

**A BRIEF REPLY TO THOMAS
BEWLEY'S PAMPHLET: ENTITLED
"AN INQUIRY INTO THE RIGHT
PLACE AND AUTHORITY OF HOLY
SCRIPTURE."**

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A Brief Reply to Thomas Bewley's Pamphlet: Entitled "An Inquiry Into the Right Place and authority of holy scripture." by Daniel Pickard

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TO
THOMAS BEWLEY'S PAMPHLET

ENTITLED

"AN INQUIRY INTO THE RIGHT PLACE AND
AUTHORITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE."

By DANIEL PICKARD

"DO NOT SEE, MY BELOVED BROTHERN."—JAS. I. 16.
"PROVE ALL THINGS, HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."—I THESS. V. 21.

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It is due to the reader to state, that since the following pages were written, I have had some correspondence with the Author of "An Inquiry," &c., respecting the issue and the purport of his pamphlet; and that he has courteously owned the right of publication for this Reply.

D. P.

3rd Month, 1867.

Moorland Road, Leeds.

A BRIEF REPLY

ETC. ETC.

HAVING lately received through the post, a controversial pamphlet by Thomas Bewley, entitled, "An Inquiry into the right place and authority of Holy Scripture," but which is "*printed for private circulation only*," I have felt an engagement of mind to raise a protest against *such* an issue from the press, upon such a subject; as well as to make a few remarks, by way of stricture on, and reply to, some of its contents.

"The right place and authority of Holy Scripture," being in every sense a *public* question, and not a question specially of private interest, or of local importance only, it would seem manifestly due to all concerned, that any writer engaged thereon, should make his offering in the open field of publication. In the present instance, the Author may have had reasons for issuing his pamphlet through private channels, which to himself may seem fair; but I confess, that its *so appearing*, had to my mind too much the savour and manner of those, who "privily bring in" contrary doctrine.

The Author is, moreover, a member of our religious Society, and making use of his *membership*, in the work of controverting and laying waste the long-established principles of the People he is thus joined to, on the important

subject in question. Whether this, by means of a privately circulated treatise, be a just and candid form of procedure, I would entreat him again to consider.

On reading the pamphlet through, my impression is clear, that, were our members generally to receive with credence the propositions it contains, there would then be little or nothing to protect us from a further relapse from our original persuasion and profession, into outward observances;—to an outward form of Baptism; an outward Communion of bread and wine; and to the dry and literal bonds of a school-made and salaried ministry.

In addressing himself, on page 4,* to the subject of inquiry, "What is their right place, and how are we to ascertain where that right place is?" the Author proceeds with this untenable and comfortless assertion;—"It must be manifest to all that we have no means of discovering this, except from the Holy Scriptures themselves;"—forgetting the precious truth which Barclay has well stated, that it is "by the inward testimony of the Spirit we do alone truly know them." Now if we cannot truly know them, but by the inward testimony of the Spirit, it is plain that we cannot rightly estimate them as to place and authority, but by the same good rule and guide.

"The object therefore of this paper," (adds T. B.) "is to investigate, what is the authority, what is the 'right place' they assign to themselves;" and attached to this, is a note at the bottom of the same page, where he also says, "It will be admitted that there *has been* a period in our history in which these inestimable writings have not had their *right place* assigned to them amongst us." As this statement is thus given, *devoid of date or documentary proof*, it is obvious that it may be perniciously applied according

* The references here given are to the edition of Thomas Bewley's pamphlet printed by R. T. White, of Dublin.

to the reader's prejudice, to the *very best period* of our history: and do not the writer's further remarks in the same note, and in the same pamphlet, show a disposition in himself so to apply it?

On page 5, we find the Author approximating nearer to the testimony of Truth, (though he accords it the second place,) by saying, "Let it be distinctly borne in mind in all that follows, that * * * * it is only by the help of the Holy Spirit that we can truly comprehend and believe the truths contained in this revelation of the Divine will, and that we ever stand in need of his enlightening power rightly to appreciate them." Again on page 6, "The preparation of the heart for the reception of Divine truth, is only of the Lord. It is by his Holy Spirit alone, that these truths can be brought home and savingly applied to the soul."

Now, when we find "in all that follows," that the only competitor with which the Author contends for "place and authority" on behalf of the Scriptures, is *the inward testimony of the Spirit of Truth*; does he not by the quotations last given overthrow the drift of his own argument? For if it be, as in truth it is, that every candid reader of Holy Writ is dependent on the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit, for a just interpretation and application of its contents; then the latter, and not the former, is the *primary rule* of faith and manners; according to the well proved testimony of Robert Barclay and all our early Friends. The Scriptures are a concurrent and secondary guide.

On pages 6 and 7, it is said, "As the testimony of Holy Scripture, in reference to the authority and right place they *assign to themselves*, consists of a variety of isolated passages scattered throughout the Old and New Testaments, it may be interesting and instructive to bring some of them together, in order to form a just estimate of the aggregate value of the evidence they afford." And the first quotation

given, is from 2 Timothy iii. 15-17, on which the Author makes this singular remark: "It may be that the bringing these so prominently forward alone (in our public documents, &c.) has unintentionally tended to depress our value of, and withdraw our attention from many others of equal, or even of more importance." The passages *then* cited and dwelt upon by Thomas Bewley, are in the following order:—

Deut. vi. 4-9.—"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God *is* one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes."

Deut. xxx. 11-14.—"For this commandment which I command thee this day, it *is* not hidden from thee, neither *is* it far off. It *is* not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither *is* it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word *is* very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."

Rom. x. 6-8.—"But the righteousness which *is* of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that *is*, to bring Christ down *from above*;) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that *is*, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word *is* nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that *is*, the word of faith, which we preach."

Psaln i. 2.—"But his delight *is* in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

Psaln xix. 7, 8.—"The law of the Lord *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord *is* sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord *is* pure, enlightening the eyes."

Prov. xiii. 13.—"Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded."

Prov. vi. 23.—“For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.”

Psaln cxix. 11.—“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. 14.—I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, * * * * 16.—I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word. 24.—Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors. 50.— * * * * thy word hath quickened me. 93.—I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me. 99.—I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. 105.—Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. 130.—The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.”

Isaiah viii. 20.—“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

Hosea iv. 6.—“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.”

Rom. x. 17.—“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

John xx. 30, 31.—“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

1 John v. 13.—“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

1 John ii. 1.—“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.”

1 John i. 4.—“And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.”

1 John v. 10.—“ * * he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”

1 John ii. 24.—“Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.”

Luke i. 3, 4.—“It seemed good to me * * * * to write unto thee in order that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.”