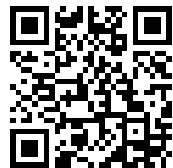

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THE
DISHONESTY OF UNBELIEF.

ROMANS IX. 22.

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THE

DISHONESTY OF UNBELIEF.

R.

ROMANS IX. 22.

“Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light” *John* iii. 19.

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THE
DISHONESTY OF UNBELIEF.

Rom. ix. 22.

WHAT if God, determining to 'make known the riches of His glory' in the midst of, and by occasion of what He 'endures,' should, as God over all, appoint that every dishonesty in man's mind should receive 'meet recompense' in some *delusion*?

Our nature runs readily into charging on God anger like ours; but the 'wrath' is the necessary displeasure of a perfectly holy God, who sees outspread before Him the hideous disorder of creatures breaking away from dependence.*

His *power* is 'able to abase the proud,' but is blessedly put forth to save the humble who consent to His judgment, and cast themselves on His mercy.

Now-a-days men print arguments against the very existence of 'a personal God'; of course, therefore,

* So 'children of wrath, even as others,' does not mean that God hates His creatures, but that mankind are found in a condition *morally* such as His 'wrath' must be *declared against*. To show His wrath is to reveal His character by that against which He 'hath indignation'; and what is that now but pride (even as Sodom's) and self-righteousness of men?

against any alleged message from Him. Society has drifted into this licence, and God 'endures' it.

What, then, has He preserved as proof that He has spoken, and still speaks to man? The *stress* of infidelity may help us here, by indicating our actual position, and true line of defence.

My *thesis* is, that Unbelief in the Gospel is a *dishonest* thing: not that such men as Gibbon,* or others, can distort the truth of facts or doctrine; but that the *rejection* of THE evidence of the Gospel is a *condition* of moral dishonesty.

The name 'infidel' is by some objected to; I use it in its ordinary sense. Little ground has that man to complain of it, who blasphemes what he once solemnly professed to venerate.

The '*Irrationalism of Infidelity*' (1854, 8vo. 400 pp.) is the title of a very able exposure of the tissue and animus of Mr. F. Newman's 'Phases of Faith'; I add, as incidental to my subject, that the writer was well acquainted with Mr. N.'s history, and has prefaced his book with a solemn appeal to his conscience. And yet Mr. N. *would seem to be ignorant of the existence of this book*; so silent is he about it; though he has added a chapter to his 'Phases' in reply to Mr. Rogers, who had provokingly exposed the gossamer philosophy of Mr. N. and his friends.

However, we must not think of Mr. N. as *idle*. Since his book against Christianity, he has cast before him the 'projected shadow' of a *Church* (!), from which he

* If the reader wants proof of the little confidence to be placed in Gibbon's use of his *immense reading*, when the Christian religion was concerned—he may find it in that writer's remarks on the alleged silence of history as to the darkness over the *earth* (rather *land*) at the Crucifixion. The 'distinct chapter' of Pliny consists of *two lines*.

is not sure the *Atheist* should be excluded; and now, if report and some internal tokens * may be trusted, he openly characterizes the account of the miraculous conception as 'disgusting'; and labours to persuade us that the death and resurrection of Jesus were, after all, no death or resurrection at all! The way he sets about this, he himself tells us, is by taking the Scripture accounts *concessively*;—'concessively' meaning, in this case, the accepting of some circumstances incidentally appearing therein, and which are not satisfactory to Mr. N.'s mind, as grounds for rejecting the great *Fact* to which these accounts testify, as 'established by many infallible proofs' 'during forty days.' Now it is certain that the Gospels were written for those who were already 'instructed in' and 'surely believed' the things written; and therefore that they are very far from being of the nature of materials for a new trial of the facts, by every individual of after ages. Does Mr. N. receive the leading facts? If not, his arguments are as out of place, as it would be to bring in critical tweezers when we are not satisfied that there is any *face of facts* whereon to operate.†

If the *Gospel* of Jesus is God's truth, I can well understand that the enemy of God and man should aim at the great *FACT* of Jesus' resurrection; for it is fundamental to the *saving truth*. (1 Cor. xv.) But 'the twelve' and the 'five hundred' are gone to their graves, and all who could have spoken to their characters also; the testimony is therefore 'second-hand' and remote; and it is too late, at the distance of eighteen hundred years, to move for a new trial of the great *FACT* on which the *Gospel* originally went forth.

* 'Westminster Review,' Jan. 1858. See especially the way in which his clever antagonist, Mr. Rogers, is spoken of.

† See note A, at the end.

But I will make to the other side a *real* 'concession,' and allow that a religion coming from God ought not to require of us that we should follow Paley's argument, concise and sensible as it is. Such works may greatly confirm some of us; but the majority of Christians do not read them, and must be judged either to be without the proper evidence for their faith, or to have found it elsewhere. I repeat, therefore, that it would, in my judgment, be a considerable presumption *against* a religion being from God, if it stood in need of a big book or elaborate argument to make us receive it.

The mistake appears to have arisen from men claiming to be addressed as if they were of *pure* and *upright intellects*; a presumptuous claim that has been *weakly* conceded. But God speaks to men as complex beings, having ignorance with intelligence, Sin and misery, and above all, as having a *Conscience*.

Every newspaper, equally with all history, testifies to the fact of sin and misery attaching to man, under *all* his circumstances, and under *all* forms of government. In every scheme of philanthropy, as well as in every discontent, we recognise the same solemn fact. We know little of our nature, unless we see *Sin*,* the thing contrary to God, infecting it in every part. Indeed, a *single* sin, undeniably traceable to the sap of our nature, is enough to shew that nature *corrupt*,—actually so, though not so created. Our estimate of that corruption will vary according to the light into which we are able to bring it; in the presence of a *holy* God, it must be '*very blackness*,' and '*fitted for destruction*.'†

God (say Christians), while declaring all this, also

* See note B, at the end.

† One who denies that there has been *any fall*, ascribes all this to his Creator!

declares the remedy. He is both our light and our cure. 'Light is come'; but 'men love darkness.' And this worse than apathy must be broken up, and an *earnestness to be saved* take its place, before Man can receive truth—or Christ, who is THE Truth.

There is something awful about this vast human family—each member of it drawing his breath from the Creator, whom he does not 'glorify,' and whose command to 'REPENT' he proudly resists.*

The truth of God speaks *to all men*; but it is not denied, but *rather to be maintained*, that the truth is intended for a certain *moral* condition of the affections, for which all are held responsible. I submit that it could not be otherwise, unless our Creator designed, in communicating with us, to set aside the very principles of our nature as it came from His own hand. If I am right in this—a man continues an unbeliever in the truth, because of the absence of a certain *moral condition* of the heart and affections.

Of course, if our nature is regarded as having sustained only a *slight* bruise, there will be no *earnestness*; but if sin is discerned to have poisoned our very springs of action, *then*,—and so much the more because beautiful social affections still point truly,—we shall long to be delivered from this moral ruin.

What says History, inspired and uninspired? In the strength of a fallen nature Cain dared approach God, and was rejected. Instantly his countenance fell, and lour'd toward the accepted one; † hatred ran its course;

* Repentance I take to be a 'new mind,' coming out of,—and further evidenced by—new affections. If men say, '*wherein shall we return?*' they make proof of a hardened conscience, not that they have not a '*revolted and rebellious heart.*'

† 1 John iii. 12.

accursed and unhappy he went out and builded a city; corruption spread, for it was *evil* communication. And in later history, how does our nature shew? Its energy is destructive,—its righteousness perpetuates *avengers* without causing unrighteousness to cease. It ‘lusts and has not,’ it ‘fights and wars.’ The family is but a narrower world.* Man’s mind rests not from casting up its mire; his memory retains and transmits evil, while it quickly loses good; the tongue, formed for blessing, spreads a *fire*.† And the exceptional instances of compassion, peace, equity, and meekness, make us feel all the more the pressure of their evil contraries. Man is not happy,—because his heart is astray. Laws do but restrain him; civilization occupies and full-feeds or lulls him; and the moralist, failing to effect any real reformation, is driven to conclude that it is not a *rule of life* that is needed.

What, then, is needed? It is first of all, a something which shall regenerate the affections *for our Maker*.

In this need God *sends*,—not a theological system, but a MESSAGE. It is very humbling to our pride to be put in such a place, and dealt with as helpless, nay, worse still, as needing to be *reconciled* before being *taught*. But if SIN is to be judged by us truly, *i. e.*, on higher grounds than our low, social estimate thereof, we must be brought into *our* place,—and so see God in *His* place; and say, ‘Against **THEE** only have I *sinned*.’

The holy,—but pityful God, is *known* only where sin is *forgiven* (compare 2 Thes. i. 8, and Jer. xxxi. 34).

THEN His deep compassions for sinners are seen in the gift of the beloved Son. The stupendous barrier that sin

* See note C, at the end.

† See a solemn chapter on the Morality of Words, in Trench.

interposed, is measured by the necessity for the drinking that cup; the distance of sin from the Blessed God, in the forsaking of the sinner's Substitute 'on the tree'; the almightiness of God's Son to redeem, in the loosing the bands of death by which He "could not be holden"; and the perfectness of the *Atonement*, in the raising to God's right hand the One who 'bare our sins.' And so God is known—*only* where His love IN CHRIST is believed;—and the law, which is 'holy,' losing its title to condemn—gets its claim to be loved!

Behold, 'the way of God,' the Cross,—the Blood, become the eternal rebukes of man's self-sufficiency! But then, what less than divine suggestion could have given birth to the thought of salvation by *blood*? Yet there it stands indelible on the pages of history. *Before* Christ came, seen in the sacrificial rite, round which other institutions were grouped; and *since* Christ came, in His cross,—as the central point of our religion. God has worked, mysteriously, *beyond man's thought*! Dionysius the Areopagite, and the woman Damaris, rest their souls on a mystery alike inscrutable to both. (Acts xvii.)

In this silencing of our subtle reason by the wisdom of God, and not until then, is regeneration, or the new birth, wrought. A man believes that JESUS is the Christ, the 'anointed' of God, for the transcendent work of *redemption* and *glory*:—and thenceforth there is not a blessing of the covenant in Christ's blood but belongs in title to that man. The grace of God has overcome his evil, and the ignorance of foolish men is put to silence.

Love—lowliness—faith—temperance—meekness, are plainly attributes of a happy *creature*; and their excellence is allowed by all. What *cannot be borne with* is, that these things should be connected with that humil-

iating Cross * which publishes everywhere the shame of our nature. The 'offence of THE CROSS' has not ceased. It is still the witness of a *love* that works *through the condemnation of sin in a Sin-Bearer* to the peace and purity of *forgiven ones*. Were it possible to disconnect the spirit of a Christian's walk from his faith, the former might be endured, or even commended! † Let, now, an unbeliever hire a room in one of the lanes of this city, and lecture on what he calls the *spirit* of Christianity, *without any mention of its facts*, while a Christian in the neighbourhood preaches the *FACTS, atonement, resurrection, &c.*, with their bearing upon conscience. We may then judge the prophets 'by their fruits.' (Scenes of abject degradation best shew out the moral miracles of conversion). If it should be objected that such a challenge is not equal, because of the *prejudice* of the hearers, will unbelievers point us to the fruits of their missionary labours *among the heathen*? If this also is declined, where is their philanthropy? Has their experience dashed its hopefulness? or are they secretly conscious that *the facts of the evangelist*, and not the rules of the moralist, alone regenerate man's moral being?

But why turn to moral rules, if all is right *morally*? *Political* reformers are such, because they judge *governments* in the wrong. *Moralists* proceed on a similar assumption: and ought not one who occupies himself about *revealed* truth, to acknowledge his need of light; and to start from that admission.

* The CROSS speaks our ruin. The INCARNATION, so far from elevating the ruined nature, was necessary in order that One might die *for all*. The RESURRECTION publishes Redemption.

† The remark may need qualification. For doubtless some excellent fruits might be counted meanness of spirit.

Christians say, that man was 'made upright,' but is fallen from uprightness; that his instincts are mastered and corrupted; that sin *reigns*, only variously manifested; and that our reason itself is *untrustworthy* in any question where moral condition affects discernment. If so, to be really honest, we need *first* to judge and confess this *natural* dishonesty.

For one convinced of our nature's mysterious confusion, not to desire a teacher *speaking with authority*; or for a *sick* man to get his physician into discussion of the *principles* of medical science, instead of about his own sickness; (coming to him *head-wise* and not *need-wise*); can hardly be counted honest. I submit that in a solemn matter there cannot be honesty without *earnestness*. God has opened no royal road to safety for *indolent* souls; or it would not be THE salvation the Gospel declares.

I turn, therefore, from all who are not *in earnest* asking the way of salvation, 'that they *may be saved*.'* I have formerly wasted much precious time on such, but intend to do so no more. What shall we then say? or how complain, if, while God gives substance to the *earnest-hearted*, the enemy is permitted to entangle such as are *not in earnest* in some of the multiform shapes of error, brought in by men *out of communion with God*.†

There is plainly a vast amount of *judicial* 'blinding and hardening' of those who love not the light. It is a solemn thought in so mysterious a world; I think I see this *judicial* process going on, partly by means of our disobedient mixing of believers with unbelievers; so that subjects that ought not at all to come before unbelievers, are mingled with the claims of a message

* 2 Thess. ii. 10.

† See note D, at end.

demanding the *simple faith* of sinners. What the world has to do with, is a *message of salvation*,—not a theological system, or a *book*, not even with *the Bible*, except as containing the message, and serving to test the fidelity of the preachers. And yet what is more common than the jumbling together of all these elements, to the detriment of all.

God understands us. 'In Him is no darkness at all.' But we may well ascribe to a nature fallen like our own, a *something* quicker than instinct, that perceives that a certain doctrine would spoil us of our *independence* ;* and this perception may have power *in us*, before we are aroused to consciousness that we have transgressed any known law. To some such dishonest glancing away of the mind I would attribute it, that the preacher of a *sincere gospel* is met by questions touching election,† or eternity of punishments, or other points of high mystery. Yet, what is this but *confusion*—serving the end of *evasion* ? But God does not give up His title to the 'obedience of faith' in all *simplicity*. He stands for it, we may believe, in mercy to our race ; for it is the door to blessing ! Mark x. 15.

His message is indeed of LOVE in the 'glorious gospel.' Adjuncts there are, which we must not suppress—a dark back-ground of judgment to come ; all true, yet not *the message* preached for confidence of faith ; that is—JESUS.

Consider how evil must that flesh (or natural condition) be, which a holy God does not satisfy, and cannot bless,—of which also He declares that they who are 'in it' cannot please Him ! Can we wonder that He who 'knew what was *in man*' was a 'man of sorrows' ?

* Job. xxi. 14.—'Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us ; we desire *not* the knowledge of thy ways.'

† See note E, at end.

In the way of divine *compassion*, He bore *this* among 'our griefs,' and 'sighed' when giving a new sense where the heart was unrenewed. (Mark vii. 34, compare verse 36.) All own that every man living *sins*:—but where are they who truly accept the conclusion that SIN is *in* our nature, as well as *around* us in its fruits? '*Their eyes they have closed.*' One who really sees this truth cannot but discern the *insensibility* generally hiding it. Whence is this? If an enemy has done it, how subtly does he work! Transgression and misery he does *not* hide; for the constant presence of these operates to reconcile us to distance from God: further, by leading to 'comparing ourselves among ourselves,' it occupies us with great or small sins, of which we charge ourselves with the *least*:—and then, in confession of sins, the thought enters that, were it not for failures, *ourselves* would be right:—and so we are kept from the deeper confession of our sinful *Nature*. But this last it is, that, establishing the necessity of a new birth, makes room for the work of the Son of God. And truly, so long as there is not this judgment of our flesh as a 'corrupt tree' that must needs bear 'corrupt fruit,'—even *confession of sins* may be an effort to recover self-complacency—and a return to confidence in the flesh.

The mystery of original or birth sin appears altogether inscrutable. But it belongs to nature and natural religion. Eternal punishments and other high mysteries are matter of revelation. The 'lake of fire,' the 'undying worm,' are a part of God's word; awakening men from the apathy that is Satan's lie; I don't know that we are anywhere told that any shall be punished for *birth* sin, who have not gone astray from the womb. In this dark range of thought we may fall back on the principle of equity intimated in the 'many' and 'few' stripes.

A 'righteous Judge' beholds, and can well discern between those who put from them the light, and the neglected dwellers in alleys where the light never penetrates.

Beyond even the impatience natural to our minds, the present day claims to be one of *progress*. Truly it is *progress*, rather than leisure for thought. An amount of slight information is very widely diffused, and hence a great increase of talkers, confident in their numbers, and yet without any notion of the real nature of the Christian evidence—some wrapping themselves in the cloak that hides ignorance, and some walking in their own sparks. 'I will get me to their great men,' said one of old; but the great and wise among us—fine minds, it may be, and instructed in many things—are fully as ignorant as others in this most solemn of all enquiries.

Who doubts that Religion lies open to attack through the Scriptures? or that difficulties task the Christian advocate, at times above his ability to deal with them? Many such have been enlarged on by infidel writers, and many still remain but indifferently met, although the majority may be said to be well obviated. I observe, in passing, that difficulties in the Scriptures may prove a rich field of future instruction; nay even, as has sometimes happened, supply a confirmation of our faith. Let us remember how wide is our subject, and enter on such difficulties in the modesty that becomes us.

Above all, let us approach difficult questions, strong in conviction of the truth *already apprehended*. Take for instance, the great truth of the FALL. Were not *all* the lives of a sinful race *forfeited*,* while the long patience

* We know not how much of *special and particular retribution* may have entered into recorded divine judgments, as in the case of Adonibezek, Zebah, and Zalmunna, and Agag, in whom we learn it incidentally.—Judges i. 7; viii. 19; and 1 Sam. xv. 33.

of God was there? Shall not He, who endures to see man's fruit running into misery on all sides, be clear when He uses men as 'ensamples' before sweeping them from the face of the earth? The Canaanites had added fearful abominations to their idol-worship; their children, slain by Israel, in their office as His executioners, must be trusted to Him, as we daily trust those perishing by famine or pestilence.

I do not here dwell on such *difficulties*, nor on the other hand, do I enter on evidences internal in the Scriptures themselves, which may well assure the heart of one who chooses that field of study.

But the proper evidence of *the Gospel* is its wonderful adaptation to our nature's need. *This* is as the proof of a key that unlocks the wards of the heart. The most *experienced* Christian is the most enriched in this species of proof: and whether we make acquaintance with it by the power of the truth at the outset of faith, or arrive at it in the after use of the truth, it is at once the legitimate and most convincing of all evidence; an evidence *internal* in the record, and *internally* realized; but an evidence only to be appreciated by those who are honest enough to take their true place as *fallen and sinful*.*

Indeed, enquiries into what are called 'evidences' of religion, should never, if we would judge wisely, be regarded as more than *confirmatory* of the main proof, which is addressed to the conscience. True, the various lines of argument followed by Christian advocates are *strong, multiplied*, and all *convergent* to the perfecting of the proof; but then, as none of them can be said to be strictly demonstrative, a cover is left for an unwilling

* We must *catch the droppings* of the cloud to understand its worth. We cannot do this by *getting above* it. This would be to 'climb up another way.'

heart to shelter itself from disturbance. Some indeed assert that our belief is independent of *volition*. If the *affections*, that in our nature move *volition*, were extinct, or entirely outside, so as by no possibility to be touched by the question brought before us, it might be so,—as in *arithmetical* proof; but the assertion is preposterous in the face of the daily experience of those who make it.

I may have but a low opinion of the morality of our leading infidel writers, judging from their way of handling this solemn enquiry.* But my object is much wider than the question of their morality, public or private. It is to make more manifest the *dishonesty* at the root of unbelief; not, of course, meaning thereby that unbelievers go to work *intentionally* to cheat their own souls, or others, of the truth; but that unbelief, *wherever the Gospel is truly set forth*, is the result of real, though it may be unconscious *dishonesty*; just as we habitually speak of the heart as deceitful, meaning by that, that it deceives *the man himself*, by the bias with which it holds the scales of thought, and inclines them towards some pleasing delusion. For a man to say he does not *purpose* deceit or dishonesty, is but levity, when the charge is that he shares a *nature*, of which the instincts refuse and *hate* the light because its own *actings* are evil—a far deeper thing. And there is this afflicting aggravation, that the *light* is of *grace*; but we know that grace is as ‘coals of fire,’ so long as the heart is at enmity. (Rom. xii. 20.)

Our nature has been fully shewn to be ‘a *corrupt tree*,’ and the power to *estimate* the corruption has been claimed for ‘*pure eyes*.’ It has been argued that there is in us much more than apathy, a predisposition, quick as instinct, to depart from, and remain at a distance from our Creator; that, carrying in us the deep deceitfulness

* See note F, at the end.

of such a nature, we are not fit to be trusted in a question demanding a *pure moral judgment*, until we have first judged this evil bias; and that it is mere levity to say that 'it is enough if there is no *conscious* dishonesty.' That God who commanded light to shine at the first, has, in the Gospel, revealed *Himself* by declaring 'His *wrath*' against proud ungodliness, and '*grace*' toward sinners 'who believe.' That He has done this, not by elaborated testimony, such as would put difference between wise and unlearned, but by a *message* that reaches the *sincere conscience*; that the earnest-hearted own their condition, and desire to be saved out of it; that those *not in earnest* are judicially allowed to entangle themselves, and in various ways be hindered of the blessing; that from the reception of the testimony of *Christ* and His *atonement*, there spring fruits so excellent as are obtained from no other root; 'His NAME, through faith in His NAME,' giving such soundness that even enemies can 'say nothing against it.' The proper evidence of Divine Revelation has been asserted to consist in its perfect *suitability to the need that called for a revelation*; all other evidence has been allowed to be but secondary to this. It has been admitted, that such secondary evidence is not so *demonstrative* as to overbear *moral condition*, and compel an assent in which the *affections* would have no part,—a fact in harmony with the consideration that the Creator is trying our spirits. That this arrangement for the trial of earnestness, and judicial snares coming on those in whom an earnest heart is wanting, is subserved, in ways of which we have little conception—partly by the evidence being invested with preliminary difficulties, and partly by the unreasonable intrusion of questions coming out of their place in consequence of our disobedient confusions. Lastly, it has been re-

marked that there is no reason (but rather the contrary) for considering this age particularly qualified for religious inquiry; its distractions necessarily causing slightness of knowledge, and its boastful spirit taking from the solemn sense of creature dependence and responsibility.

These things I have touched, but not in this order; indeed, I feel unable to give more order to the thoughts presented. Let it suffice if all bear on my thesis. There are some things lying too *broad* and too *deep* in the darkness of our *fallen* nature to be *by us* measured and subordinated; but glimpses may help us in anticipating a day when eternal things shall no longer be hidden by 'things seen.' In 'man's day' there is much that is perplexing. The wise king, when he began his glorious reign, brought *hearts* into the light; then facts came forth according to truth, and 'all Israel saw that the wisdom of God was there to do judgment.' (See 1 Kings iii. 16.) Mystery may meet us on all sides, in nature, providence, religion, and may be appointed to keep us from 'leaving the bounds of our habitation,' and so losing the place of happy creatures, who *receive* the highest blessings,—as all take our necessary sleep—on the common level of our Nature's *weakness*.

The *sum* is this:—

I. Our nature is very *sick*; and besides its active evil in *transgression* of every law, there is much evil *apathy* which *we* cannot analyse.

II. Those in *earnest* for perfect soundness are not likely to be found opposing a Physician who has worked myriads of wonderful cures, and invites *all* to come and be healed 'without price.' On the contrary, a *real* philanthropist will rather labour to remove impediments to their coming.

III. Those *in earnest* in desiring cure will be as glad to receive it in the way of DISCOVERY, as in the more beaten track of *progress in science*.

LASTLY. They will be fully as ready to “strip themselves,” and go down into despised *Jordan*, as into *their own Abana* or *Pharfar*.

In conclusion, unbelievers (and here I mean such as have had the gospel truly presented to them) must forgive me, if I ascribe their *not being satisfied* to their being not thoroughly *in earnest*, and their not being in earnest, to a lack of honesty—real, though it may be unconscious.

But I would throw away my thesis (instead of nailing it outside the church doors), if any one will produce an unbeliever sincerely *convinced* of his state by nature, *earnest* in desiring a cure, favourable therefore to healing power, prepared to welcome help through *discovery*, and to accept a cure, in any way *however humbling*. But such an one we may expect, will come to CHRIST, ‘casting away his garment’! Confessing that nothing less than REDEMPTION was needed, in order that God might deal with man, he will, if only simple and consistent, cease from *self* altogether, and find his ‘joy and peace in *believing*’:—looking *from* his faith to his *Saviour*; and resting, not in having *right thoughts*, but in the *Grace* which he thinks rightly about.

NOTES.

[A]. It moves contempt to read such *minute* criticisms of one who seems entirely unimpressed by the bloody sacrifices of 4000 years—the formal institution, and the observance of them for atonement for sin by a whole nation for fourteen centuries—the words of a long line of prophets, speaking of *Grace* through *substitution*—and the connection of all this with the yielding up of Himself by ONE called 'THE LAMB OF GOD'—and the effects resulting in the peace of soul of all who have since believed in that bloodshedding.

[B]. See a paper on 'The Fall,' (W. Yapp, 1854).

[C]. The parables of ordinary life are full of rebukes; but they need God, and his *Nathans*, and a *Conscience*, to interpret them. In such shifting parables how continually do we pass sentence on *ourselves!*

[D]. Who can set a limit to this remark? It is even probable that a lack of spiritual *singleness of eye* would explain most of our differences in the interpretation of Scripture; such, at least, as are *conflicting*, and not mere different steps in instruction or attainment. Pascal's reflection comes to mind—'*l'ame ne s'offre jamais simple d aucun sujet.*'

[E]. Divine Foreknowledge, or *Election*, is in this most wonderful; that it is *felt* to be not inconsistent with *free action*, and so it is shewn in scripture, Gen. xv. 14; Exod. i. 22; iii. 19, iv. 21, v. 2, vii. 3, 5, 23, viii. 15. God *chose* Jacob, and laid Esau's heritage bare; but Esau rejoiced over his brother in the day of his calamity, and stood in the way to cut off the 'children of Judah'; *therefore* Esau should be devoured. Obadiah 12; Jeremiah xlix. 10.

[F]. A thought occurs here, which I leave to others to verify or discard. It is, that where neither the earlier oracles of God, nor His voice in the Gospel, bore witness to the need for blood-shedding, *there* individual souls of men, aspiring to rise above the religion existing around them, have been *met* and *rewarded* by God in a marked elevation of moral tone; such men really, according to their light, 'seeking after Him.' While, on the contrary, *since Christ came*, and where God's way of bringing sinners nigh by blood is known, though ever so much encumbered by human additions, *there* the 'aspirations' of souls, *getting away from the humbling Cross*, have been met by Divine rebukes, to be read in a manifest depravation of moral judgment.

