

**LIGHT THROWN  
UPON  
THE FOUR GOSPELS**

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Light Thrown upon the Four Gospels by William Odling

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**WILLIAM ODLING**

**LIGHT THROWN  
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# Light thrown upon the Four Gospels ;

BEING

## A TREATISE

ON

THE INDISPENSABILITY OF THE DISTINCTION TO BE MADE

Between Natural Faith and Repentance,

AS A DUTY ACCORDING TO LAW :

AND

Spiritual Faith and Repentance as a Sovereign Gift ;

OR,

NEW COVENANT BLESSINGS ACCORDING TO  
THE GOSPEL.

AN EXPOSITION OF JOHN VI. 27.

BY WILLIAM ODLING.



" Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you, for him hath God the Father sealed."

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## Preface.

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1. Must it not appear to every mind that is not deeply tainted with infidelity, deism or atheism, that God is a God of *truth*? Deut. xxxii. 4. And that nothing contrary to *truth* can proceed from him; nor can the Spirit of God teach anything but that which is consistent with *truth*. Should it be asked, What is *truth*? the reply is, "Thy (God's) word is truth." John xvii. 17. And "he that speaketh *truth* showeth forth righteousness; but a false witness deceit." Prov. xii. 17. "I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee." 3 John iii.

2. There are numerous opinions among men, upon the different branches of truth, as recorded in the Scriptures; and there are those who consider themselves true teachers, who presume to say, that one person's opinion is as likely to be right as another's; but is not such a notion bordering on infidelity, and

is it not a disbelief of the harmony of the sacred oracles? and must not such a mind be unestablished in the *truth*, and opposed to much evangelical *truth*; and think that every man is at liberty to *believe* any thing that his vain *reason* may dictate? Oh! let us look for a better guide than this; for there is such a thing as "a form of sound words which are to be held fast." 2 Tim. i. 13. "Holding fast the faithful word, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." "Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men that turn aside from the *truth*." Titus i. 9—14. "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, sound speech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed." Titus ii. 1, 7, 8. It is true, that every man has an undoubted right to think for himself; but then, there are right and wrong thoughts, even as there are but two classes of characters on the face of the earth—the righteous and the wicked, (though many different shades and complexions); so there are but two kinds of doctrine disseminated—truth and error; and

" Nothing but truth before God's throne  
With honor can appear."

3. Oh, then, for a heart instructed in divine things, so as to know the *truth*, love the *truth*, enjoy the *truth*, speak the *truth*, and be established in the *truth*; for

“ Firm as a rock God’s truth shall stand,  
When rolling years shall cease to move.”

4. There are others who tell us that the sense of the Scriptures are privately conveyed and confined to the brains of the pope and the priests, hence they endeavour to withhold them from every one else. But we read that “no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation;” (2 Peter i. 20,) and “that the Fathers are to teach them to their children, and children’s children.” Deut. iv. 9. And the injunction of him who spake as never man spake, is, “Search the Scriptures.” John v. 39.

5. When the Holy Ghost inspired his servant to write his sacred *truth*, he well knew the conflicting opinions, the errors, the false notions, the vain philosophy, the traditions of men, the flesh, and world-pleasing doctrines that would abound. 2 Thess. ii. 7—10. Hence, the many strong and striking admonitions, cautions, and warnings interspersed throughout the truthful volume; such as, “Take heed how ye hear, and what ye hear.” “Beware of false prophets,” (Matt. vii. 15,) for “many false prophets shall arise and deceive many.” Matt. xiii. 11. “Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ.” Col. ii. 8. “Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines, for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace,” (or truth). Heb. xiii. 9. “Believe not every



spirit, but try the spirits," (John iv. 1,) by the word of truth. "Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth." Gal. iii. 1.

6. And notwithstanding the many cautions, and admonitions, we find that many have been bewitched with talent, with philosophy, with false notions, with traditions, with subtle sophistry and seducing eloquence, so that they do not obey the truth; and "by reason of whom the way of truth is evil spoken of." 2 Peter ii. 2. And who often endeavour to link the interests of Christ and the world together. Talent, eloquence, and philosophy are admirable in their place; but they are not to be set up in Dan as a calf to bow down to; nor published in the streets of "Askelon" as a god to be worshipped; nor placed in competition with truth, for it is a lamentable fact, that great talent in general, is guided by "vain philosophy," or *human reason*, rather than *divine truth*.

7. Sophistry, or human reason, with all its native appendages and acquirements, when it sets itself up as an expounder of God's *truth*, if it does not analogise and harmonise, it is but an *ignis fatuus* to the mind—a false light. We have numbers of talented teachers, who have the effrontery to say, that "to harmonise God's word is a business which they are not required to attend to;" and even boast in saying, that "to reconcile the different parts of Scripture is not their work." But is not this "vain philosophy, and great swelling words of vanity?" 2 Peter ii. 18. With such then, the Scriptures may be made to mean

anything that reason and fancy dictates, or that talent and eloquence can utter. But is this in accordance with the method of the Great Apostle of the Gentiles? for he says, "Which things we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth," but that which is taught in the Scriptures by the Holy Ghost, "comparing spiritual things with spiritual." Was it not Paul's business then to harmonise and to reconcile? Hence, "if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." Bishop Heber's estimate of human reason, may not be improperly placed here, which is as follows :

" Vain human reason boasts himself a light,  
 Though but a wandering meteor of the night ;  
 Yet the impostor would aspire to be  
 Esteem'd a son of noble pedigree,  
 Vaunting his father's titles and his race,  
 Though you see mongrel written in his face.  
 In vain he seeks on pilgrims to impose,  
 In vain he strives to lead them by the nose ;  
 The cheat's discover'd, and bright TRUTH prevails,  
 When humble faith doth hold the sacred scales.  
 Reason and sense are but deceitful guides,  
 A better convoy God for us provides :  
 Celestial TRUTH dwells in th' abyss of light,  
 Wrapt up in clouds from human reason's sight ;  
 He that would see her as she's thus conceal'd,  
 Must look by FAITH, believing what's reveal'd.  
 Rest then, my soul, from endless anguish free'd,  
 Nor reason is thy guide, nor sense thy creed.  
 Faith is the best insurer of thy bliss,  
 The bank above must fail before this venture miss."

8. It has been the desire of the writer of the following Treatise, to lay aside human reason as a guide to expound the said text; and to keep his eye and mind steadily fixed on sacred *truth*; and he has endeavoured to *harmonise*, to *reconcile*, and *analagise*. And by this method, he trusts that his *labour* has not been in vain upon the work assigned to him; and he is desirous that it may stand or fall, when justly compared with that *word* which "shall not pass away." For for many years it has been his desire to contend, not for victory, but for TRUTH; for which he feels himself accountable, for a proper use, or abuse of; and by which he will be judged at the last great day! Rev. xx. 12. And when he becomes useless to God, to his cause, and his people in this vale of tears, he may drop into the dust from whence he came, and his soul return to God who gave it. Eccles. xii. 7.

9. He has considered the text as being highly metaphorical, and that it cannot be taken in its grammatical or literal sense; because if understood so, it has no parallel in the Scripture, but much to contradict it; whereas that cannot be admitted.

10. In the fourth division, i. e., the council and advice given; it may be thought by some, that there is much in it superfluous, or foreign from the subject; this will be obviated, if it be duly considered that this part of the text (though metaphorical) is analagous with the Old Testament precept, council, and advice given to the Jews by the Prophets, concerning their