has so contrived it, that not one single personage has shown himself throughout the period, of as tall a stature as the worthies of the scripture,—and management complacently accounts

for the phenomenon, by pompously stating that tall men are not now designed by God, and are not required in the present circumstances of the church. Management must be pulled up by its root, before strong deeds can be done, and men must learn, sooner or later, to believe that Paul acted not splendidly but weakly: when he took advantage of a point of law to shift his case to another tribunal.

In his defence of himself before Agrippa, Paul makes a statement that seems to us subject to criticism. He says—“Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.” It is an allegation that if true so far as it goes, does not contain the whole truth. It may be doubted whether his enemies could have prevailed against him, if he had acted with thorough consistency. If he had openly resisted them, instead of pandering to their prejudices, it is more than probable that he would have gained the victory. If in place of following the counsel of James, he had frankly declared that he had taught the Gentiles in the manner alleged, and had stoutly and from the scriptures, vindicated his own conduct, it is to be supposed that things would have fallen out in a different manner. By entering the temple, as he did, he led men to consider that he suspected the rectitude of his own former actions. The Jews rose up against him, not merely because they had heard that he was a heretic, but because they saw that he was a trimmer. By a different course of action, he might have awed, or he might have convinced them. By the course which he did pursue, he threw away the influence that boldness and consistency would have given him, and he confirmed them in their bigotry, by shewing them that he succumbed to it. A declaration thoroughly true, would have set forth that the Jews went about to kill him, because he had first offended their bigotry, and then yielded to it. This would have been quite true, it would have been honouring God in the eyes, and whereas with all his faults, he almost persuaded Agrippa to be a Christian, by the absolute candour which we contemplate he might have brought him altogether to that conclusion. It is the most probable thing we can imagine that Paul did not thoroughly understand why it was that he had been delivered into the hand of his foes, and if this supposition be accepted, which is the most lenient of the two, his statement contained the vice of ignorance. But a man who falls into this sin from time to time, even if he commit no others, is not a faultless model.

At the close of Paul's defence, we learn that Agrippa said to Festus—“This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed to Cæsar.” This declaration leaves it open for us to state that Paul had trusted Providence, that he had hurt his own cause by playing the lawyer, and that he was conducted a prisoner to Rome because of three false steps. First, because he had disobeyed orders not to go up to Jerusalem. Second, because when arrived there he had attempted to deceive the Jews. Third, because when dragged before the judgment seat, instead of committing his cause to God, he had appealed to the Roman emperor. To those with whom we argue, it will appear an answer more than sufficient to our strictures, that during the voyage to Rome God appeared to Paul. With such a fact to descend upon, nothing

could ever convince them that there had been anything to blame in his previous conduct. Warning their sentimental natures with this supposed argument, their brain would be quite unable to lay hold of such considerations as these,—that to charge a man with some error and some duplicity is not to call him a castaway,—but if he be not a castaway, that God who has already appeared to him, may, after punishing him through his own faults, favour him with another interview to tell him that although reprimanded he is not forsaken. A heavenly vision may prove that God is favourable for the time being, but it is not necessarily a certificate for the past. That Paul, on his way to Rome, had a kind message through an angel, is not logical evidence that he had acted thoroughly well at Caesarea.

In the last chapter of the book there is another instance in which Paul fails to tell the whole truth, whether wilfully or from want of light. Arrived in Rome, Paul "called the chief of the Jews together; and when they were come together he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, who when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. But when the Jews spake against me, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar: not that I had ought to accuse my nation of." We repeat in this case what we stated in a previous example. In the sense in which the Jews must have understood him, he had offended against their customs. He had preached to the Gentiles that they could be saved without the law, and this in the eye of the Jews was an offence. If he had told the Jews that, in preaching such a doctrine to the Gentiles, he had done right, and had offered no real violence to the law, he would have spoken the truth. If he had informed them that the law being spiritual, he had not really broken it in telling the Gentiles that men are to be saved by faith, he would have made a correct statement. But he addressed those who considered that salvation came by practising the ceremonies of the law, and as they must have understood him, he did not give an accurate account when he said, that he had committed nothing against the customs of their fathers. It is one thing to say, the letter of the law ceased by the death of Christ, we have now to do with its spirit, and I, Paul, who have preached among the Gentiles salvation, by faith, have not infringed the law because I have set forth its spirit, I have taught that which is the end and object of all its institutions. It is another thing to inform Jews who understand nothing of the law but its externals, that you have committed no offence against their creed, all the while that you have been promulgating through different countries that men may be saved without complying with these externals. You utter a falsehood in making a statement which is really true, provided that you know that those to whom you make it must receive an erroneous impression from your words. Neither did he speak in an enlightened manner when he said that he "was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar." It shewed *inmanagement*, we admit. It was a skillful method of obviating unfavourable impressions, of soothing the national pride of his countrymen. It spoke in this wise—you must not think hardly of me that I have removed my case from the courts of my nation and have referred it to the heathen tribunal of their conquerors. No good man is constrained to take his case out of the hands of God and leave it to the arbitration of men.

Paul the Apostle was not constrained to appeal to Cæsar, or if he was, it was at the instigation of feelings that were far from being altogether celestial. If he did take this false step, he should have discovered his error after so considerable a lapse of time. Even if he perceived nothing wrong in the course that he had taken, he should have felt it to be beneath him to speak to the prejudice which he knew the Jews must entertain against the conduct he had pursued. It was a jealousy of race, therefore an unworthy feeling. Paul might properly allude to it in order to expose it, he might not properly allude to it in order to dally with it. A favourable hearing obtained in this way was not fairly procured. We may be told that a few verses after this he speaks very plainly to the Jews of their unbelief. This was on a different occasion. A man may be in two states of mind in two different days. A man may employ too much to gain a hearing, and yet may feel indignant afterwards when he perceives that he cannot bring his hearers to think along with him. Preachers, of all men, should be aware that he who cringes at one time may possibly bully at another. These are the last facts recorded in the acts of the Apostles.

According to the received chronology they occurred just thirty years after the death of Christ, and twenty-eight after the conversion of Paul. The leaven of imperfection is mixed up with them,—they are not the deeds of sinless personages,—they cannot safely be proposed as absolute models to mankind. If error be discernible in the last narrated doings of the apostles, it is reasonable to expect that it should be found in the outset and progress of their history. He who does not thoroughly understand his message when he has been used to it during twenty-eight years, may rationally be supposed to understand it even less when nearer the beginning of his ministry. If Paul equivocated when he entered Rome, the supposition may be entertained that regeneration with him had been gradual, and that errors may be discovered in his earlier career. If this can be supposed of Paul, it may be supposed of the other apostles.

The book, some of whose incidents we have reviewed, exhibits the doings of fallible beings. Their fallibility is proved by the general statement that they are men of like passions with us,—by the passages in their writings that *virtually* condemn their acts,—by those others that condemn them *by name*,—by the analogy of the faith, and by the reason of the thing. Some of the cases of error or ignorance are admitted by the churches,—others we must suppose them to admit, because they do not practise what was enjoined or done in the particular instance. Such admissions, however few, and however equivocal as to the way in which they are made, found a principle: they impose the canon of peccable apostles. The quality cannot be allowed, even in one example, without giving rise to the rule. Those who admit one case, are forced to affirm the rule. The laying down of this canon makes apostolic conduct an open subject which no other canon can rightfully close. Being opened, one person may find a case of fallibility to-day and another to-morrow. The one has no right to say to the other, you are going too far, my amount of fallibility is the exact measure, yours is too much. Any degree of it is possible, if it be allowed in some degree. The chief features of apostolic fallibility, on which we have insisted are, regard to rites, the placing of rites and moral duties on the same plane, the drawing distinctions between Jew and Gentile, disobedience to intimations from the spirit, downright deceit, equivocation and Slavish deference to prejudices. These, as we have remarked, are of all errors, the most dangerous, because they are of all the most sure to be imitated. In

two parallel lines, one in the Old Testament, the other in the New, there is a description, long and very minute, of the rise and downfall of a false church. It must rise and fall before "that day" can come. The elements that compose the spurious fabric are a whore, a beast, a man of sin, a false prophet. The combined influence which accrues out of these, is to endure twelve hundred and sixty days, or forty and two months. Most critics, however they may differ as to the nature of the phenomenon, agree in thinking that its career is near a close. In this we do not differ from other students of prophecy. Where we are peculiar is in believing that the beast with two horns in the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, is the ram that Daniel describes in his eighth chapter. We are likewise, so far as we know, singular in considering that this second form of the beast is the Protestant church, and that its downfall may shortly be anticipated, in consequence of tremendous convulsions, the harbingers of which, as we believe, are even now visible. Human badness will overturn the evil fabric that now subsists; but true theology can alone erect the building that is to rise in its stead. An essential step toward a good system will be to procure a straight rule. The object cannot be attained so long as divers measures and divers weights are in general use. It must be prominently set forth that while "all scripture is profitable," some parts are intended for warning and others for example. It must be made plain to mankind, in spite of the deadliest opposition of the false prophet, that to neglect this distinction and religiously imitate what is written in order that it may be avoided, is to call crooked straight and straight crooked. To run this line through the acts of the apostles, to show, that in opposition to the practice of centuries, the facts therein recorded are not designed to be invariably followed, to point out that the contrary view is that "worshipping of angels" which scripture predicts and reprobates, to exhibit that all the leading evils under which the churches suffer are traceable to wrong opinions in this matter, is to contribute toward the advent of the latter era. In writing these things we are not under the influence of a fallacy which we have exposed in Paul: we do not expect to propitiate Jews or inveterate formalists. To them we shew no mercy, and from them we look for none. They may be bought, they may be frightened: they never can be won. War to the knife is the theology for them, for it is the only theology that they can understand or feel. We close this little discussion with a list of principles, that will contain the matters for which we contend, and that may render more intelligible what we have written in a less systematic style.

First.—To urge the distinction between a saint under full inspiration and a saint under the ordinary guidance of the spirit, is not to advocate a new principle. The distinction has been made formerly, if it has not been broadly expressed. But if it has been tacitly applied to David or Solomon, what hinders that it should be made avowedly in reference to Peter or Paul?

Second.—Fallibility is not a question of degree. They who allow that the Apostles erred in one instance, surrender infallibility as effectually as those who charge them with many errors.

Third.—To find faults and sins in the conduct of the Apostles, is not to deny that they were twelve in number, or that they had high-privileges, or that they wrought miracles.

Fourth.—If we know and believe that the Prophets sometimes did not understand the meaning of what they uttered and recorded by inspiration, we should find it easier still to credit that the Apostles sometimes did not act up to what they wrote.

Fifth.—To say of the acts of the Apostles that they are not perfect models, is not to leave men without a standard, provided that there be other parts of Scripture which supply that standard.

Sixth.—He who admits that the moral conduct of Jesus Christ is faultless, and that the rules of virtue which the apostolic epistles lay down are perfect, does not leave men without a rule.

Seventh.—To point out sins and errors in the acts of the Apostles, is not to determine with absolute precision what was the amount of the holiness of these persons.

Eighth.—Probably the statements which we have made are compatible with the opinion, that the Apostles, after all, are the best men who have ever lived.

THE END.

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