

The Christian Watchman

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BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE—BY LOVE UNFEIGNED.—ST. PAUL.

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Original Contributions

For the Christian Watchman.

"THE WORD."

No. VII.

GOD REVEALED THROUGH THE WORD.

"God has revealed himself to man only through the 'Word.'"

It is an error to suppose that human reason can discover, much less comprehend the nature, attributes, operations, or purposes of the Supreme. It is also an error to suppose that he has ever revealed himself directly to the soul of man. He is in reality unknown except as he has revealed himself through the "Word." He is the sole medium through whom the Divine Light has flowed into the world. "He hath revealed Him."

A revelation of God implies of course an announcement of His nature, excellencies and excellencies, but it implies much more; it not only makes known certain elements of His character and certain operations of His understanding or will, but it is such a presentation of Divinity to the mind as is intelligible, and capable of concentrating toward him, human thought, affection, or energy. Merely theoretical knowledge of God is of little utility. The human mind is so constituted that revelations which treat only of the infinite and eternal produce but feeble impressions. The religious instinct which impels to the discovery and worship of the Divine, will, if introduced only to a disquisition of the abstract attributes of Deity, however perfect, inevitably impel to idolatry or pantheism. A revelation to be complete must not only be correct but intelligible; it must not only treat of the nature, character, and operations of God, but present him so that the mind and heart can apprehend him; such a revelation has been made by the "Logos," and by him only. Man could not reveal God to the world, for he has not been able to discover Him. "No man hath seen God at any time." Nature indeed disclosed the fact that a being almighty, wise, existed, creating and preserving all things, but his mode of existence and moral attributes were obscurely shadowed forth. Though "the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handy work," and though "the things which are made" disclosed his eternal power and godhead, yet none have even yet discovered the Deity as a being to be comprehended, loved, and obeyed from the study of nature. Those who have no other sources of knowledge are worshippers of idols, either stocks or stones, elements or stars.

Man moreover was made "in the image of God." It might be supposed that by reflection, conscience and reason, important discoveries respecting the supreme might be made. By taking for granted the existence of God, and by removing from him even imperfect philosophy have framed very imposing systems of theology. But philosophy cannot clearly decide as to what is a perfection and what is not, besides as it advances toward worthy conceptions of Deity—his supposed attributes become more vague—in fact as these speculations become more correct theoretically, the idea of God practically becomes less and less operative. The rude idolater is not inferior to the refined philosopher in piety or virtue. The one rapturously adores an idol, the other coldly meditates upon a vague speculation. Nor has God ever revealed himself directly to the human soul. We cannot even conceive of the possibility of such a revelation. Besides the most difficult arising from the inability of man towards God, the finite mind cannot apprehend the infinite. The fact of a revelation as was fitted to render man acquainted with God or to elicit those feelings of reverence, love, and submission which are his due. Besides God made himself known even thus imperfectly through the medium of visible signs or audible sounds, and did not appear to him in his original glory. It furthermore appears that this revelation imperfect as it was, and imparted by mere words or signs, was communicated not by the Eternal Father, but by the second person of the Trinity "Word."

Man is indebted for whatever real and practical knowledge of God he possesses to the Incarnate Word. "No man hath seen God at any time," the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath revealed Him. "When the light of nature without, and the teachings of reason and conscience had failed to make man acquainted with his Maker, when the teachings of Moses, and the prophecies of inspired men, had only cast a misty light into the spirit world, and failed in communicating knowledge of God to man, then the Incarnate Word, the Divine Son appeared, and revealed all of Deity that the mind requires, or can receive."

He knew God. He had seen the Father. He was intimately acquainted with his nature, character, will and purpose. He has fashioned immensity and comprehended eternity, and to his mind there was nothing incomprehensible or mysterious in Deity. This perfect knowledge he did not obtain from study or reflection, or through any medium, since he possessed that knowledge of

God which fully qualified him to reveal Deity to man.

The "Word" could also impart this knowledge to man. He could speak in human language, he was acquainted with the nature of man, he himself became a man, and so could present truth not in a naked or abstract form, but with a simplicity of expression, a beauty of feeling, a richness of illustration which rendered his instructions interesting, intelligible, and capable of exciting in the heart the emotions in accordance with the nature of his theme.

But words could not possibly convey to the human soul all the knowledge of God which it needs, and can receive. The most correct descriptions of the Divine perfections, would leave but a vague impression on the mind or the heart. The word, however, by the events of his life, and the fact of his death, imparted a knowledge of Deity which no words could express. Thus is revealed through the Son the wisdom and justice, the purity and love of the infinite spirit. One glance at Calvary affords more correct knowledge of God than could be obtained through all other sciences, philosophies, or merely verbal revelations.

Besides the "Incarnate Word" was God manifested. Those who saw him and heard him speak, became acquainted not with a mere man but with Deity. "Those who knew him, knew the Father also. In the words which he spoke, in the action which he performed, in his life and in his death, he exhibited the moral perfections of God."

For the Christian Watchman.

Studies for the Sunday School.

MINISTRY OF JOHN BAPTIST—HIS PREACHING.

Mt. 3: 7, 12; Mark 1: 7, 8; Luke 3: 7, 17.

The ministry of John was not confined to the lower orders of the people. The Pharisees and Sadducees heard his addresses, believed that the Messiah was on the point of making his appearance, and were anxious to be prepared for admission to his kingdom, and participation in its privileges; consequently they came to John to be baptized. But they imagined that repentance was unnecessary; that their descent from Abraham entitled them to immolation, which they thought was, in their case, the only requisite for admission into the kingdom. But John refused to immerse them, and faithfully pointed out their error.

Ye brood of the viper, who hath taught you that this external right suffices to cleanse from sin and guilt? who hath showed you that this observance will, of itself, insure access to the heavenly kingdom—that without repentance and righteousness ye can escape the wrath which Christ will pour out upon his enemies? If ye would escape this wrath, and enjoy the blessings of the kingdom, ye must repent of sin, and exhibit the righteousness which flows from genuine repentance.

Ye pride yourselves in your ancestry, and vainly imagine that your descent from Abraham qualifies you for the sacred immersion and entitles you to the privileges which Christ shall confer upon his subjects. But remember that descent from Abraham implies no merit, and does not afford an exclusive title to the blessing at hand, but is by the sovereign appointment of God. Others beside the lineal descendants of your great ancestor, may attain to all the privileges of which you boast. God, who gave a posterity to Abraham, can also increase it. He can raise up, from the very stones beneath your feet, children unto Abraham, and can grant to those who are not lineal descendants from him, all the privileges which you enjoy.

Now beware, cease to pride yourselves in your birth; repent, and let your repentance be seen by its appropriate fruit. The present season is most critical. The Messiah is about to set up his kingdom. Impending judgment is taking place and wrath is already upon sinners. All are under examination. The wicked shall be rejected and punished,—the righteous approved and rewarded. Behold, the axe lies at the root of every tree, both good and bad; that which beareth good fruit shall be saved from destruction, while every tree which is barren, or beareth evil fruit, shall be hewn down and cast into the fire.—Mat. 3: 7, 10; Luke 3: 7, 10.

The multitude who heard this severe address to the Pharisees and Sadducees, felt terrified in view of the judgment which was denounced upon transgressors. At once the question was anxiously asked, what then must we do to escape the threatened punishment? John replied: "Be charitable; dispense of your substance to those who are in want. Part with superfluities for the relief of the naked or the hungry. He that has two coats let him give one to him who has none, and he who has food let him do likewise." Publicans also came to John to be immersed, and inquired, "Teacher, what shall we do?" He told them to perform the duties of their office honestly; not to tax the people beyond what had been assigned by the authorities. Soldiers also, who were present, inquired, "And what shall we do?" He replied: "Oppress none; shun the base trade of the informer, and be content with your regular wages."—Luke 3: 11, 15.

The people were astonished by the wisdom of these counsels, and the uncompromising hostility of the Baptist towards wrong doing, and began to conclude, especially as he immersed the truly

penitent, that he was the Christ. But he at once corrected such a gross error. "It is true," he said, "I immerse you in water unto repentance, but I am only herald to Christ. He comes after me; but he is mightier than I. So far as he is exalted above me, that I am not worthy to be his servant to perform for him the most menial office, even to untie or to bear his sandals. I immerse only in water, but he shall immerse you in Holy Spirit and in fire, and not merely unto repentance, but for your sanctification and eternal life. I am but a preacher; he will be the executor of divine justice upon the ungodly. Even now the winnowing fan is in his hand. He will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor; the wheat he will gather into his garner, but the chaff he will consume with unquenchable fire."—Mat. 3: 11, 12; Mark 1: 7, 8; Luke 3: 16, 17.

A. B. C.

For the Christian Watchman.

Notes on Upper Canada.

We have not the variety to suppose ourselves competent, by virtue of a few weeks travel in a few localities of Canada West, to eulogize correctly the character and habits of its people or to compare them wisely with those of the inhabitants of our own country. Leaving such a task for the scalpel of some comparative anatomist, skilled in the dissection of various social frameworks, and more intimately acquainted with those in question, we shall merely offer the results of a few hasty observations and comparisons on common-place topics.

However unbecoming to the individual or to our humanity may be the sentiment, it is nevertheless difficult for one from an obscure country like our own to repress a feeling akin to gratulation at the discovery of a respect in which a greater and more powerful land compares unfavorably with it. The New Brunswick, so disposed, would not be without opportunities for the exercise of so ungenerous a trait even in Canada. Of this one has abundant and very disagreeable proof in the character of the institutions with which the traveller of necessity first makes acquaintance. Never before did we realize so clearly or value so highly what total abstinence societies and total abstinence doctrines have done for New Brunswick, as while in Upper Canada. Never before did our eyes so much for a sight of one of those quiet, cozy, temperance hotels which are prominent in almost every village in New Brunswick, or at least in our favoured section of it. But then, alas! they ached in vain. We cannot positively assert that no such establishment exists, but we can most honestly aver that between Montreal and Toronto we miserably failed to find one. The bar-room is the inseparable fellow of the dining room—in fact generally much the more important and better patronized part of the premises. One cannot get his name entered on the landlord's book without running the gauntlet of a long file of deaneers, and halting very likely under the signs of a strong beer syphon. One cannot exchange the civilities of the morning with a fellow-boarder without being met with an invitation to "take something"—cannot take a seat for a few miles in a stage wagon without undergoing many a wondering if not contemptuous stare for not doing his share of the accustomed "treating" at every tavern along the road. This state of affairs is, we suppose, but too close a counterpart to that which a few years ago obtained in New Brunswick, bears in fact, too much likeness to what still exists in some parts of our almost Maine Law Province. But to our coming from a country which has for long years persistently set the brand of illegality upon the forehead of the traffic, and in which, as a righteous consequence, drinking with its attendant horrors seeks the darkness, it seemed most strangely disagreeable and revolting. Manifestly, as we had the virtue of necessity to plead, we could hardly visit the office, *alias* the bar-room, without feeling as if our sonship were being defiled. Cold water to a thirsty soul is a soothing drink is sweet, but a Son's relief for it is by no means increased by lingering fetid fumes of gin or beer, and yet less by the reflection that the very vessel from which he is quenching his thirst may have held the "first glass" which started some young immortal on the sure and swift passage to perdition, or may have administered that "last glass" which set free the crushed spirit of some fond wife from the loathsome yet loved body of a husband long since dead to every worthy purpose of life and love—a freedom infinitely more fearful than the life long bondage, because without room for repentance or hope.

But daily contact has a marvellous power to blunt our sensitiveness even to the most hideous forms of moral evil, and we have found partially true of the species what the poet has said of the genus.

"Vice is a monster of such dreadful mien,
As to be dreaded, needs but to be seen;
But seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure."

We feel thankful to be able to affirm in all honesty that we have as yet got no further, a bare endurance being the most kindly feeling we have as yet cherished for the vice. Nor till her blandishments assume some form more attractive than disgusting fumes, and bawdy songs, and midnight brawls, do we fear finding ourselves on the succeeding steps.

But while this is one of a few points in which our little Province prefers to her more powerful sister the advantages of a wiser and better ex-

ample, there are many other social features in which she compares but poorly. One of these as we could not but feel convinced, is agriculture. In this respect we have much to learn. One point in which the Canadian farmers seem especially to stand far in advance, is in the use of labour-saving machinery. Our observations were all made in harvest, yet we doubt not the remark would hold equally true in seed time, or at any other season. To the contemplative mind and fruitful imagination of the poet, the scythe as it "lies glittering in the dew wreath of tedded grass," may be a thing of beauty and of poetry. But to less favoured mortals, and especially to such as may have learned its practical use on the broad marshes of these Lower Provinces, it will we presume, prove quite as suggestive of sweating brows, and weary limbs, and aching bones, and mosquito insects, as of the more poetical associations. Such unimaginative beings will, we trust, discover quite as much poetry in one of those Canadian moving machines which, while leaving the harvester nothing to do but guide skilfully his horses, quickly level the waving mass on broad acres, leaving it not in awkward ridges but evenly strewn along. Reaping machines, too, constructed on somewhat similar principles, though necessarily more complicated, are used in the grain fields. One has been invented and is recently coming into use, so arranged as to pay a double debt by reaping and at the same time raking the grain into bundles. True, these, like all other new inventions are yet more or less imperfect, and for that reason are derided by some of the older farmers, who are more strongly than wisely conservative of time honoured customs. For our own part we look upon all such improvements with gratification, seeing or fancying we see in them much of hope for the future. We have no sympathy with the fear that he who formed the intellect will look with displeasure upon any new instances of its triumph over difficulties, or its amelioration of physical toils. Apart from any questions in politics or economy which might be started in view of the rapidly increasing material wants of the age and the prospective scarcity of manual labour, every benevolent mind must rejoice in the success of any attempt which promises to the labouring classes a diminution of the hours of daily toil. True, the old adage about "idle hands" &c., might reasonably be quoted against a movement, if such were possible, that would bring a large and sudden exemption from the necessity for prolonged physical labour. But every one who reflects upon the sad consequences of intense and unintermitted devotion to bodily toil which are so apparent on every hand, in blunted sensibilities and intellects dwarfed and benumbed, must hail with pleasure even the faintest promise of a gradual relaxation—a relaxation keeping pace with the mental and moral elevation of the race. May not such promise reasonably be found in the event, but dimly foreshadowed as yet, of the introduction into the farmers, department, of greatly improved machinery, and the enrolment of the steam giant and other natural forces into his service?

[To be Continued.]

For the Christian Watchman.

RECOLLECTIONS OF ROME.

NO. XII.

THE ROMAN.

Now let us take a rapid glance at the inhabitants of Rome.

Except during the summer season when the climate is very unhealthy. There is always a foreign population in this city. Here from every civilized country are priests and preachers, pilgrims and pleasure seekers, invalids, artists, and scholars, whose nationality, and whose several occupations, even may be readily detected.

But let us turn to the residents of Rome. The priests first attract our attention, for their vast numbers, and the peculiarity of their costumes. The monks are attired in coarse robes of various colours, white, brown, or grey and are hooded and sandalled. The holy men in brown are the most numerous, the most industrious, and may be seen at all hours of the day returning to their monasteries, well laden with cold provisions. They are said to be the most successful beggars in Rome. The official business of the monks seems to be limited to praying souls out of purgatory, and occasionally to join in some of the more imposing of the religious ceremonies performed in Rome.

The regular priests are also very numerous. They wear a long black coat, which reaches nearly to their heels, with a low crowned, broad brimmed hat, and are evidently superior to the monks, in manners, rank, and intelligence. The prayers and vigils, and fastings of all these holy men agree well with them. Who knows, but that the fat which is so plentifully deposited over their ribs, in spite of self-inflicted penances, is a marvellous production of the Holy Mother Church in attestation of the validity of her claims.

Now and then a Cardinal will pass by in a red coach-drawn by four horses. These ecclesiastical princes are all arrayed in scarlet robes, and the most of them manifest that tendency to become fat so unaccountable in men who are supposed to be engaged in an unceasing struggle to "keep their bodies under." A few of the Cardinals are however very noble looking men. Cardinal Antonelli, in spite of his shaven crown and scarlet

gown, resembles an emperor rather than a priest, but he has not a holy look.

Occasionally we can see the Pope himself. One morning when at the Cafe we were informed that the Santa Papa, was performing some religious ceremony in the Chies: Ne Gasa, and being anxious to see him, we hastened immediately to the church. In front of the main portal was a superb coach, to which six horses were attached. Behind the coach a troop of cavalry, in splendid uniform, was drawn up. This was the Guardia Nobile, composed of volunteers from the nobility of Rome, and offered by princes. In a few moments the Pope, attended by a few priests, came out through one of the side portals of the church, paused an instant before the crowd which had assembled, and were waiting to receive his blessing, then lifting up his hands, pronounced a benediction, meanwhile all with the exception of a few protestants, fell upon their knees.

The Pope seemed very anxious and care worn, but he appears like one of the most amiable of men, and as I looked at him I did not at all wonder at the delight with which the Roman people hailed his accession to the papal throne, or the enthusiastic love which they once cherished for him.

But there is another division of the population of Rome, which for numbers and variety of costume, surpasses the order of the priesthood. Beggars swarm every where, in the churches and cafes, at the doors of the palaces, and by the monuments of the ancient city. Wherever we go, the ear is assailed by the cry, "Oh signo date meo mezo bioch." Here stretched along the narrow pavement is some wretch horribly deformed, who silently points to his deformities, and thus, appeals to one's sympathies, and yonder is one who with vehement gestures and passionate exclamations, beseeches, importunes, and often wears one into giving the farthing so earnestly sought. Two of the Roman beggars were such curiosities that I often went to visit them at their station on the declivity of the capitoline. One of these had no legs, he was all smiles and gesticulation, and would implore his most illustrious, and most gracious excellency, for the love of God to bestow upon a poor, unhappy cripple, the trivial, insignificant, and indeed contemptible sum of one mezza bioch. The other beggar was one of the most villainous looking wretches I ever saw, and in his style of begging contrasted admirably with his neighbor. No time was wasted in giving titles to those whose aid was implored, he came to the point at once. He would throw his arms wildly upward, try to look the very image of despair, and shout out, "Oh signo, date meo mezo bioch son o pover, miserabile, desperado."

The attention of the stranger will often be called to yet another class of residents in Rome. Here are some six or eight thousand French soldiers, whose business it is to protect the Pope. It is thought that but for those he would be obliged to take up his abode elsewhere. They evidently are quite at home, and may be met with everywhere in the cafe museums or promenades, and apparently the gayest and happiest of all the dwellers in Rome.

But besides beggars, priests, and soldiers the Roman people, the sole inheritors of the glorious name of that illustrious race who once ruled this world, who "Hand to hand and foot to foot through hosts, Through nations numberless in battle array Each behind each, each when the other fell Up and in arms, at length subdued them all."

Since the times of the later emperors there have been comparatively few exhibitions of that invincible courage and fortitude, that untutored but sublime dignity, that stern and unbending virtue, which blending, constituted the peculiar character of the ancient Roman, made him the ruler of the ancient world, and won for him from modern times an admiration, which the more refined and intellectual Greek had never been able to obtain. The energy fortitude and courage of the Roman, seems now to be the birth-right of the Anglo-Saxon. Those exhibitions of dignity in speech and action, which are so frequently presented in the history of the ancient city, are now no where to be seen. Of course the simplicity of manners and the incorruptible virtue of pagan Rome have vanished to return, in their ancient form, no more.

When we review the modern history of this people we are not surprised that they no longer exhibit the peculiar qualities of their ancestors. The Roman has been a slave for many centuries,—a slave to a master who not only ruled over the outer life, but also over the thought, the holy feelings of the heart, the sacred dictates of the conscience. Vain, thus far, has been every attempt at freedom. The despot has always been able to call in aid from beyond the Alps, and from the days of Charlemagne to those of Louis Napoleon, the most potent rulers of Europe have vied with each other in their efforts to preserve to the pope of Rome his patrimony, unimpaired. We should not be surprised if the modern Roman had lost that irresistible energy and force of character, which distinguished his ancestors. Nor have the influences to which he has been exposed tended to call forth the manliness or the morals of antiquity. A hoard of Barbarians mingling with degenerate Romans, formed a people which were only partially regenerated through the influence of Christianity. Christianity itself soon became corrupted, and exerted little elevating influence. The vicereigns of Christ were often the worst of mankind, the court of the Head of the Church was often the most

corrupt and impure in Europe. We should not be surprised to find the Roman as extravagant as corrupt, and locations as his political enemies represent him. We are only surprised to find that he has not fallen into deeper degradation. Let Englishmen suffer as many centuries of such slavery, let them have presented at the head of an infallible church such examples, and we feel assured that after they had suffered as the Roman has, they would be wiser than the Roman is.

He possesses many qualities which, under a more liberal government and a purer religion, may yet develop themselves into a character more truly admirable than that which his ancestors exhibited.

One will not meet in Rome the crowds of gay, laughing, shouting buffoons who through the promenades of Naples, nor the thoughtless and careless multitudes who traverse the Long Arno of Florence. The Roman cannot forget the city to which he belongs. There is a solemnity in his appearance, and a dignity in his movements; there is a glow on his brow, but there is hope yet in his breast, glowing after so many centuries of degradation. He does not seem to be gross in his pleasures. Though excluded from the business and pursuits of the modern world by the desolate marshes which surround his city, as also by the narrow-minded policy of the popes, he still exhibits a wonderful degree of refinement in his tastes, as also in his manners. The dungeon and the gibbet have banished those free thoughts which have fed the minds and guided the lives of the inhabitants of happier lands; yet, strange to say, the Roman has not fallen into the vices which usually characterize the hopeless slave. He delights in music, poetry and the fine arts. One is surprised to find how much more refined he is than a Londoner of the same apparent education and position in society.

The land flows with wine, yet one will rarely meet with a drunken man. Even during the Carnival, when the Roman lays aside his reserve, nothing coarse or vulgar is to be seen. We may imagine the drunkenness, the quarrelling, the crime which would attend a Carnival in London or Glasgow. In Rome the sports of the season, silly though they appear to us, are carried on with harmless mirth, and very rarely lead to indecency or brutality.

The Roman is intelligent, and possesses a cultivated taste. Though ignorant of much of what we deem essential to education, his mental powers are trained in a school in which we have never studied, and directed towards subjects on which we perhaps rarely think. He has a book ever open before him which cultivates one of our noblest powers—the imagination. His city is a vast museum. He can wander amidst ruins which are the relics of the ancient mistress of the world. He can take an interest and a pride in every broken slab, in every fragment of antiquity over which he travels. He can view not only the mutilated remains of the past, but many of the choicest works of olden and modern times. He can learn by heart the exquisite conceptions of the greatest artists who have ever lived. Here is the dying Gladiator, and there the Laccoon, and the Apollo Belvidere. Then he turns to view these triumphs of ancient art rivalled by the productions of Raphael, Michael Angelo and Canova. Here he looks with admiration on the noble simplicity of the Parthenon, the most perfect relic of antiquity in the world, and there he sees towering far on high the majestic dome of St. Peter's. The Roman has before him every object that can stimulate the imagination, and perfect its powers.

He is a patriot, a patriot notwithstanding his long bondage, notwithstanding his religion. He feels that his fatherland. He cannot love his master, though he be called the viceregent of God. We do not wonder much at this. The Roman is surrounded by objects that must awaken patriotic pride. He cannot contrast the glorious past with the ignoble present, without longing for redemption. History, Antiquity, Art, and Nature, all combined to fill him with love for the now degraded City. No wonder that the young Roman could dare defend his city against the French invader, for "where's the coward that would not dare to fight for such a land?"

And now that the banner of united Italy waves almost within sight of the Capitol, we do not wonder that the Roman lates his present rulers and longs for the hour of redemption—may it soon come.

The Roman possesses many qualities which entitle him to our esteem. He is enthusiastic and passionate, but he possesses a generous heart. He is ignorant of many subjects in literature and philosophy, but he is not rude or uncultivated. His tastes often lead him to pursuits which to us seem trivial and unmanly, but it is a question whether even this be not better than the mammon-worship of the Anglo-Saxon. The Roman is turbulent, under the papal government. He is, when injured, fierce and vindictive, but when he has seen the Christian character exemplified in the boasted heads of the Christian faith?

We anticipate the day when he can once more say with pride "I am a Roman citizen."

Twice has Rome risen from the dust,—she may rise again. On May 20, 1847, the Roman people poured forth from their houses to the Capitol chanting their hymns of liberty. It may