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AN

EARNEST APPEAL:

IN

A LETTER

TO THE (SO-CALLED)

Plymouth Brethren,

ADDRESSED MORE ESPECIALLY TO THE

DUBLIN SECTION OF THE SOCIETY,

BY A

FORMER MEMBER AND DESERTER.

K G. A.

LONDON:
WILLIAM MACINTOSH, 24, PATERNOSTER ROW.
DUBLIN: G. HERBERT, 117, GRAFTON STREET.
BELFAST: PHILLIPS AND SON.

1867.

Price Fourpence.



AN EARNEST APPEAL.

DEAR FRIENDS,

About thirty years since I joined your Society for a short period. Through various means, in God's good providence, I was soon led to apprehend some of your errors, and afterwards to see the sin of deserting the United Church of England and Ireland. This Church is not of human devising; it is of no sect or party constructed "by art and man's device," but, as I hope to show in the sequel, a part of the Church of the living God, which is "the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Tim. iii. 15.)

Removed to various and distant places, I heard little of the "Plymouth Brethren" for years, and had hoped that this novelty might have almost expired. A pamphlet, however, recently published by Houlston and Wright, entitled "The Close of Twenty-eight Years of Association with J. N. D.," and another, "A Caution against the Darbyites," disclose the fact, that the sect has various and large ramifications throughout the kingdom, and is already split up into at least six hostile factions.

The first-named of these pamphlets, which exposes Mr. Darby's lately-broached and repulsive aberration, need cause no surprise. Mr. Darby was one of the originators of the "Plymouth" movement. This gentleman's enunciations in the meetings were always so vague and mystical that few professed to understand them; and, in fact, it was quite plain to some persons that he seldom understood himself. Mr. Bellett, on the contrary, who took a place as leader in the Dublin section, dissected Scripture with singular tact and neatness, and his eloquent and lucid addresses attracted many hearers. Had this able man (by profession a barrister) been led, when he abandoned the law, to accept orders in the Church, he might have become a blessing to many. His knowledge of the Bible was joined to a cultivated mind; combined with a meek deportment and private worth. Mr. Bellett, seemed to avoid controversial discussions—not so every member of the brotherhood; from a total misappropriation of 1 Cor. xiv.,

some of them maintained that new doctrines might be introduced continually. Their opinions were so various and uncertain, that an attempt to classify or arrange them would be like making a map of the clouds or mist. I shall endeavour to sketch some of these ever-changing fancies.

The first and leading tenet of the Brethren was the total rejection of an ordained ministry; in this and other particulars resembling the more ancient sect of Quakers. The Brethren repudiated the idea of an officiating priest, as an invasion of Gospel liberty and a return to Judaism; consequently the sacraments were discarded, and soon even the word sacrament disallowed. With them Baptism was a mere dipping, which *represented* the believer's resurrection to a new life; the Lord's Supper was a kind of common meal, where one at the head of the table made mention of the death of Christ, giving thanks for it, and each person helped himself. To the doctrine of pardon or grace being communicated through these Divine Institutions, Brethren were extremely averse. All Church government was esteemed a mere human thing, and compared with "Jeroboam's altars and Jeroboam's feasts;" every Church in Christendom was yclepd a "human association." The use of the moral law in the Christian Church was a special stumbling-block to these teachers, and held to be a return to the bondage of Mount Sinai. (See Church Article VII.) False views of sanctification led Brethren almost to forego the confession that they were sinners.* It was said that the time was come when Christians should forsake all denominations of "man's devising," just as the early Christians fled from Jerusalem when that city was surrounded by the Roman army. Meeting together anywhere and everywhere, the pious were thus to "take an attitude" of awaiting the Lord's "second coming." Alas! on such feeble foundations as these were men content to erect this mere phantom, and call it a Church—nay, *the* Church.

But it is easier to pull down than to build, and the practical working of this self-called "divine," but, in truth, merely experimental or *empirical* association was a total failure. If I mention facts to prove this, my object is to warn, not to wound the feelings of any unnecessarily. The same tree will ever bear the same pernicious fruits. There was much denunciation of what was called "the world;" one result of which was that many members forsook their worldly callings. Learning was discarded, and therefore young men neglected their studies to go about preaching. The boasted love and unity of the body too often assumed the form of offensive familiarity or

* See Appendix C.

vexatious intermeddling. The society fell into cliques which looked askance on each other. Some of the busier members considered it their duty to rebuke the misconduct of their companions; yet a *hospitable* couple was suffered to live unmolested in an unlawful connection, and in full communion with the Brotherhood. Individual members were benevolent, but I never recollect any collection for widows or the poorer sort to have been made in the assembly.

But if we blame let us also pity. The times are out of joint, and we have seen many stars in our time "fall from heaven." There is much hope of Brethren, as they are commonly persons of sincere, simple, and earnest minds. They are quite free from that political acrimony and covetousness which cause us to despair of too many of the Romanists and Dissenters in this country. Our Lord prayed for St. Peter, but excluded Judas from His last petition. (St. Luke xxii. 32; John xvii. 12.)

Not having seen any attempt in print to give a detailed answer to Brethren, I have endeavoured to discuss their tenets in a connected form, and in as few words as possible. It is difficult to be concise without obscurity. Trusting to God's blessing on a weak attempt,

I remain, dear friends,

Your humble servant,

A. G.

In an attempt to point out and answer the erroneous views adopted by Brethren, the leading opinions claiming attention appear to flow from misapprehensions of Scripture on which the entire system is based. The first of these mistakes is that they apply those parts of the Epistles which treat of the use of what is commonly called *supernatural* gifts to the present state of the Church; and the second error is, that Brethren totally ignore the very existence of those rules furnished by St. Paul for ordering and guiding the holy society of the Universal Church, from his own day till the appearing of our God and Saviour. Whether the miraculous gifts vouchsafed on the day of Pentecost, were or were not meant to be withdrawn when the Church became strong enough to walk without such aids, is a question on which we shall not now enter.* One remark, however, may be made, viz., that the supernatural, continued, would in time cease to cause surprise or awake attention.

* See Appendix A.

To proceed with the points first in question. The chief passages of Scripture which speak of gifts now no longer found amongst us, are Acts ii. 1—7, and 1 Cor. xii. and xiv. These chapters in Corinthians treat of the use and the abuse of various manifestations, as the power of speaking unknown tongues and interpreting the same; discernment of spirits, or a perception whether an evil spirit, instead of God's Spirit, might not have taken possession of the tongue of some speaker; also a divine impetus, called "prophecy," which is plainly spoken of as an immediate revelation. (1 Cor. xiv. 30.) And that such must have been a full inspiration is further evident from the fact that we find women shared the gift, and yet, in seeming contradiction, in verse 34 they are commanded "to keep silence in the Church;" and, lest they should suppose that, from sharing these favours, they were suffered to become teachers in the congregation, St. Paul commands that they shall cover their heads in the assembly, in token of subjection to the Angel or Bishop of the Church. The Apostle, in the course of chap. xiv., rebukes the various irregularities in the use of those inspirations which had obtained amongst the Corinthians, and every word he writes is a proof that such powers are now in abeyance, and that these passages of Holy Scripture cannot be used to upset an order of things confirmed by the same miraculous manifestations, established upon other Scriptures, and which can be proved to have existed from Apostolic times till the present.*

Query I. If these things be so, and if it be a *fact* that the miraculous effusions of Pentecost no longer continue with the Church, should not Brethren cease to disturb the minds of earnest Christians, by trying to bind a society together with the sandy rope of texts totally misapplied?

Having seen what gifts have departed from the Church, we must try to discover what remain with her. For this purpose consult the epistles to Timothy and Titus, men who were amongst the chief officers appointed by St. Paul to govern the Church. From these documents we gather undeniable testimony that the miraculous training of the fishermen of Galilee was to be superseded by another order of things; men were henceforth to be fitted for the ministry, and to become vessels more and more meet for their Master's use, when in office, by the cultivation of their natural powers. (1 Tim. iv. 12—16; Tit. ii. 7, 8.) Study, especially of Scripture, combined with meditation, was to be a chief means to this end.† Just in the same way

* See Appendix B; and 1 Tim. i. 18; 2 Tim. i. 6.

† See an admirable sermon by Bishop Bull on a learned ministry. His text is, "The cloak which I left at Troas," &c. (2 Tim. iv. 13.)

another change is hinted; by a reference to the Jewish law, (1 Tim. v. 17, 18,) it is intimated that henceforth the ministers of religion should be maintained, in the Christian Church, as their predecessors had been in foregoing dispensations—Gentile and Jewish. (See Gen. xiv. 20; Num. xviii. 21.)

Query II. If it be matter of fact that the church has for seventeen centuries been instructed by men assisted in the use of their natural endowments by the ordinary and secret motions of the Holy Ghost, were it not well for Brethren to consider, and shew by what authority they reject a state of things appointed to continue “till the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ”? (1 Tim. vi. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.)

Having sought by the light of God’s Word and experience to point out what gifts remain with us and what have been withdrawn, we come to consider the “helps and governments” which existed in Apostolic times, and to ask if all continue as at first? These are enumerated, in Eph. iv. 2, and 1 Cor. xii. 28. Apostles and Prophets are placed first. As miraculous gifts of healing and plenary inspiration have departed, so no man is now, or was, after the death of St. John, an Apostle in the primary sense of the word.* Prophets also soon disappeared.

We find, from the epistles to Timothy and Titus, that pastors and teachers were to continue divided into three orders, viz., overseers, now called bishops, priests or presbyters, and deacons. Timothy is enjoined to commit the teaching of the things he had learned from St. Paul “to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” (2 Tim. ii. 2.) The appointment and selection of these ministers was entirely placed in the hands of Timothy, whereas Brethren, without a semblance of permission from God’s Word, have substituted for this monarchical rule a spiritual democracy, presuming that every member is qualified to judge of those who are fitted to preach in the assembly; which notion, as may be gathered from previous remarks, is based on a misconception of parts of 1 Cor. xiv.

Query III. Is it not matter of fact that whilst teachers endowed with supernatural power have disappeared, yet faithful consecrated men, in smaller or greater numbers, have ever been found to guide the Church? Where is it hinted in the New Testament that persons who can show no credentials of their divine mission are to appear in the last days, and sweep away

* In 1 Cor. ix. 1, St. Paul speaks of having seen Christ as a mark of an Apostle. In 2 Cor. xii. 12, of other proofs, “signs and wonders and mighty deeds.”

the ordinances which had obtained from the beginning of the Christian dispensation?

We have considered what gifts are present with the Church, and what gifts she retains no longer; also the change which passed over the qualifications of her teachers at an early period. Our next duty is to inquire into the nature of the offices of ministration instituted by Christ Himself, and subsequently applied by the Apostles to the existing state of the society in their day, as well as to the future exigencies of the Church after their departure, and for which the Holy Ghost gave them wisdom to provide.

To the Twelve, they only being present, our Lord committed at His last supper the trust of breaking bread and pouring out wine, giving thanks for the same, by this ordinance to show forth His death "till He come." By means of this holy Sacrament they were to convey to the penitent believer remission of sins (see Matt. xxvi. 28) and "all other benefits of His Passion." (See the office of Holy Communion.)

To the eleven Apostles, and to them alone, (see Mark xvi. 14; Matt. xxviii. 15,) the risen Christ gave a commission to preach the Gospel and baptize; promising to bless the teaching of His commands "till the end of the world."

Query IV. Does not even an earthly monarch send favours and pardons by the hands of accredited messengers? With such our Lord compares Himself in the parable. (St. Matt. xxii. 1—15.) Does not an earthly monarch rule his kingdom by means of duly appointed magistrates? If there be no authorized ambassadors from Christ who can be responsible for rejecting the Gospel message?

Here may be a fitting place to notice that chief stumbling-block in the way of the Brethren, namely, the word Priest. From the language used (1 Peter ii. 4, and Rev. i. 6) it is maintained by the Brethren and others that under the Melchisedec priesthood of Christ, all believers are equally priests, and that a distinct order is quite inadmissible. Now the very same language is applied to the entire Jewish nation, in Exod. xix. 6, "Ye are a kingdom of priests, an holy nation." This did not hinder the setting aside of one tribe for special service, though the assertion was seemingly wrested by Korah and his company as an excuse for their rebellion. (See Num. xvi. 3.)

We have also an order of men, perpetuated not by carnal generation, nor by supernatural gifts, yet set apart under the Gospel dispensation for Spiritual Sacrifices. These also have somewhat to offer. For the public congregation, they present the spiritual sacrifices of the people, whether consisting of

confession, intercession, or thanksgiving. Every individual Christian priest is entitled and called upon to offer such sacrifices in his closet, or in the midst of his family. Under the true Melchisedec, ordained priests offer to God the Father a memorial of the one sacrifice of the Son, when they break bread and pour out wine with thanksgiving; they then proceed to feed the people with the body and blood of their Lord, which are "verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper."

Other priests there are who do not fear to degrade this holy Sacrament by calling it a real, not a commemorative sacrifice; in truth, the Jewish priest merely offered a premonstrate sacrifice, shewing forth the death of the true Lamb till His first coming: there never was but one real Priest and Sacrifice. These profane Christian priests "crucify the Son of God afresh, and put Him to open shame," by changing the holy symbols of His death into an idol to be carried about, gazed upon, and worshipped.*

Has the Christian priest aught to offer in Baptism? Yes, verily, he presents the redeemed child, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to the Father.

Having turned aside from the main points of consideration for a needful purpose, we return to the consideration of our Lord's commission to the Apostles, and view its extent. Was this limited merely to gather a few Christians here and there? No! they were to make disciples of "all nations." Christ says, "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth." Here the God-Man, risen from the dead, asserts His royalty as King of kings and Lord of lords; and *therefore* the Apostles are commanded to baptize and teach all nations. They are to summon monarchs and their subjects to the obedience of Christ, and so bind the kings and nobles of the Gentiles with the chains of the Gospel. Such expressions as "Union of Church and State" have led men into a wilderness of error. Every state should be a Church, and religion the fountain of its laws. All power should be exercised under and for Christ. Every king should be as David, and every people should have its own chief bishop and hierarchy. The Roman pontiff has usurped the place of Christ, who is invisible; his cry has been "All power is committed to me," and he has trampled alike on the rights of monarchs and prelates. Taught an evil lesson, a reaction has taken place, and we hear the people on all sides profanely shouting, "*Vox populi, vox Dei!*"

* See Rubric at the end of the Office for Holy Communion, and the 28th Article, for the opinion of the Anglican Church as to Transubstantiation and a younger sister, Con-substantiation. Also Sac. Mass, Art. 31.

Query V. When the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on the earth; or shall He find all belief in His rule, through the medium of His appointed governors, the magistrate and bishop, departed? (See Luke xviii. 8.)

We have considered the gifts which have departed, as well as those which remain in the Church; also the necessary modifications of the offices by which the Church is served, owing to the withdrawal of plenary inspiration, and miraculous gifts of healing, &c. The nature of the commission entrusted to the consecrated rulers of the Christian temple has been next considered, and the design of Almighty God that the Church and the world should be conterminous, if only men would hear His voice. Let us now try to gather from the examples and precepts contained in Holy Scripture, what the duty of Christian men is with respect to separation from any or from all baptized bodies in these the last days.

Jesus, God's holy Child, in the days of His flesh, frequented the synagogues and temple. The Pharisee, the Sadducee, and the Herodian were then found within the Jewish sanctuary. If the same sects be now found within the branch of Christ's apostolic Church existing in this country, such may be a cause that God shall speedily deal with her in judgment; but we are not purer than our Master, nor called upon for such reasons to forsake the public assembly. The testimony of Christ against abounding iniquities was ever loudest as He stood *within* the temple.

Again, the Apostles testified even later in time than their Master. The priests and rulers had "crucified the Lord of glory," they had stoned Stephen, and never ceased to persecute and scatter the helpless flock of Christ. None of these things moved the holy men to forsake the temple worship; they walked orderly and kept the law of Moses. They would not encourage contempt of national religion and public worship by their example. They loved their country too well to seek to hasten the day of woe, when God should give up the long-favoured people to the desolater.

Query VI. If, as all seem to agree, the end of Gospel times be come upon us, should we not make Christ and His Apostles our pattern?

For many centuries godly men groaned beneath the bondage of Rome, but continued to testify within her communion, sometimes against her anti-christian tyranny, sometimes against abounding superstitions. They could refuse to worship the king or his image; they could endure the flames; but only God in His own time could raise up a Cyrus here and there,

to open the gates of brass, and deliver some captive nations from the spoiler.

Query VII. Are not these tried and patient ones an example and reproach to us, if, suffering under no tyranny, and with the free use of God's holy Word and Sacraments, we forsake our parent Church?

When He that "walketh in the midst of the candlesticks" sent His last instructions by St. John to the angels of the Churches, (Rev. ii. iii.,) He sharply rebuked the false teaching suffered in one body, the foul immorality endured in another, the deadness of a third, and the pride and self-sufficiency of a fourth. Nowhere does Christ enjoin that individuals shall separate from their respective Churches in consequence of these abuses. He rather commends the few *in* Sardis, who kept themselves free from the surrounding defilement, and who, remaining in their places, offered a holy pattern to all, even to the less faithful Angel himself.

In 1 Cor. iv. 2, 3, St. Paul commands as follows: "Judge nothing before the time;" and again, "When the Lord comes, then shall every man have praise of God," even adding "I judge not mine own self." Yet, despite these cautions, Brethren urge the flock of Christ to forsake their pastors, and in direct contravention of our Lord's declared will, that the good and bad shall "grow together till the harvest," they make it a large part of duty for Christians to sit in judgment on each other.

Query VIII. Does not St. Jude warn us (ver. 19) that those who "separate *themselves*" are sensual, "not having the spirit"?

Treading softly, and making our way carefully from one footstep of the flock to another, as these are traced in Holy Writ, we must again recapitulate what has been said.

We have marked the changes in the matters of Pentecostal gifts and the offices in the Church, which were in a great measure attached to the presence of those effusions of God's Spirit. Next, the line of conduct pursued by our Saviour and His apostles, in the last days of the Jewish kingdom, was considered; then the nature of the testimony made by holy men when the Christian Church was in sore bondage; afterwards we referred to the declared will of Christ Himself, in His final message; next, the command of St. Paul as to our judging each other, nay, even ourselves; and we ended with the decided protest of St. Jude against individual separation.

We now come to a point which claims special attention. The Thessalonian Church, misapprehending St. Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians, was much disturbed, supposing our Lord was about immediately to appear. To correct the

mistake, St. Paul penned his second letter to the same Church. After reminding these Christians that "the man of sin" must be revealed before the coming of Christ, he appends these emphatic words, (ii. 15,) "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle." And again, (iii. 6,) "Now we command you, brethren, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition he hath received of us."

Now this word *tradition* is too commonly overlooked, though so very marked in the text. We find there were traditions by word as well as by letter committed to the keeping of the Church. What and where are they? Has she who is styled "the pillar and ground of the truth" so failed in her trust that they are nowhere to be found? Has she so faithfully kept the written and lost the unwritten commands? Not so! we have reason to believe that every one of these traditions is to this day extant amongst us. Apostolic traditions are such offices and usages as can be proved, from hints in Scripture and collateral testimony, to have existed in the Church from its foundation. To the Apostles our Saviour entrusted the "keys of the kingdom of heaven." They were to open the kingdom to the Gentiles, which was done by St. Peter first, when he baptized Cornelius and his household. Jewish rites and worship they were to dispense with in the case of heathen converts, as they thought desirable; what they saw fit, they were empowered to retain. In some cases they adapted to the Gospel ritual certain parts of the Mosaic law. The Jews used forms of prayer. Forms were adopted in the Christian assemblies. (2 Tim. i. 13.) Stated times were set apart, and the first day of the week substituted for the seventh and termed the Lord's Day. Holy seasons were kept, especially Lent, and Easter was observed in lieu of the Jewish Passover. Infants were baptized, and Godparents were appointed, as is done to this day; the laying on of hands, called by us the rite of confirmation, followed. Open offenders were appointed some penance, and were publicly rebuked; the loss of which wholesome discipline the English Church deploras in her service for Ash-Wednesday. The clergy celebrated marriage and defined the prohibited degrees of affinity. The origin of the churching of women is lost in antiquity, but no doubt succeeded the Jewish rite of purification. The clergy were ordained by the laying on of episcopal hands. That remarkable tradition was early framed, called the Apostles' Creed. From tradition combined with internal evidence the Church defined the canonical Scriptures, and as an illustration

of the nature of this form of teaching, a very few quotations from the two most ancient fathers of the Church will be useful. The Brethren are in the habit of pointing to our Lord's words, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," as favouring their loose mode of worship. Let us hear St. Clement, then Bishop of Rome, whom St. Paul styles his fellow-labourer. St. Clement writes thus to the Corinthian Church, where a sedition had broken out against their clergy: "It will behove us to do all things in order, and particularly that we perform our offerings and service of God at their appointed seasons. These He has commanded to be done, not rashly and disorderly, but at certain determinate times and hours, and therefore He has ordained by His supreme will and authority, both where and by what persons they are to be performed. The chief priest has his proper services; to the priests their proper place is appointed, and to the Levites their proper ministers appertain, and the layman is confined within the bounds of what is commanded to the layman." Again, "the Apostles gave direction how, when they should die, other chosen and approved men should succeed in their ministry."

St. Ignatius, second Bishop of Antioch, the disciple of the Apostles, when on his way to martyrdom at Rome, A.D. 105, wrote seven epistles to the Churches, in every one of which a chief theme is unity and submission to the bishop, priests, and deacons. One quotation must suffice: "It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize, or celebrate the holy Communion."

The English Church claims the limited power of the keys, in her twentieth article, but she abjures all power to decree anything contrary to Holy Writ. If, however, Christ left His Church free in each country to apply and modify (not to change or omit) His own institutions and the apostolic traditions, the sin of those who refuse to "hear the Church," must be very great.

To make this matter of tradition plainer still, an analogy may be adduced from civil institutions. Most countries have their laws of custom as well as a written code.* Of these, but especially of the first, the judge is the exponent; his duty is to weigh the evidence educed, and thence to frame his judgment; this evidence may be written, or oral, or of both kinds. Somewhat after such a pattern was the Church embodied. The Holy

* Mahomedanism has its Koran; and its Al-Koran; the former written, the latter unwritten.

Ghost gave the traditions, written and unwritten, to the Church, by the hands of the twelve Apostles. By the same authority, the overseer, bishop, or judge, was appointed, and these judges were to continue "till the appearing of Christ." (1 Tim. vi. 14; Rev. ii. iii.)

Query IX. Brethren, where and what are your traditions by "word"? If you have none is not this part of God's Word, *i.e.*, the unwritten, become of none effect with you? Is the Holy Ghost more likely to dwell among you, than in a Church where His commands, in the form of traditions, by word and letter, have been and are kept and honoured?

Finally, let the Brethren thoroughly sift and weigh their position, and if it be found untenable in the face of Scripture, of the pure and early Church, and even of common sense and experience, let them be entreated to forsake their schism without delay. Is the Lord's coming to be hastened by de-crying national religion; by slighting our parent Church; a Church, perhaps, wherein was conveyed to them the Scripture and all of truth they have ever known? Is it by untimely judging, sifting, separating, as if this, the day of grace, were that of judgment? Is it by talk and bustle, and heaping up of teachers; by ignoring apostolic traditions, or traducing them as "human inventions;" and by scorning the duty of daily, nay, of hourly humiliation and confession? * Surely it is not by means such as these that the righteous seek to hasten that day; a day, which he that has the mind of Christ will rather seek to delay, "A day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness." (Zeph. i. 15.)

Before that day the earth shall be filled with violence; the nations shall cast off every cord and bond which has hitherto united them to Christ; the constraints and decencies founded on Christian laws shall be trampled on. Europe shall become an Acedama, and as erewhile we have seen unhappy France, the grave of even the natural conscience. Bibles, Churches, Clergy, Sacraments, shall be a public mockery; the restrictions of holy marriage, filial duty, public honesty, private faith, all, all, shall be scouted at, and looked upon as the invention of tyrants, or dreams of dotards. There may be danger in hastening such a day, danger to ourselves, (see Amos v. 18—20,) danger to our children and our country, not to speak of the fearful damage to still *professedly* believing Christendom.

* See Appendix C.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

We believe it may be and has been fully proved by Bishop Jebb, in his "Pastoral Addresses," (chap. 1,) that there exists a marked difference between our Lord's parting address to his Apostles in Mark xvi. 16—17, and that recorded by St. Matthew xxviii. 19, 20. In St. Mark, the Apostles are commissioned themselves to preach the Gospel to every creature, and a promise of extraordinary gifts is appended. In the same passage baptism follows belief, and the penalty attached to the rejection of the Gospel, to which this supernatural testimony is borne, is unqualified damnation. Like the Jews, those who despised such testimony sinned against the Holy Ghost—*visibly* working miracles. On the other hand, in St. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, there is no mention of miracles, there is a command to "make disciples all nations," in which case infants must be baptized; these disciples are to be instructed in all things Christ has taught, to *which teaching* a blessing is attached: "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

APPENDIX B.

"Now, in quite the early days of Christianity, before yet the Church had taken shape or form, while the new system was in a state of fusion, the streams of revelation were shed abroad promiscuously, without, it would appear, any regular channels or receptacles. The promise was, 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, (saith God,) I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams,' &c., &c. The nearest definition of the word prophesy in this passage I take to be, shall preach or utter religious truth under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost. In the infancy of the Christian Church the promise was fulfilled to the letter. The gift of prophesying was diffused far and wide. There is no trace of its having been confined to regular Church officers.

"Such was the Church in its state of fusion, when its rudiments were all mixed up in a chaotic form, when the light had just sprung from the bosom of darkness, and had shed itself abroad in unrestricted luxuriance through the spiritual world. And the gross and grievous mistake of certain Christian sects in our own day is just this, that they cannot see that a state of things natural and appropriate in the period of fusion, is highly unnatural and inappropriate in the period of crystallization.

“But wait a moment, when you will see System emerging out of the Chaos. You will find an actual prohibition laid by the Apostle upon the ministration of females. A step towards shutting up the power of ministering in the congregation to those who by laying on of hands are set apart to the Sacred Function.” *

This early effusion of the spirit is accounted for by Dean Goulburn in the following satisfactory manner. (Discourse 1, p. 11.) :—

“There was then no printing, no power of multiplying books, and therefore no possibility for ordinary persons of possessing them. All the Scriptures of the New Testament did not even exist in manuscript when St. Paul wrote. What means had the Church then of instruction, and of a furtherance in Divine knowledge had the Church in those days? They had the Word, even as we have, and the Word is the essential part of preaching; but instead of having the Word in a book, they had it from the lips. Inspired men were sent abroad into all the world to preach it with infallible correctness. There was then the gift of prophecy, the gift, that is, of preaching, not as the fruit of private study, but by inspiration.

“Times and circumstances are now wholly altered. What need any more of inspired men, when we have an inspired Book? A Book comprising the whole counsel of God. Think, then, when you read the Scriptures, that the Word of God Himself falls upon your ears. It is true that to Christian ministers is transmitted now-a-days a commission to preach God’s Word, but it is a Word which can be ascertained only by study.”

APPENDIX C.

It may be necessary to make some remarks on the ideas which prevail amongst Brethren regarding the duty of Christians, who are commonly called by this sect believers, to confess and bewail their sins. By believers, Brethren mean such persons as believe that all their sins are forgiven, whether past, present, or future. This belief or persuasion is with Brethren one great test of fitness for the membership of their Society. Now, that the true Christian will ever continue to bewail his sins and his sinful nature, even though enabled to believe in and rejoice in the Atonement, is the teaching of both the Old and New Testament, with which teaching the cry of the primitive Church, as well as the voice of our own Church in her Liturgy, fully accord.

Let us take a cursory view of the instruction contained in the Old Testament, chiefly conveyed to us on this head by examples, and let not men say, as is now their wont, in the infidel spirit of the age, ‘We don’t receive the Old Testament as authority in these matters.’ If the Old Testament saints be continually brought before us in the New Testament as our example, it seems a proud and daring thing for anyone to contemn those who educe principles from the words

* From “An Introduction to the Devotional Study of the Holy Scriptures,” by E. M. Goulburn, D.D.

and deeds of Patriarchs and Prophets. Nathan told David from God that "his sin was put away." Yet David composed the fifty-first Psalm subsequently, in it earnestly entreating forgiveness; and no doubt the prophet-king used it to his dying day. The entire teaching of Job by his afflictions was to lead him to a deeper sense of the vileness of his nature; though he had ever kept so clear a conscience that he seems to have found it impossible to recall to his memory particulars in which he had offended. Daniel, one of the most perfect of men, deeply deplores his sin and the sin of his people. He felt the depravity of our common nature, and wept and confessed the guilt of all alike; holy Ezra did the same. In the New Testament we find St. Paul calling himself the "chief of sinners," though he knew that he had "obtained mercy." Is this the spirit that dwells in Brethren, when they object to the words of the Litany, "miserable sinners?" Do these men learn from St. Paul to repudiate the prayer, "From Thy wrath and from everlasting damnation, good Lord deliver us?" No, the words of this Apostle show another mind; "I keep under my body, and have it in subjection, lest, having preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." St. Peter, restored to favour and highly honoured, is said to have almost worn a channel in his cheeks, weeping for his fall. St. Mark, writing at the dictation of the Apostle St. Peter himself, tells us, "When he thought thereon, he wept." We are charged "to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure" (2 Pet. i. 10), one of the best means to which end is to remember that in ourselves we ever remain "poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked;" and that the Christian life consists in confessing this continually, and coming to the fountain of grace to have our needs supplied.

What was the mind of the early Church on this point; did it accord with Scripture? Yea, verily; and our own faithful Church, her teaching also accords with Apostolic tradition. The Rev. Charles Wheatly, in his learned and able work on the Book of Common Prayer, writes as follows, treating of the Confession. (Sec. iii. p. 113):—

"The Church hath placed the confession at the *beginning* of the service, for the whole *congregation* to repeat after the minister, that so we may first be witnesses of each other's confession before we unite in the following service, and this, as we learn from St. Basil, who flourished A.D. 370, is consonant to the practice of the primitive Christians; 'who,' he tells us, 'in all Churches, immediately upon their entering the house of prayer, made confession of their sins to God, with much sorrow, concern, and tears, every man pronouncing his own confession with his own mouth.'"

Brethren decline to use the Lord's Prayer. Tertullian, who lived in the second century, says "Our Lord gave His new disciples of the New Testament a form of prayer;" he calls it, "The prayer to be said before all other prayers."*

* Wheatly, Introd. pp. 7, 8.

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PRINTED AT THE OPERATIVE JEWISH CONVERTS' INSTITUTION,
PALESTINE PLACE, BETHNAL GREEN.
