

ST. JOHN'S CREED.

I JOHN v. 18-21.

We know that whosoever is begotten of God doth not sin;
 But He that was begotten of God keepeth him, and the
 Evil One doth not touch him.
We know that we are of God;
 And the whole world lieth in the Evil One.
But we know that the Son of God is come;
 And He hath given us an understanding, that we may know
 the True One,
 And we are in the True One,—in His Son Jesus Christ.
 This is the true God, and eternal life;
 Little children, guard yourselves from the idols.

THIS concluding paragraph of the Epistle is the seal of the Apostle John set upon the work of his life now drawing to a close; it is, in effect, a seal set upon the entire fabric of the apostolic doctrine and testimony, by this last survivor of the Twelve and the nearest to the heart of Jesus. Extracting the essential part of the confession, the three short sentences introduced by the thrice repeated *We know*, we have briefly St. John's Creed, in three Articles:

We know that whosoever is begotten of God doth not sin.

We know that we are of God.

We know that the Son of God is come.

In other words, "I believe in holiness"; "I believe in regeneration"; "I believe in the mission of the Son of God." Here we find the triple mark of our Christian profession, the standard of the authentic apostolic faith and life within the Church—in the recognition of our sinless calling, of our Divine birth, and of the revelation of the true God in Jesus Christ His Son. These are great things

for any man to affirm. It is a grand confession that we make who endorse the manifesto of the Apostle John ; and it requires a noble style of living to sustain the declaration, and to prove oneself worthy of so high a calling.

Observe the manner in which these assertions are made. Not, *We suppose, We hope, We should like to believe*—in the vague, speculative, wistful tone common in these days of clouded faith ; but *We know, we know, we know!* Here is the genuine apostolic note, the ring of a clear and steady and serene conviction, the *πληροφορία* and *παρρησία* of the Christian consciousness. St. John speaks as a man sure of his ground, who has set his foot upon the rock and feels it firm beneath his tread. He has tested and handled at every point the things of which he writes, and he *knows* that they are so. This is the kind of faith that, with just right, conquers the world,—the faith that derives its testimony immediately from God, and carries its verification within itself (*vv.* 4–13). The faith behind the creed of St. John's old age is that of an experimental and reasoned certainty ; it is the trust and affiance of the whole man—heart, intelligence, will—by a living process directly and apprehensively grounded upon and built into the realities of God and Christ.

Observe, moreover, the order in which the three statements run. It is the regressive or analytic order—the opposite to that of our dogmatic creeds—the order of experience and not of systematic doctrine, of practice not of theory, the order of life and nature rather than of science and theological reflexion. St. John's mind here travels up the stream, from the human to the Divine, from the present knowledge of salvation to the eternal counsels and character of God out of which our being and salvation sprang. This is precisely the line of reasoning which, in a majority of cases, religious conversion takes. The tree is known by its fruits ; the moral demonstrates the meta-

physical ; supernatural lives vindicate supernatural beliefs ; the image of God in godlike men attests, against all conceivable weight and certitude of intellectual preconception, the existence of its Father and Begetter. Thus the argument of the Epistle mounts to the summit from which it first descended, and concludes with "that which was from the beginning." In its system of thought, "the true God" and the "eternal life" are the beginning and the ending, the fountain at once and sea of finite being. The possibility of a sinless state for the believer is rooted in the certainty that he is a child of God ; and this certainty is derived in turn from the sure knowledge that the Son of God is come in human flesh, that the very God, the Life of life, is made known in Him and brought into fatherly relations with mankind.

Let us consider these three Christian axioms in their relative bearing, and under the light in which the apostle sets them and the purpose to which he applies them in this place.

1. The first article, then, in St. John's experimental creed is this : "We know that every one who has been begotten of God (*πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*) does not sin." It is as much as to say, "I believe in holiness ; in its reality, in its possibility, in its necessity for a Christian man."

Considered from the practical side, this is the first of all our religious beliefs in its importance. This is the vital issue of all the creeds, and the test of their reality to us. The whole Nicene Confession is worth nothing to a man who does not believe in holiness. Intellectually, historically, he may understand every phrase and syllable of that sublime document, and assent to it, from first to last, without misgiving ; but it is all a dead letter to his mind, the expression of a purely abstract and disinterested and inoperative persuasion, like his conviction, for instance, that

the moon is uninhabited. What the man does not believe in he will not worship, he cannot admire nor seek after. There is no unbelief that cuts quite so deep as this, that disables one so utterly from every spiritual exercise and attainment. The cynic, the scorner, the sceptic as to moral excellence, the man who tells you that saints are hypocrites and religion is cant—there is no man further from grace than he; there is none more narrow-minded and self-deceived, and miserable in his ignorance, than the denier of the divine in man. He is the ally and abettor of him who is named “the accuser of the brethren,” whose art and craft it is to blight all true aspirations, to destroy that faith in goodness and longing after purity which find in Jesus Christ their refuge and strength. Alas for the man who can see only the tares in God’s wide wheat-field! who has no eye but to count the spots and wrinkles and such like things upon the face of the Church which is his mother! With such an ideal as ours, it is an easy trade to play the censor; it is ignoble to plead the defeat of others, who at least have made some struggle, in excuse for our own passive surrender to evil. The one effectual reproof of inconsistent profession is a profession more consistent.

Those who know anything practically about the Christian religion know that it means holiness in sinful men, that it makes for goodness and righteousness and truth in every possible way, that the Gospel assimilates us to its Author just so far as we obey it. And, with the moral history of the world behind us, we know that no other force has wrought for the cleansing and uplifting of our common nature like this. No other agency or system that can be named has produced the high and genuine and thorough goodness, the love to God and man, the purity of heart, the generosity, the humbleness and patience, the moral energy and courage which “our faith” can summon into court on its behalf. Never have these excellencies been

forthcoming under any other *régime* in anything to compare with the quantity and the quality in which they are found within the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Its host of saints, of all lands and times, are the testimonial of the Gospel; its credentials are "written not with ink" nor "on tables of stone," but "on hearts of flesh" and "by the Spirit of the living God."

Such evidence Christ Himself proposed to give of the truth of His doctrine; by it He invites the world to judge of His claim. The verdict will be awaited in confidence by those who have the earnest of it in themselves. *Sin* is the great problem of the age, and of all ages—the heart-problem, the race-problem; and Jesus Christ has shown Himself competent to deal with it, under the most various and most crucial conditions. After these eighteen centuries of Christian experiment, despite the humiliating failures of the Church's history, we can say, with a confidence in some sense greater than that of the apostolic age, "We believe in holiness; we know that for the children of God there is victory over sin."

The whole Epistle is, in fact, a reasoning out of this position, an argument upon the necessary connexion between faith in the Son of God and an unsinning life in the believer: "These things write we unto you, that ye sin not" (ii. 1). At the outset the apostle, asserting that "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all," drew from this definition the sharp conclusion that, "if we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth." Especially in chap. iii. 1-9, the duty of sinlessness in Christians is laid down, with its grounds and motives; the apostle goes so far as to say that the child of God "cannot sin, because he is begotten of God"—"because His seed abideth in him." This is the subjective reason for a life of freedom from sin: the soul is charged with a living, germinal principle coming from

the nature of God Himself, to which sin is impossible. This "seed," lodged in the Christian man, communicates to him also a relative *non posse peccare*,—a potency identified in iii. 24 with *the Holy Spirit*. But in the text before us another objective reason is alleged for the same necessity, a reason kindred to the former: "He that was begotten of God keepeth him (the one begotten of God), and the Evil One toucheth him not (*οὐχ ἄπτεται αὐτοῦ, layeth not hold of him*)." The expression *ὁ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ* is unique as applied to Christ; unless, to be sure, we should follow Drs. Blass¹ and Resch in reading, with Irenæus, Tertullian, Ambrose, Augustine (*qui . . . natus est*), and the newly discovered Syriac palimpsest, the *singular* in John i. 13, *ὁς* (scil. *ὁ λόγος*) . . . *ἐκ Θεοῦ ἐγεννήθη. Αὐτόν*, not *ἐαυτόν*, is clearly the true pronoun in this place; and the antithesis of perfect and aorist participles (*γεννημένος, γεννηθείς*) unmistakably marks out *two* contrasted persons. His alliance with Jesus Christ, the incarnate sinless One (John i. 14, Luke i. 35, Matt. i. 18, 2 Cor. v. 21: the aorist, *γεννηθείς*, must be understood of the historical birth of our Lord), brings to the redeemed man this marvellous security: "I give," He said, "to My sheep a life eternal; and they shall never, never perish; and none shall snatch them out of My hand" (John x. 28). His great warfare with wrong had for the Lord Jesus at all times the glow and passion, and concrete reality, of a personal hand-to-hand encounter. The conflict between the Divine and the sinful, the Spirit and the flesh within the man, is at the same time a contest over the man between Christ and the Evil One, between the Good Shepherd and "the wolf," who "snatcheth and scattereth"

¹ *Philology of the Gospels*, pp. 234 ff. The saying of Matt. i. 20, addressed to Joseph, *τὸ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν ἐκ πνεύματος ἔστιν ἁγίου*, is really parallel to 1 John v. 18, and to John i. 13 (upon the reading of Blass), since it ascribes the origin of Jesus to no human but to a Divine begetting.

God's flock. Our safety, as St. John conceives it, lies in the watchful eye, the strong arm and prompt succour, of Him who, while He was with His disciples, "guarded them in the Father's name," and who is our unseen Keeper, abiding with the flock, the Shepherd and Bishop of souls "alway, unto the world's end" (John xvii. 12, Matt. xxviii. 20, 1 Pet. ii. 25).

It is God's specific property in men that Christ is set to guard; on that, while Jesus Christ liveth, the enemy shall lay no hand. "Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you"—yes, sift you indeed he shall, but "as wheat," which comes out of the sifting without one grain of the good corn lost! The God-begotten keeps the God-begotten—the firstborn His many brethren; and who may limit or qualify the possible integrity of that preservation? "I ascend unto *My Father and your Father*": what a oneness of family interest, a pledge of fellowship and championship lies in that single word! Christ guarantees to the faith of His brethren by all the resources of His spiritual kingdom, by the blood of His passion and by the rod of His strength, a true quittance and full defence from sin. To "touch" them, the enemy must first break through the shield of Christ's omnipotence.

But is the Apostle quite clear and firm upon this point of the sinlessness of Christian believers? The offspring of God, he says in v. 18, "sins not"; and yet a moment ago he had said (v. 16), "If any man see his brother (manifestly, a Christian brother) *sin a sin* not unto death," making provision for this very lapse and opening to the delinquent the door of restoration. The same paradox startles us in the first verse of chap. ii.: "I write, that ye may not sin"—as though, with better instruction and a proper understanding of the Christian's calling, sin would be out of the question; and yet in the same breath, "And if any man sin!" What can be more trenchant, more peremptory and

logically final, than the dictum of chap. iii. 6: "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither knoweth Him?" If this maxim is to be applied with dialectical rigour, then the Christian man must be assumed to be, from the moment of his regeneration and onwards, without faltering or exception, a sinless and blameless man, and he who is found otherwise is proved unregenerate. This kind of hard, hide-bound logic has played havoc in theology; it is not at all to the Apostle's taste. He throws out his paradox, and leaves it; he thrusts upon us the discrepancy, which any tyro who chooses may ride to death. The contradiction is in the tangled facts of life, in the unsolved antinomies of everyday Christian experience. The verbal incongruity is softened, in a way, by the fact that (in iii. 6 and 9, for example, as compared with ii. 1) the Greek verbs asserting sinlessness are in the *present* tense implying continuance, use and wont, while those admitting the contingency of sin in the believer stand in the *aorist* as indicating an occurrence or isolated fact—an incident, not a character. But the inconsistency of statement is still there, and has its counterpart, only too obviously, in the life of the soul and the Church.

The principle, however, is not surrendered because it is contradicted by unworthy facts; it is only by the true principle that the contradictory can be corrected and overcome. The law of Christian holiness is no induction from experience; it is a deduction from the cross and the Spirit of Christ. St. John admits, and deals with, the abnormal fact of conscious and post-regenerate sin in a child of God; he does not for a moment *allow* it. All sin, even the least, is unnatural and monstrous in a child of God, and must be regarded with a corresponding shame and grief; it excites a deadly repugnance in the Holy Spirit which he has from God. However grievously prac-

tice may belie our moral ideal, that ideal may on no consideration be lowered in accommodation to the flesh. We dare not put up with the *necessity* of sin; the instant we do so we are lost. Christianity can make no concession to, no compromise with, the abominable thing, without stultifying itself, and denying its sinless, suffering Lord. "You know that He was manifested, that He might *take away* our sins; and sin in Him there is none" (iii. 5). Sin is that which has no right to be, and Christ's mission is God's declaration that it shall not be.

2. We come to the second article of St. John's creed, implicit in the first—his doctrine of *the new birth*. It is the man who "is *begotten of God*" that "sinneth not." Those who "know that they are *of God*" have learnt the secret of holiness, and hold the clue to its hidden paths of righteousness and peace.

Taking human nature as it is, reading human history as it was and must have continued to be apart from the coming of Christ, the assurance of our text is altogether irrational. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean, or make saints out of the men described in Romans i. ? "The whole world lieth in the Evil One." Knowing myself as I do (the *αὐτὸς ἐγώ* of Rom. vii. 25), the resurrection of the dead is less incredible than that I should live an unsinning life. Every one who has measured his own moral strength against the law of sin in his members has been compelled to groan with Saul of Tarsus, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" But then he was able instantly to add, "I thank God [it is done], through Jesus Christ our Lord! . . . The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." We "must," as Jesus said, "be born anew"—born over again, from the Divine spring and original of our being. When this was said to Nicodemus, the master of religious lore and the experienced man of the

world, he took it for a useless apophthegm, a figurative way of saying that the thing was impossible. You cannot recall to its pure fountain the river turbid with the filth of a hundred shores; you cannot restore the human race to its cradle of innocence in Paradise, nor send the grey and world-worn man back to his mother's womb. To declare that we "must be born again"—that reform, amendment is useless, and only regeneration will save—is to bid us despair. The astounding message of Jesus was not that men must, but that they *can* be born over again.

The process is hidden in the workings of God. It is mysterious, in the same sense in which all the deepest things of life, and the nature of the human spirit, are so. Every man is, at the bottom, an enigma to himself; the most critical movements of his soul are those he is least able to explain. When psychology has taught us everything, it has really settled very little. *How* a man is "born of the Spirit," "begotten of God," transformed—whether slowly or suddenly—from a doubter into a full believer, from a lover of sin into a lover of holiness, from a worldling into a conscious child of the Almighty, is an inscrutable secret. We shall never construct a perfect science of salvation, nor reach the ultimate rationale of a man's conversion to God. But the event itself, and its moral and material effects, are plain to observation. Such new births of men and of peoples are the master-facts of biography and history. "The manifestation of the Spirit" and His "fruits," the outcome of the interior, spiritual action of Christ upon human society, is visible enough for those who care to see. "Thou hearest the sound thereof"—as you know the wind is astir by the thunder of the waves on the beach, by the crashing of the forest trees, though you may shield your own face from the blast. In those great seasons when the winds of God are blowing, only the deaf can doubt that there has come on the human

spirit some fresh afflatus, a breath from the eternal shores, a throb, a tide, a "mighty rushing" in the spiritual atmosphere, that pulsates from some vast and unseen source. At such times multitudes of men, who lay morally dead as the bones in Ezekiel's valley, stand up a living army of the Lord. Whole communities at certain epochs have been inspired with a sudden heroism of faith, that shines through the records of the past with superhuman light; and the secret of their courage and their victory lay in the conviction, "Deus vult," "The Lord is on our side." But whence this wind comes or whither it goes, in what treasures it is hidden, how, or where, or upon whom it may next descend, "thou canst not tell."

The apostle would have all Christian men cherish habitually the thought that they "are of God," and live in its strength. They must dare to vindicate their celestial birth and destiny; they must learn to believe in the supernatural within them, in their own redeemed, Christ-given manhood, and to assert its moral rights. The old lofty motto, *Noblesse oblige*, has its fit application here: high birth demands high bearing. The son of God, the brother and fellow-heir of Jesus Christ, what has he to do with dabbling in the mire of sin?—he "cannot sin, because he is born of God"—what have God's priests and kings to do with the shabby tricks and mean expedients of a mercenary ambition, with the compliances and servilities of those who crook the knee to the god of this world and wait upon his favours? Remember whose sons you are, and by the Spirit of the Father that is in you maintain the honour of your name and house, amidst a world that lies in the Evil One. Such is the application that St. John virtually makes of his doctrine concerning the New Birth.

It is a splendid, but it is an awful thing to say, "We know that we are of God." It is to be conscious that the hand of God has been laid upon us, to have felt the breath

of the Eternal pass over our spirit to awaken and transform. It is to know that there is a power working within us each, at the root of our nature, that is infinitely wiser and stronger and better than ourselves; a Spirit planted in our hearts which comes directly from the being and the will of the Living God our Father, and links us individually to Him. To *know* this is to hold a distinction immeasurably above all earthly glory. It is to be charged with a principle of righteousness that can dissolve every bond of iniquity, that treads down worldly fear and pleasure, and makes us, living or dying, more than conquerors.

3. The third is the fundamental article of St. John's belief; it is the all in all of his life and of his world of thought. This last is not, like the other two articles, the declaration of a personal experience, but of a grand historical and cosmic event: "We know that *the Son of God is come!*" Perfect holiness and conscious sonship to God date from the advent of the Son of God, whose "blood cleanses from all sin,"—"the Son" who "makes us free," that we may be "free indeed" (i. 7; John viii. 36).

The sum of this Letter, in its practical aim, is "that ye sin not"; the sum of its theology is "that Jesus is the Son of God" (v. 5). St. John's Christology and ethics blend in the experience that Christians are in Jesus Christ themselves sons of God. Within this circle lies the entire secret of the new life and the new world of Christianity. This specific faith in the filial Godhead of Jesus is no mere fruit of doctrinal reflexion, no late-developed theologoumenon of some Johannine school; the writer heard the tidings, unless his memory deceives him, at his first acquaintance with Jesus, from the Baptist, the master of his youth, on the banks of the Jordan (John i. 29-34). From that day to this he has known, with an ever-growing apprehension of the fact, that *the Son of God is come*, that He has arrived and is here in this world of men.

He has come to the world and has mixed among men, "and the world knew Him not, His own received Him not"; its "princes crucified the Lord of glory" (John i. 11; 1 Cor. ii. 8); for all His coming, "the world" still "lies in the Evil One." That we, out of all mankind, should know it is no merit of ours, but a grace: "He hath given us understanding, that we should know" Him, and God in Him. (Here the verb is *γινώσκωμεν*, not the *οἶδαμεν* of the three great assertions; for our knowledge of God is in the making,—not the ascertainment of a definite fact, but the apprehension of an infinite reality). "This is the only place in which *διάνοια* occurs in St. John's writings; and generally nouns which express intellectual powers are rare in them" (Westcott). The phrase has a unique significance. The apostle does not write, "He has given us a heart to love Him"—that goes without saying—but "an *understanding* to know." It is a right comprehension of the advent that is implied, the power to realize what is behind the phenomenal fact, the discernment of the veritable God (*τὸν ἀληθινόν*) in the Son whom He sent. This *knowledge of God* in Christ is the bed-rock of Christianity. St. John's creed is that of the sound intellect, as well as of the simple heart. It claims our intelligence (given for this end), our studious and discriminating thought, without which it cannot win our deeper homage. St. John has done well to tell us that *διάνοια*, no less than *πνεῦμα* and *ἀγάπη*, is the gift of Christ (cf. iii. 1, 24). His truth calls for the service of the understanding, while His love elicits and kindles the affections.

The object of the knowledge which the Son of God brings is "the True¹ One,"—*i.e.* God Himself, the Real, the

¹ *Τὸν ἀληθινόν*, a word distinctive of St. John, occurring nine times in his Gospel, thrice in this Epistle, and ten times in the Apocalypse; five times only in the rest of the New Testament. It signifies truth of being, *verity*; while *ἀληθής* signifies truth of statement, *veracity*.

Living, in contrast with dead, false "idols" (cf. 1 Thess. i. 10) ; this God Jesus shows to the world. To glorify the Father, not Himself, was the end of Christ's coming, pursued with unswerving loyalty; the apostle would have misinterpreted his Master had he stated things otherwise, or given this name of "the True," in such a connexion, to any other than Him to whom the Son Himself ascribed it—"the only true God" (John xvii. 3). He repeats the confession of Jesus for his own last sentence of testimony: "This is the true God, and (here, in this knowledge, is) eternal life." This supreme knowledge comes from without to ourselves; [it is truth disclosed to us, not evolved within us or reflected from our own ideas. But it does not stop there; if we truly apprehend it, then it apprehends us in turn, absorbing us into itself, into Him whom it reveals; so that "we are in the True One," since we are—and so far as we are—"in His Son Jesus Christ."

Dogmatic theology, greedy of proof-texts, has made out of the last clause of verse 20 an affirmation, superfluous after all that the Apostle has said and foreign to this passage, of the proper Deity of Christ. What St. John has to do is to seal his Letter with the assurance to his once pagan readers that now, beyond doubt, they hold and grasp the *very God* in Christ, and are no longer mocked with vain idols and phantoms of blessedness; they are no more, as in heathen days, *ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες καὶ ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ* (Eph. ii. 12). In this faith well may they, as they surely can, *guard themselves from idols*. No other, no slighter faith will save pagan or Christian, the plain man or the theologian, from the idols of his own imagining.

They know that the Son of God is come by "the witness in" them, "the Spirit He has given" (v. 10; iii. 24, etc.), by their "anointing from the Holy One," by their own changed life and character, by "the true light" that "shines" on all things for them (ii. 5-8, 20; iii. 14, 19;

iv. 16 f.). He has not come to "the world" as to some material *κόσμος*, a mere foothold in space and time; but in truth to that temple and inner centre of the world, the individual heart. When Christ comes to "dwell in the heart by faith," He has come indeed; then at last the Son of man has where to lay His head, and to build His throne. Those *know* that He has come who have so "received Him," to whom accordingly He "has given right to become children of God, those that believe in His name" (John i. 12; Eph. iii. 17, 19).

The man thus redeemed by the Son of God carries in his heart the pledge of his Redeemer's world-wide victory. It is no limited, personal salvation that St. John conceives in these large outlines. He has just spoken of "the whole world" (*ὁ κόσμος ὅλος*, the world *as a whole*, in its collective nature and structure) as "lying in the Evil One"—in the domain and under the hand of Satan.¹ The expression recalls the scene of the Third Temptation of our Lord (Matt. iv. 8-11; Luke iv. 5-8), when the devil showed to Jesus from an exceeding high mountain "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them"—in the midst of it at Rome, the ostensible lord of the nations, Tiberius Cæsar, the most Satanic ruler known to history, with his angel's face and fiend's heart; and the usurper dared to say, seeming to say truly, "All this is delivered unto *me*, and to whomsoever I will I give it!" But listen to Jesus and He shall speak: "All things are delivered unto *Me*, of My Father," "All authority is given unto Me, in heaven and upon earth!" Which, pray, of those two counter-claims

¹ Ἐν τ. πονηρῷ κείται: "The phrase answers to the εἶναι ἐν τ. ἀληθινῷ that follows, and to the characteristic Pauline ἐν Χριστῷ. Cf. iii. 24; iv. 15. The connexion shows beyond question that τῷ πονηρῷ is masculine, and the converse of κείσθαι ἐν τ. πον. is given in John xvii. 15, ἵνα τηρήσῃς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ. A close parallel to this expression is found in Sophocles, *Œd. Col.* 247, ἐν ὑμῖν ὡς θεῶ κείμεθα τλάμονες" (Westcott).

is legitimate? which of those rival masters is finally to dominate the earth?

“The world lieth in the Evil One”: so it was, beyond all question, in the apostle’s day, under the empire of Tiberius, of Nero, of Domitian; and such is the case to a very large extent at this modern date. “But (δέ) ¹ the Son of God is come!” Against all the evils and miseries of the time, against the crimes and ruin of the ages, as against our personal guilt and impotence, there is that one fact to set; and it is sufficient. He has come to “destroy the works of the devil,” to “root out every plant which our heavenly Father had not planted”; and Christ is doing this, through the hands of His servants, upon a wider scale and with more fruitful and visible results than ever before. He will not fail nor be discouraged, until the work of uprooting and replanting is complete. “The strong man armed keepeth his goods in peace,” till there comes “the stronger than he”; then there is a stripping and a spoiling.

The Son of God has not come into this world to be defeated. He did not fare forth upon a generous but doubtful adventure, nor sit down to the siege without first counting the cost. He has set His imperial foot down upon this earth, and He will not draw it back. Its soil has been stained and stamped with His blood; the purchase mark is ineffaceable. He has lifted up before all the nations the banner of His cross, which floats a victorious ensign over seas and continents; and to Him shall the gathering of the peoples be.

GEORGE G. FINDLAY.

¹ How is it that the Revisers failed to restore this antithesis? Dr. Westcott, of course, notes it, and makes much of it: “The third affirmation is introduced by the adversative particle (οὐδ. δέ). There is—this seems to be the line of thought—a startling antithesis in life of good and evil. We have been made to feel it in all its intensity. But, at the same time, we can face it in faith.” St. John uses δέ but seldom as compared with καί, and never without distinctive meaning.