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compared to that of the great Pyramid, in the construction of which astronomical facts certainly played a part, though it is not easy to determine where design ends and coincidence begins.

It becomes only more clear to the reader of this book that the Gospels are a remarkable structure, resting on fact and observation, and full of the sort of detail which can originate only in reality. The first two chapters of Luke stand the test which the Author has been unconsciously applying much better than the first two chapters of Matthew, as furnishing far more of the illustrations which he collects. The last chapter of the book, however, does not add to its effect as a whole.

W. M. RAMSAY.

THE TEACHING OF EDWARD IRVING.

ON the far horizon of early life lie the facts which connect me personally with Edward Irving. Memory preserves the form and features of three persons intimately connected with the early days of that movement, which issued in what by a bewildered clerk in tabulating the returns of the last religious census was first called the Catholic Apostolic Church. This name was a mistake. The members themselves, desired only to be known as belonging to "a congregation of the Catholic and Apostolic Church worshipping in Newman Street." None of the three I have mentioned ever joined that congregation. One of them, my own grandmother, sat regularly under Irving both at Hatton Garden and in Regent Square, my grandfather having been one of the committee who called the young helper from St. John's, Glasgow, to preside over the Scots congregation in London. Of her my recollections are peculiarly vivid. I was but seven when she died, yet the

Te Deum and the 64th paraphrase, "To Him that lov'd the souls of men," are always closely associated in my mind with her memory. To her I owe my first knowledge of the Logos. She, together with William Pennefather, founder of the Mildmay Conference, with whom her later years were associated, and to whom I owe my baptism, gave me my earliest conception of the saint.

I mention these facts, because my object is to gain for Edward Irving more justice than is usually allowed him as a maker of Christian Thought and an exponent of the Faith of the New Testament; and I want to show that I have some right to speak. But my claim carries me yet further than I have indicated. In my possession is a perfect wilderness of manuscripts dealing with the inner history of the movement in the Twenties and Thirties. Both my grandparents kept journals with more or less regularity. There is a letter of 1824 in the handwriting of Irving's wife, Isabella Martin of Kirkcaldy, the last few words and signature being added by the great preacher himself, in which the duties of an elder are set forth and the office pressed upon my grandfather. There is the copy of another letter on the subject of certain day schools in which Irving declares that "every teacher of children should have taken upon himself the vows of Christ." There are letters on spiritual subjects from and to the McDonalds, the ship-building family of Port Glasgow, who were the centre of a "gifted" circle on the Clyde, intimately associated with the congregation in London. There is another letter of William Caird, dated from Albany Park and telling about his wife, the Mary Campbell who with her sister Isabella belonged to McLeod Campbell's parish of Row, and who form the subject of reminiscences by Robert Story of Rosneath. Most interesting of all, perhaps, is a document endorsed with the words: "I believe this utterance was

given through Margaret Macdonald." It includes at one point the indication of a 'tongue.' The paper is torn, the ink faded, the writing hurried and difficult. But the style is oracular, and the "message," starting from the fact of "the mighty God in the womb of the Virgin Mother," purports to declare the true position of woman as near to "the Man upon the Throne of God," though always subordinate as "the weaker vessel" and the author of the Fall. It is no doubt intended as a warning against the feminine influence under which, as some believed, Irving was being led astray. I speak under correction, but my impression is that the "Twelve Apostles" were the result of the utterance of a "prophetess."

It must be understood that the view of Irving's teaching here to be presented depends on an independent study of the subject, based to a large extent upon these unpublished writings. They are used as a key to his published works.

But there are one or two things which should first be made clear. One is that no sort of impression of Irving is to be gained from the éloge of Mrs. Oliphant. My grandmother, who must have known him very well indeed, used always to say that the biography entirely misrepresented him. When some years ago, in the light of previous knowledge, I read the book for myself, I entirely endorsed this view. It was quite obvious that the novelist, who ventured to write his life, had not the necessary equipment for a scientific treatment of her subject, for she had neither sympathy with his spirit nor insight into his teaching. To her nothing appealed but the brilliant eloquence and the fervent character of the man, his meteoric course and clouded ending. His story exhibited the elements of tragedy. It was almost a merit that he should accomplish nothing. But Irving must be taken seriously, if his place in the history of religious thought is to be duly recognized.

On the other hand, not much reliance can be placed on the criticism of Sir Walter Scott. It will be remembered how Lockhart records an entry in the Diary for 1829, in which Sir Walter mentions his meeting with Irving, telling how "he spoke with that kind of unction which is nearly allied to cajolerie" and how with his generally fine appearance and obliquity of vision he seemed like "the devil disguised as an angel of light." Shakespeare never drew a saint, nor was Scott, with all his wide powers of observation, the man to do justice to the qualities that make the seer. That Irving was not beyond the reach of human frailties goes without saying. But I am bound to say that my authorities, who belonged to a party ultimately rejected by Irving and who would therefore not be slow to detect fundamental insincerity, never betray suspicion of vanity or insincerity, but uniformly attribute what they regard as his failure to influences outside the man himself. And I am much more ready to accept the judgment of an observer like Thomas Erskine of Linlathen. "He has been a remarkable man in a remarkable age. He was a man of much childlike feeling to God, and personal dependence on Him, among things which may well appear unintelligible and strange in his history."

One other point deserves notice. In one of my journals an account is given of a pastoral visit paid to the household of the author. "Mr. Irving asked my opinion of Mr. Hall of Leicester. He considers him too argumentative. Mr. Irving says that he himself is desirous of preaching extempore and after the style of Baxter and the ministers of his day." Any one who remembers the Addisonian English of Robert Hall, his affinities with Burke, his sympathies with Eighteenth Century Reason, will readily apprciate Irving's point of departure from the preceding age. He is a romantic, a prophet, a seer. His appeal is to the spiritual man. Here

is the explanation of the fact that the middle classes of Glasgow, who idolized Chalmers, had no use for his assistant. They wanted sermons on "The influence of Christianity in aiding and augmenting the Mercantile Virtues." Orations on the great looming mysteries of the universe only bored them. But it is true that Irving, like Wordsworth, had no humour. And this was his undoing.

We must now turn to an examination of the teaching with which Irving sought to meet the needs of his time. The spirit of the eighteenth century was not wholly a thing of the past. Formalism and conventionality still reigned. The ethical and vital side of religion, its supreme importance as the mould of human character, was only dimly realized. Moderatism regarded the Christian Faith as a prop to civil government and morality. The Evangelical preached a mechanical salvation, whose one-sidedness and externality were tending to make the doctrine of substitution as non-moral, if not immoral, as the mediaeval system of masses. This was the state of things which Irving had to face; and he did so by bringing into the forefront of his teaching the doctrine of the Incarnation, and the expectation of the Second Coming.

The teaching which concerned the Incarnation was developed first. It should be remembered that it preceded by several years the Oxford movement, on the lines of which Irving advanced, more confused, more misty, less systematic, but dominated by the same principle. Here is a notable passage from the Advertisement to the Oxford Tracts, bearing the date, All Saints, 1834:—

> The following tracts were published with the object of contributing something towards the practical revival of doctrines which, although held by the great divines of our Church, *at present have become obsolete with the majority of her members, and are withdrawn from the public view even by the more learned and orthodox few* who still adhere to them.

Compare the preface to the *Oracles of God*, Irving's first book, published in 1823 :—

It hath appeared to the author of this book, from more than ten years' meditation upon the subject, that the chief obstacle to the progress of divine truth over the minds of men is *the want of its being properly presented to them.* In this Christian country there are, perhaps, *nine-tenths of every class who know nothing at all about the applications and advantages of the single truths of revelation, or of revelation taken as a whole ;* and what they do not know they cannot be expected to reverence or obey. This ignorance, in both the higher and the lower orders, of Religion, as a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart, is not so much due to the want of inquisitiveness on their part, as to *the want of a sedulous and skilful ministry on the part of those to whom it is entrusted.*

The object which Irving, no less than the Oxford reformers, set before himself was nothing else but to revive and press upon the public attention forgotten truths of dogmatic religion, as supremely affecting human life, and to revive those deeper aspects of the faith which an Erastian age had allowed to lapse into practical oblivion.

The argument of *Judgment to Come*, which forms a portion of Irving's first volume, states the problem of the time as it appeared to the young minister of the Caledonian Church. First he notices the passionless morality of the learned, with their cold maxims and contempt of faith and enthusiasm :—

Oh, that the spirit of the antients would rise again and ashame these modern men, who go dreaming in universities over a philosophy which hath no kernel of nourishing food, a philosophy of mind they call it, but it is a mind without a heart,—who go wearying the dull ear of senates with talk about Law, and jargon about the moral government of men, while in all their researches after wisdom and government they see no form nor comeliness in the institutes of God, and hear no music to enchant them in the Gospel of Christ, though it poureth the full diapason of harmony into the heart of man.

Like the Oxford School, he was the sworn foe of Philistinism :—

I know how boon Nature of herself hath suggested deeds which blaze through dark ages like stars in the vault of night, and I know

how bountiful a mother she is still in bearing sons and daughters strong in virtue and desirous of glory. But I know as well how "they come to their own, and their own acknowledge them not."

Again, like the Tractarians, he dreads the rising Liberalism :—

Truly they do but babble about liberty and reformation, who think that the depressed condition of a people can be elevated to its proper place by political means alone. The perfection of civil polity is to defend, not to guide mankind.

This, then, was Irving's world—cold, moderate, middle-class, developing the liberalism which Keble and Pusey and Newman feared, and tending in its education and general view of life to a practical materialism. Some of the enthusiasm of the old evangelical party still remained, but its theology was hopelessly unable to cope with the widening intelligence and larger interests of the time. The idea of substitution, which lies at the bottom of the truest and most living aspect of the work of Christ, had been so distorted by the mechanical and forensic method of stating the doctrine of the Atonement, that it repelled rather than attracted the finer minds.

In his pamphlet on the *Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine of our Lord's Human Nature* (1830) Irving comments as follows upon the objection raised to his teaching on the ground that it detracted from the merit of the Saviour's sufferings :—

There is a third objection, which is generally put in this form: And wherein then lay the great meritoriousness of Christ's sufferings? To which question, the answer generally given is, That they procured God's favour, pacified him, and made him placable. This goes exactly upon the notion of the heathen, that God wanteth and will have suffering, wanteth and will have compensation, standeth to his point, and will not abate one iota of suffering to any one. And as he had a mind to save so many, Christ came and bore the sufferings which they might have borne; every jot of it, but not one jot more: for if he had borne one jot more, the Father would have been unjust, and if he had borne one jot less, the Father would have abated of his sternest rectitude. . . . Such is the system of theo-

logy, or rather the one false view of a great truth, which hath swallowed up all theology and upon which are constructed the greater part of the sermons with which the Evangelical part of the church are nourished, or rather poisoned.

Such was Irving's view of that technical evangelicalism which has no echo in the heart. His own doctrine is aglow with life, bursting with energy, quickening flesh and soul and conscience at every point. The journal already quoted gives summaries of sermons preached from time to time in Hatton Garden or at Regent Square. Irving is never tired of recurring again and again to the central thought of the real humanity of our Lord. The following entries in the year 1825 may be taken as examples:

(1) This day Mr. Irving continued his discourse on the influence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit necessary in man's conversion and in the general providence of God. The flesh was weak and unable to fulfil the Law. Therefore Christ came and condemned sin in the flesh, and gave us a victory over death. In the evening discourse he gave us his view of the true use and character of miracles. He thinks it is a low way of estimating the truth and character of the Christian religion to adduce the miracles wrought by Christ and his disciples.

(2) The Trinity is not merely a doctrine revealed in the word of God, but the whole Scripture is a history and embodying of the dealings of the Three Persons with mankind; the Father willeth, the Son declareth and manifesteth, and the Holy Spirit sanctifieth and worketh in us all holy thoughts.

This sort of teaching, delivered with burning eloquence and enthusiasm, rapidly produced its results in many minds and characters. I take the following from the *Quarterly Journal of Prophecy*, a review published in the early seventies by Nisbet and edited, I believe, by Horatius Bonar. The writer is my grandmother, and she is describing phases of spiritual experience under the influence of Irving's teaching:

I must be made a new creature, after His own image, holy as He is holy, pure as He is pure, like unto Jesus my ever-blessed Lord. . . . I must die so that Christ might live in me. Imparted holiness was what, in my heart, I desired and prayed for continually. . . . I saw Jesus perfectly holy in my nature, and I believed He could

make me holy too. I saw His glory would be shown forth in making the unclean clean, the unholy holy like Himself; His own life in the creature flowing from Himself into the members of His body, being washed in His blood and clothed in His imputed righteousness.

What are the leading thoughts of this passage?

Surely vital union with Christ; human nature divinised by incorporation into Him. All this is involved in the faith that the Son of God became man and was made wholly like to us. This is the burthen of Irving's *Sermons on the Incarnation*, a volume which involved him in the charge of heresy. His error, as I am inclined to believe, was philosophical rather than strictly theological, depending on a confusion which sometimes tended to attribute evil to the flesh rather than to the will. Had I been a member of the Annan presbytery, I think I should on the whole have acquitted the accused on this indictment. But nevertheless it afforded a handle to the orthodox whose own teaching was far less true and living than that of the man whom they condemned.

The transition from high doctrine on the Person of Christ to a high conception of the Church is easy and natural. It is the passage from the Epistle to the Colossians to the Epistle to the Ephesians. The head of the woman is the man, the head of Christ is God. The head of the woman is the man, the head of the Church is Christ. That is the true theological sequence. And so about 1830 we find Irving preaching largely from the Ephesian Epistle, expounding the nature of the Church, and dwelling on the reality of the Christ-life imparted through this divine channel. He had always taken a high view of the Church. As a minister of the Established Church of Scotland he had subscribed the Confession of Faith, with the xxvth chapter of which he believed that "Unto this catholick visible church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints." To him this had never been a mere matter of form. In his writings he always uses

the word "churchman" as opposed to "sectary," and the idea of his own ministerial office from the first was that of a patriarchal priesthood of blessing, a conception which still lives among Free Church ministers of the old school in the Highlands. In 1831 I find him describing himself as "angel" of the Church at Regent Square and as such claiming obedience from a member of the congregation. With the Westminster Confession, chap. xxviii., he held that in baptism the grace promised is not only offered, but "really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost"; with the chapter on the Lord's Supper, that "In this sacrament [there is made] a commemoration of that one offering up of Himself, by Himself, upon the Cross, once for all, and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same, and that worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this sacrament, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed . . . receive and feed upon Christ Crucified." Such is the teaching of the formularies of the Established Church of Scotland. As such Irving had received it, and the germ of his subsequent preaching was virtually contained in it. It is not difficult to see how, as the sense of the overshadowing presence of the Spirit came to be more intensely accepted, the teaching began to take a definite shape. If there is grace in the Church, why not gifts of grace?

It was in 1831 that Mrs. Caird (Mary Campbell) with her husband visited London, impressed Irving and many of his people with the reality of her "gift," and thus formed the link between the manifestations at Port Glasgow and on the Gareloch with the prophecies and tongues which now appeared in the National Scots congregation in London and which its pastor felt constrained to "call into the Church." From this time until the condemnation of Irving by the London Presbytery there was always "the prophets'

seat," occupied largely, if not exclusively, by women, the occasion of those scenes of disorder which caused such scandal to the more phlegmatic Scotsmen of the session.

But it has never been generally recognized, no reader of Mrs. Oliphant would suppose, that the struggle which ensued was not confined, on the one hand, to the party which carried forward the movement till the "Catholic Apostolic Church" was a realized fact, and on the other to the old-fashioned Presbyterians who saw nothing but extravagant fanaticism in the very idea of spiritual gifts. There were others, and the McDonalds of Port Glasgow were among them, who were in the fullest sympathy with the principles of Biblical interpretation upon which the expectation of spiritual manifestations was based. Some were themselves subjects of these manifestations, but urged that the spirits of the prophets were subject to the prophets, that Irving failed not because he recognized but because he did not discriminate between the spirits, and allowed himself to be dominated by the utterances of "gifted" women, whom as pastor of the congregation he ought rather to have controlled. It is of the utmost importance not to neglect the fact that the later phases of what is popularly called Irvingism do not represent the whole of the movement, which is not therefore to be judged entirely by them. If it be true, as is undoubtedly the case, that the developments, to which Irving's teaching led, were deprecated by some of those who "spoke with tongues," no less than by others who distrusted the phenomena entirely, it manifestly becomes possible to assert that he was led astray by "lying spirits" instead of being deluded by a mere imagination of spiritual influence. I must not, however, be understood as affirming that such was the case on the evidence of what after all are *ex parte* statements.

It now becomes necessary to attempt to estimate the

value of what must always be considered an essential part of Irving's teaching, namely his interpretation of the prophetical element in Scripture and the Second Advent. So early as 1826 he had published a discourse extending to two volumes entitled *Babylon and Infidelity fore-doomed of God.* He was a member for some years of the prophetical conferences held in Mr. Drummond's house at Albury Park, where among others he associated with Hugh McNeile. That he expected the near approach of the Second Coming is, of course, unquestioned. But apart from this he felt the peculiar importance of these prophetical studies. "The events contained in the propheoies," he says, "are therefore not only a most important, but, if there be any difference, the most important part of the revelation of God; as the time of harvest and of the vintage is the most important season of the year." As then in the case of the spiritual gifts it is necessary to draw a careful distinction between Irving's teaching and the particular direction in which he was led, so in this matter of the Seoond Advent we must again distinguish. He revived the Parousia as the definite hope of the Church, which witnesses to the Lord's death "till He come."

This is the real point of difference between Irving's theology and that revived study of the Incarnation which characterized the nineteenth century generally. And here he is surely truer to the New Testament than Pusey and his successors or Westcott and his school. The Alexandrian theology of the fourth century, while suppressing much that was extravagant in Millenarianism, ignored a real element in the apostolic teaching when it developed the Christian Gnostic doctrine of the Logos at the expense of the prophetic side of the New Testament. Athanasius might give due prominence to the idea of redemption as conditioning the revelation of the incarnate Logos, but

the trend of the Cappadocians was towards an unpractical religious philosophy. Nor can we fail to trace a similar tendency in modern theology for atonement to give way before incarnation, a perfectly Biblical doctrine of divine immanence to shade off into a teaching that is practically indistinguishable from pantheism, amounting to a denial that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." In the New Testament the true proportion of faith is maintained by insisting not only on the concrete experience of the past, "that which our hands handled," but also on the concrete hope of the future, the manifestation and coming when "we shall see Him as He is." This is characteristic of the First Epistle of St. John no less than of the Apocalypse, of the Pastoral Epistles as well as of 1st and 2nd Thessalonians. Every group of the Pauline Epistles is alive with the joy of the Advent. Jude and 2 Peter glow with its heat. The expectation was not lost to the Church till Dionysius of Alexandria stifled it with his Platonism. Nor has there been wanting a continuous stream of witness all down the ages. But it has been the Dies Irae presented as a warning to sinners rather than the Reign of Christ offered to the hope of the saints. Michael Angelo's cartoon in the Sistine Chapel, with its weird and awful grandeur, is scarcely appropriate as an invitation to the Table of the Lord.

Now we may claim for Irving that he was a powerful, if too much neglected, witness to the true balance of New Testament teaching in the nineteenth century. Its theology is not a mere philosophy of the facts of the Gospel. There are passages of true προφητεία in St. Paul's arguments (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52; Phil iii. 20, 21; 1 Thess. iv. 15–17; 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4; 2 Tim. iii. 1–5). The "Word of God" has His place not only in the Fourth Gospel but in Revelation. It is the great merit of Irving that he was keenly alive to both sides of the apostolic teaching. Nor is it unconnected

with this fact that there is no tendency to explain away the Atonement. The adoration of the Lamb "who loved the souls of men and washed them in His Blood" was what I was taught in my young days. It was here, as I now see, that another school, to which I owe an immense debt, was singularly defective. The writers of *Lux Mundi* passed from the Incarnation to the "extension of the Incarnation." The Atonement they were mainly concerned to explain. There is a strange and unsatisfying inadequacy in the late R. C. Moberly's *Atonement and Personality*. Is there not a real connexion between failure to appreciate the Scriptural presentation of the Death of Christ and the practical neglect of the "blessed hope and appearing of our great God and Saviour"?

But if Gnosticism is always hovering about Christology, Montanism is the ever present danger of apocalypse. As in the matter of the spirits, so here Irving displayed a characteristic weakness in submitting his intelligence to minds in every way inferior to his own. As early as 1826 he was induced to accept the system of apocalyptic interpretation of a gentleman whose only title to fame is his influence over the celebrated preacher. I cannot but suppose that Mr. Hatley Frere, who had otherwise little chance of winning acceptance for his prophetical views, set himself to capture Irving as an instrument for propagating his method. Mrs. Oliphant, in her accustomed manner, attributes this weakness in her hero to the "glamour in his eyes," in other words his romantic idealism, which "invariably elevated every man he talked with into the ideal man he ought to have been." This may be so. But it may just as well have been the result of the "humility and childlike simplicity" to which at a later date my grandmother ascribed what seemed to her his false steps. At any rate he whose power had been that he saw great ideas looming through the

mist, became in the matter of unfulfilled prophecy definite even to a fantastic exactness, and thus added the movement which bears his name to the list, not of great achievements, but of brilliant failures.

"Now was the time of harvest"—so thought Edward Irving. "Mr. Irving thinks," says our journal, "that the coming of the Lord will take place in thirty years." So he began to busy himself with Armageddons and Men of Sin, with Scarlet Women and Little Horns, till at length he almost seemed to catch the first streaks of the fiery dawn of the great and terrible day. Surely these revived gifts of the Spirit were the cry to go forth to meet the bridegroom, these prophetic voices were giving forth plain and unmistakable directions for the reaping of the world's harvest. So for himself the practical outcome of his teaching, while witnessing to much that the Church had forgotten and needed to revive, was to follow his disciples out into the wilderness, there to build with the desert sand and to pursue wandering fires.

J. G. SIMPSON.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

I.

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE QUESTION.

A RESTATEMENT of the grounds of belief in the great fact of the Lord's Resurrection seems called for in view of the changed forms of assault on this article of the Christian faith in recent years. It is difficult, indeed, to isolate this particular fact, outstanding as it is, from its context in the Gospel history taken as a whole, every point in which is made subject to a like minute and searching criticism. On the other hand, the consideration of the evidence for the Resurrection may furnish a vantage ground for forming a better estimate of the value of the methods by which