

## The Church.

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ON the great day of Atonement, the High Priest, with the golden censer, and the blood of sprinkling, vanished from the sight of the vast multitude of worshippers, through the blue embroidered veil, into the Holiest Place. In that shrine was the symbol of God's immediate Presence, where the adoring Cherubim bent over the mercy-seat, looking down into the Ark, which contained the broken table of God's Moral Law. During the High Priest's awful functions in that inmost shrine the people saw him not, but in an agony of expectation they waited till the propitiation was completed, and he came forth to them resplendent in his golden and jewelled robes. The attitude of Christ's Church is the attitude of that expectant multitude. St. Paul expresses it by the word *ἀποκαρδοκία*—an eager desire, a painful waiting, a strained expectation, which, looking away from the things of the world, is absorbed in the thought of Christ's Return. With His own blood our great High Priest has passed through the blue curtain of heaven into the Holiest Place; and while, year by year, we joyously celebrate His Advent to *save* the world, we wait His promised Advent to judge and to restore, when old things shall vanish away for ever, and behold, He shall make all things new!

But even while we wait—we hope. It is night; our lamps burn low; more or less, in human frailty, we all slumber and sleep; but we are not unblest. Infinitely more blessed is our lot than that of those in the Old Dispensation. They saw not God; but our eyes have seen, our ears have heard the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Moses was their minister; the Lord from heaven is ours. They had angels and prophets; we have the Son of God. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews draws out the contrast for us. 'Ye are not come,' he says, 'to a mount that might be touched, a palpable and kindled fire, and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that no word more should be spoken unto them: for they could not endure that which was

'The Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.'—Eph. i. 23.

enjoined; and so fearful was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake: but ye are come—(note well those words!—'ye *are* come'; not ye *shall* come hereafter, but ye are come now)—'unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts, the general assembly of angels, and the Church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven; and to God the Judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the Mediator of a New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel.'

I. Besides the waiting and hoping character of Christ's Church, four clear and glorious truths shine forth from this fine passage: one is that the Church of which we are members is a Church not only of earth but of heaven;—the second, that it is the Church not only of the living, but of the blessed dead;—a third is that it is the Church not of terror, but of grace and love;—a fourth, that it is a Church blessed, enriched with the plenitude of Him who filleth all things with all things—with the immediate Presence and indwelling Spirit of God and of Christ.

i. It is the Church not of earth only, but of heaven. 'Ye are come,' he says, 'to innumerable hosts, the general assembly of angels and the Church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven.' If with us there be imperfectness, *there* is consummation. When Richard Hooker lay on his death-bed, he was observed to be deep in thought, and when his friend Dr. Saravia asked him of what he was thinking, he replied, 'That he was meditating the number and nature of angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace could not be in heaven, and oh! that it might be so on earth!' May not we find comfort in the same thought? Here there is perturbation: among them is peace. Here discord: among them a sweet accord. Here jangled music: there unbroken melody. When they that are against us seem more than they who are with us, may we not open our eyes and see with the vision of faith that the hills

around our city are full of chariots and horses of fire? The angels of Sinai were separated from Israel of old by flame and darkness; but the angels of *our* Covenant are seen with the eye of faith, ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. May we not believe that there is more than fancy in the poet's verse?—

How oft do they their silver bowers leave  
And come to succour us that succour want!  
How oft do they, with golden pinions, cleave  
The flitting skies like flying pursuivant,  
Against foul fiends to aid us militant!  
They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,  
And their bright squadrons round about us plant,  
And all for love, and nothing for reward.—  
Oh, why should Heavenly God to men have such  
regard?

ii. Secondly, it is the Church of the dead, no less than of the living. We are come to the spirits of just men made perfect. They form the lucent cloud of witnesses who, having wrought, and fought, and overcome, look down with love upon our struggles, and would fain breathe their peace and their hope into our souls. There is deeper comfort in *that* thought than even in the other. For the angels have not been tempted, and have not prevailed; and the saints have, though once frail as we. They are one with us, that noble company—the prophets who hoped for Christ; the apostles who laboured for Him, the confessors who witnessed for Him; the martyrs who died; the deep thinkers who made His mysteries plain; the sweet singers who still bear our spirits upwards to God; ‘strong and white souls innumerable,’ who have toiled and prayed for His kingdom; patriots who have given their all for life and liberty; sages who have found the truth they longed for; little children, transplanted early, that they might grow up in the very garden of God—

One army of the living God  
To His command we bow;  
Part of the host have crossed the flood,  
And part are crossing now.

One company we dwell in Him  
One Church, above, beneath;  
Though now divided by the stream,  
The narrow stream of death.

And we belong to that noble companionship. We are fellow-citizens with the saints, because we are the household of God.

iii. Thirdly, it is the Church of grace and love,

not of terror. I know no truth more obscured as with smoke of Tophet than this. The message which preached reprobation and damnation to the vast majority of mankind—the message which, like that of Calvin and Jonathan Edwards, was sulphurous with fire and brimstone—was no gospel at all. It was an amalgam of coarse excitements and vulgar terrors; it made sad the hearts which God had not made sad. It was no Angel of Light, carolling ‘Good will to men,’ but a blackrobed Inquisitor wrapping harmless saints and God’s poor men and women in its *san benito* of devils and painted flames. It was the ill-spell of Manichean dualism, not the gospel of that dear Son of God, who came not to destroy but to save. The Law and the Letter had its stern, unrelenting, exceptionless message of death; the Gospel offers life in Jesus Christ our Lord. The Law was full of menacing commands; the Gospel is rich in tender promises. The Law was uttered amid the pomp and tumult of material forces; the Gospel came breathing upon sick and weary souls, like the vernal wind on dying flowers. The Law was a dispensation of death unto death; the Gospel a sweet savour of life unto life. The Law rolled over terror-stricken souls the thunders of despair; the Gospel was luminous with the smile of a hope that maketh not ashamed. Compare the Sinai of Moses, its lightning flashes and trumpet blasts of doom, with the green hill by the silver lake, where, with the warbling birds around Him, with the sweet wind in His hair, and the mountain lilies at His feet, Christ spake His Sermon on the Mount! At Sinai the angels were robed in the splendour of terrifying phenomena,—the rending wind, the rocking earthquake, the eddying smoke, the wreathing flame, the midnight thunderclouds,—but with thrilling, jubilant voices they sang ‘Fear not’ above Christ’s cradle, and ‘Fear not’ beside His tomb. ‘Peace on earth’ was their Christmas minstrelsy; and ‘He is risen’ their Easter hymn.

iv. And the fourth note of the Church is that in the Gospel we are come to the free access, to the immediate presence of God. At Sinai, if so much as a beast touched the mountain, it was stoned, or thrust through with a dart; but our Church is the Body of Christ, and He abideth *with us*; and our bodies are the temples of Christ, and He abideth *in us*; and He has promised to pour out His Spirit upon all flesh; and He has proclaimed

'peace, peace to them that are far off, and to them that are nigh.' We need no material structure as a sign of God's Presence; no cumbrous ritual as a condition of approach; no human priest can bar our access with the caprice and arrogance of mortality. The Veil is rent; the Way is open, the Holiest unconcealed; the Father waiting to welcome us with outstretched arms and the kiss of forgiving peace.

Can we not feel the glory of this high privilege? Imagine the hour of death;—the hour when this material shall have vanished like a cloud. Imagine the soul, assured of blessedness, entering the numbers numberless of radiant presences;—will it stay one moment to look on Raphael or Milton, on Francis of Assisi or Thomas of Aquino, on Paul or John, on Isaiah or Abraham? will even the burning Cherubim or the lucent Seraphim delay its speed, or Gabriel the herald, or Michael the prince? Will it not flash through them all, as on the lightning's wings, to fling itself, in ecstasies of rapture unutterable and inconceivable, at its Saviour's feet? Yes, but it is so, if we will it, now. What man that shall die, what frail and feeble minister shall dare to thrust himself for one moment between us and the Lord of our life in that thrilling solitude where at any moment our soul may be alone with God? Not one of those twelve gates of pearl is ever shut by day or night; open for ever is the door of the Presence Chamber, open for ever the passage to the mercy-seat.

II. As the issue, then, of these Divine revelations, we believe that there is one Holy Catholic Church. It is a blessed counterpoise to pure individualism, to religious selfishness, to mere self-assertion in the holy life. We are not alone; we are not each fighting our own separate battle. We are members one of another in Christ; bound each one to another, and all of us to God, by an everlasting covenant; fighting side by side the same great common fight; all equally guilty, all equally redeemed.

i. Many of us are members of the Church of England; we love her, and she deserves all our love. There is not one of us who would not breathe for her the aspiration expressed by the great eloquent statesman: 'I wish to see the Church of England great and powerful. I wish to see her foundations laid low and deep, that she may crush the giant powers of rebellious darkness.

I would have her head raised up to that heaven to which she conducts me. I would have her open wide her hospitable gates by a noble and liberal comprehension, but I would have no breaches in her wall. . . . I would have her a common blessing to the world; an example, if not an instructor, to those who have not the happiness to belong to her. I would have her give a lesson of peace to mankind, that a vexed and wandering generation might be taught to seek for repose and toleration in the maternal bosom of Christian charity, and not in the harlot lap of infidelity and indifference.' The Church of England is of course but one branch of the great Vine, one fold of the great flock; but she illustrates to us what is the true conception which we should attach to the great universal Church of Christ on earth.

ii. What do we mean, for instance, when we call it a *Holy Church*? We do not mean that it is perfect: for there is not a Church which has not erred. As our 19th Article tells us, the Church of Rome, the Church of Antioch, the Church of Alexandria, the Church of Jerusalem, all have erred; and times have been when error seemed to be universal. We do not mean that the Church is sinless. Alas! she soon lost the fragrance of her orange flower; soon stained her white robes with heathen superstition; soon reddened them with innocent blood. We do not mean that all her members are righteous. Alas! the weaknesses and crimes of Christians have been in all ages a byword of their enemies, and we may ask with the poet—

Face, loved of little children long ago,  
Head, hated of the priests and rulers then,  
Say was not this Thy passion—to foreknow,  
In Thy death's hour, the deeds of Christian men?

But individual failures do not alter her general character nor her steadfast testimony. Even though it be said to her, as Christ said to the apostles, 'Ye are clean, but not all,' the call still comes to every one of her children, 'As He that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' The ideal is firmly held through all disasters. The Church, uplifting her eyes to the galaxy of those whom her Lord has enabled to be her saints, still witnesses to the beauty of those luminous examples. Holy in her saints, holy in her institutions, holy in her aims, holy in her witness, she continues holy, though as yet so grievously imperfect. She never despairs of

Humanity, though she is daily betrayed and afflicted by those who claim to be her sons.

iii. And what do we mean when we say I believe in *one* Church? We maintain that she is one in spite of all appearances to the contrary; one through eighteen centuries of corruption, schism, and heresy; one though many of her rival branches, with stupid and unloving arrogance, even deny the common salvation to all outside their pale; one in spite of ten thousand subdichotomies of petty schisms; one though they hate each other, anathematise each other, excommunicate each other, burn each other; one in spite of the deathful torpor of the East and the corrupt superstitions of the West; one though not only the whole Church, but each section of the Church, is split up into mutually opponent parties, each eager to denounce the other; one though Ephraim envy Judah, and Judah vex Ephraim; one in spite of lethargy here and fury there; one 'though on this side and on that we are answered by anathema, if we utter the greeting of Peace.' Yes, the Church is one;—if not in visible uniformity, if not in perfect sympathy, if neither in identical opinion, nor even in harmonious feeling, yet one because she is one army under one Captain, one flock under one Shepherd. She is one because there is one God and Father of us all; one because the faith is essentially one, in spite of the blustering self-assertions of petty differences; one because the great Temple is ever built upon the chief cornerstone of Christ, though many separate chapels and buildings may cluster round its unity. Drop a globule of quicksilver upon the ground, and it will split into multitudes of separate globules, starting asunder at every touch into rounded and glittering isolation. Leave them there, and they will be separate for ever, and perhaps be driven farther and farther apart; gather them together again, and they are one in unbroken unity. So will it be with these divided Christians, when the feebleness, opinionativeness, and ignorance of earth, is but as the indistinguishable dust which cannot separate the unity of heaven. Let narrow dogmatists say what they will, but 'the meek, the just, the pious, the devout are all of one religion,' though here they do not recognize each other over the thorny hedges of opinions, and across the tottering walls of sects and Churches, daubed with the untempered mortar of human pride. But there in heaven, the shaven and sandalled Inquisitor mayhap shall weep

tears of remorse as he folds in his arms the holier brother whom here he tortured. There Luther shall be one with Zwingli, though on some mere opinion about the sacrament he said that they were not of the same spirit. There Arminius and Calvin shall agree together very well. There Channing is one with Augustine, and George Fox sees eye to eye with Pascal. There Pusey and Maurice may sit side by side, though one said to the other, 'We do not worship the same God.' For God looks on us with larger other eyes than ours. He is not the leader of a sect, or the fugleman of a party. He estimates us not by our achievement of orthodoxy, but by our struggle for goodness. To him who believes in Christ and in His Righteousness, and in a God of Light and Love, difference and agreement on this petty point, or that petty point, of ritual or doctrine are as trifles—the mere provincialism of ignorance and pride. Every bigot in exact proportion to his feebleness and ignorance revels in the exacerbation of differences; but just in proportion as a man loves God, and is like God, does he emerge into an upper air, where the divisions between Churches do not run, and the noise of controversy cannot penetrate.

iv. And when we have thus seen that the Church can be *holy* in spite of imperfection, and *one* in spite of division, we may begin to realize the often ignorantly perverted and haughtily monopolised name of *Catholic* Church. The title does not occur in Scripture; and it did not at first mean that the Church was universally diffused, but that she taught the whole truth necessary to salvation. They who would confine the name of 'Catholic Church' to the Church of Rome, or the Greek Church, or Episcopal Churches, or Churches of which the notes are mere outward organization, or mechanical continuity, sin against the entire value and inmost meaning of the very word which they abuse. A Church as rotten to the very heart's core as that of Alexander Borgia may have all these notes; a Church as saintly as that of the Moravians, may have none of them: and which do you think that Christ will recognize for His? Will He love Rome when it reeks with murder and falsity, and disown Herrnhut though it shine with virtues? The Catholic Church will never have any meaning to me but that which the Church of England gave to it in our Articles—'a congregation'—and therefore every congregation—of faithful men,

'in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.' A narrow ecclesiasticism thinks that it has done a fine thing; when, aping the posture and usurping the claim of exclusive catholicity, it has made the open portals of Christ's universal kingdom bristle with the swords and pikes of human ordinances and inhuman anathemas: but by so doing it is not acting in the spirit of St. Irenæus, who said, 'Wherever Christ is, there is the Church'; not in the spirit of the Book of Wisdom, which says that 'the spirit of the Lord hath filled the world'; not in the spirit of St. Thomas Aquinas, who says that 'even Jews and heathen, who are faithful to the best they know, must practically be counted as Christians'; not in the spirit of Christ, who said, 'In My Father's house are many mansions—and many shall come from the East and from the West.' 'The notion that no grace is given outside the Catholic Church,' says a learned Romanist author, 'is not an opinion merely, but a heresy.' Exclusiveness and anathema are the notes not of large, meek, loving, Christlike catholicity, but of provincial and sectarian Pharisaism. St. Jerome told the Luciferians long ago that Christ was none so poor as to have a true Church only in Sardinia; and Bishop Sanderson assured the bigots of Puritanism that God's people were not exclusively confined to a parlour or two in Amsterdam. For myself I regard every true Christian as a member of the Church of Christ; every true Christian, I say, be he Romanist, or be he Quaker, be he Baptist, or be he Independent, be he Wesleyan or Presbyterian. Do not mistake me; I do not say that all these are equally in the right, or that it does not matter what we are. I may hold, and do hold, that they are less near the truth than the Church to which I have the blessing to belong; yet I would rather take my chance in the world to come side by side with a Romanist like Father Damien, or a Quaker like Elizabeth Fry, or a Nonconformist like John Howard, than with whole armies of those who would fain deny to them the name and privileges of the Church of Christ. For Christians are those only whom Christ will own, and Christ's test is not apostolical succession, and saying, 'Lord, Lord,' or believing this or that about the sacraments, but He said 'Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you'; and He said, 'Whosoever shall

do the will of My Father, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.'

III. I love my own Church with all my heart. I know none purer, none nobler, none wiser, none more comprehensive. In her communion I was born, in her communion I will die. She blessed my infant cradle, I pray God that she may close my dying eyes. She baptized me at the font in the lustral water of baptism; may she bend over my lowly grave with the words of benediction. But she is but one separate star in the vast burning constellation of the true Church; of all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth. So far as he is trying to be a true Christian, every one of us is a faithful branch in that Vine, a living stone in that Heavenly Temple, a lively member in that Body whereof Christ is the Head. Thus our union with the grand common Church of the saints is the pledge of our unity with God and with man. If we are slack in her service, our slackness is disgraceful; if we are renegades from the duties she requires, our apostasy is infamous. But if we be faithful in her battle our strength is increased by millionfold supports, our faith brightened by millionfold reverberations. For then we dwell not alone, but in Mount Zion, that glorious city which is built on both sides of that river of death which separates grace from glory. We are fellow-pilgrims, then, in the vast multitude of the redeemed, which death cannot sever, nor schism rend, nor sin blight, nor against it can the gates of hell prevail. For our little moment of life, in the interspace of two eternities, we are passing figures in that far-reaching procession, which, whether it toil uphillward, or plunge into the shadowing valleys, is still 'all one, all advancing together: they that are farthest on their way conscious of their lengthened following, they that linger with the last, drawn forward by the attraction of the advancing multitude.' Every family can constitute the Church in its own house; every soul can be a Church contracted and condensed into a single bosom; the whole Church is but one soul, dilated and diffused into many congregations. It is selfishness which is the root of all sin, that tends to destroy all Christianity, to foster pride, to embitter opinionativeness, to quench the Spirit within us; and even when we think ourselves religious, our religion is apt to be but selfishness expanded to infinitude. If we could all soar to higher things; if we could re-

member that even Christ pleased not Himself; if, like St. Paul, we could rise to that sublime spirit of self-sacrifice which made him ready even to wish himself anathema from Christ for the sake of his brethren; if the sense that our citizenship is in heaven, and that thus the very meanest of us is Christ's citizen in no mean city, could ennoble all our thoughts and actions; if we could rise to the height of this great argument that we are not come to the thunderings and lightnings and voices of Sinai, but to the Church of the angels, the Church of the blessed dead, the Church of Hope and Mercy, the Church of free approach to God, and free confidence in God for all mankind; if the sense could ever be present to us that we are very members incorporate of the Church, One, Holy, Catholic, in that mystical body of Christ, which is the blessed company of all faithful people,—how soon—before the rush and glow and burning strength of that high conviction—would the fiends

who curse and blight the world shrink scared into their coæval darkness! how speedily would the time dreamed of by a good man be fulfilled, when from the watch-towers of Asia, once the land of lords many, shall roll the exultant chorus, 'One Lord'; and from the cities of Europe, distracted by many divisions, the glad cry, 'One Faith'; and from the religious communities of America, distracted by baptismal controversies, the happy confession, 'One Baptism'; and from despised and neglected Africa, once cursed by our slave trade, now poisoned by our drink, the glad acknowledgment, 'One God and Father of us all';—and when the sacramental host, scattered all over the face of this lower creation, shall spring upon their feet together, and, seizing the harp of thanksgiving, join in the chorus which shall be swelled by angel melodies, 'One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all!'

## Recent Foreign Theology.

### Nestle's 'Septuagint Studies.'<sup>1</sup>

THIS third instalment of Dr. Nestle's *Septuagint Studies* is not inferior in interest and importance to the first and second. The indefatigable author deals with two non-canonical texts which have hitherto received too little attention—the Prayer of Manasses and the Book of Tobit; and the points discussed are treated with characteristic precision and fulness.

1. For the *editio princeps* of the Προσευχή Μανασσή Dr. Nestle refers us to Robert Stephen's Vulgate of 1540. In the Complutensian Polyglot the Prayer is given in Latin, with the note *neque in hebreo, neque in greco habetur*. The first edition of the LXX which contains it in Greek is that of Frick, which appeared at Leipzig in 1697.

The MS. evidence comes from two quarters. (a) The Psalter of the LXX is followed in Codd. A, R, T, and in more than half the cursive MSS used by Parsons, by a collection of liturgical odes; and among these the Prayer of Manasses sometimes at least finds a place. It stands eighth in

A and ninth in T. How many of the cursives contain it is unknown; the St. Victor MS. employed by R. Stephen appears to be the 13th cent. Græco-Latin Psalter, now Biblioth. Nat. Gr. 188 (S. Victor), in which it occurs, and Dr. Nestle points out that Coxe's catalogue mentions its presence in Barocc. 15, Cromw. 5, Laud 2. The whole question of the contents of the liturgical collection appended to the Greek Psalter awaits and deserves investigation at the hands of some competent scholar. (b) The Prayer is also found in *Apostolical Constitutions*, ii. 22, where it is embedded in a narrative based on 2 Paral. xxxiii. 12 ff. This biblical context would seem almost to invite such an interpolation (cf. v.<sup>13</sup> καὶ προσήγατο πρὸς αὐτόν, v.<sup>18</sup> ἡ προσευχὴ αὐτοῦ), and it is matter of no little surprise that no known MS. of the LXX places the Prayer here; for the Meerman Codex, cited by Parsons (*add. et emend. ad fin. t. ii*), appears to be a MS. of the *Constitutions*, not of 2 Chronicles. It seems that the Prayer did not form a part of *Paralipomena*, as received by the Church from the Synagogue. By a natural inference we are led to regard it as a Christian composition, and it is possible that the *Constitutions*

<sup>1</sup> *Septuagintastudien*, iii. Von Professor D. Th. u. Ph. Eberhard Nestle. Stuttgart, 1899.