

**THE LAW OF THE HOUSE:  
A PRIZE  
ESSAY ON REVERENCE  
FOR THE SANCTUARY**

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The Law of the House: A Prize Essay on Reverence for the Sanctuary by Miss E. Henderson

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**MISS E. HENDERSON**

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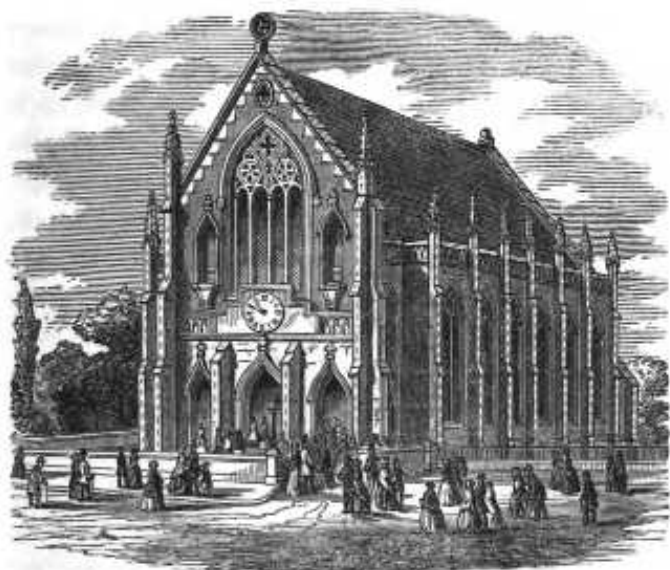
**THE LAW OF THE HOUSE:**

**A PRIZE ESSAY**

ON

**REVERENCE FOR THE SANCTUARY.**

BY MISS E. HENDERSON.



"And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him."—Luke xxi, 38.

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## P R E F A C E .

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Two members of one of our long established London congregations, (MR. W. FORD and MR. F. JONES) grieved at the late attendance of many of their fellow worshippers, regarding such negligence as an indication of declining piety, and too well aware that the evil was not confined to their own congregation or their own communion only, became very desirous to awaken general attention to the subject. They felt assured that the majority of every congregation would listen favourably to any well directed appeal which might be addressed to them, and thought that such an appeal coming from a distance, and written rather than spoken, might be more effectual than any passing remonstrance from the pulpit. Some ministers they observed, were disheartened by the failure of often repeated attempts to correct the evil of late attendance, and there was a fear that the silence of discouragement might be mistaken by late comers for the silence of content. In short, late attendance had become a habit, an inveterate and most injurious habit. Like all bad habits it acquired increasing force by continuance, and soothed into slumbering acquiescence those whom it did not infect or grievously disgust. Nor was this all. Sloth and irreverence were manifestly united, and to those

who disturbed the worship of others it became impossible to conduct their own worship aright. With persons of that class prayer lost its reality, praise was mockery, the sermon a mere fruitless entertainment or tedious infliction, and a state of mind gradually became established which it was difficult to distinguish from infidelity itself. It even became a question whether it was right to countenance the godlessness which pervaded so large a part of a congregation by continuing to be united with such a company, or whether the more devout might not rather be justified in withdrawing from the place, and leaving the incongruous mass of droppers-in to melt away by the natural effect of their own irreverence. This was a painful question. Attachment to their own church, which is not a local establishment but a world-wide institution—love to the cause of God and to the ministers of the gospel who, of all others, were most grieved—the consideration that he who would conquer must not retreat—pity for the souls of the offenders, and sympathy with many fellow-worshippers not less offended than themselves, induced those gentlemen to attempt a remedy, not so much in the adjacent pews as in the mass of congregations throughout the country.

They therefore agreed as a first measure, to offer twenty guineas for the best Essay on "Reverence for the Sanctuary." This offer they advertised, and in order to avoid any appearance of exclusiveness in regard to a subject which concerns all, and to carry their own views of Christian catholicity into practice, they requested three ministers to adjudicate. The Rev. EDWARD AURIOL, M.A.,



Rector of St. Dunstan-in-the-West, as of the Church of England, the Rev. Dr. RULE, as a Wesleyan, and the Rev. Dr. LEIFCHILD, as a Dissenter. Ninety Essays were sent for adjudication, and although, of course, the manuscripts exhibited great diversity and widely differing degrees of merit, almost all of them gave internal evidence of earnestness in the writers; many of whom were evidently actuated much less by the chance of a very moderate premium for the production, than by a desire to remedy the evil lamented by the donors.

The adjudicators had no difficulty in selecting a few manuscripts of decided value, and on united consultation they soon became unanimous in awarding the preference to the one labelled "*Ne vile fano,*" which, on unsealing the accompanying letter, was found to be from the pen of Miss HENDERSON, daughter of the late revered Dr. Henderson, whose devotedness to the study and to the circulation of the Holy Scriptures had probably contributed to produce, in the heart of his child, an intelligent apprehension of what should give the beauty of holiness to the worship of Almighty God. The adjudicators, valuing the essentials of Christianity far beyond any accidental variety of discipline, were much gratified to find evidences of superiority to all mere denominational attachment or prejudice in the spirit of the successful competitor. The reader cannot test the justice of their decision by comparing Miss HENDERSON'S Essay with some others of perhaps equal merit in point of composition which came before them, but it is to be hoped that its comprehensive treatment of the subject will be found to justify their approbation.

Above all it is most earnestly to be desired that the blessing of our Heavenly Father, of the God, whom we all worship, of the Saviour in whom we all trust, of the Holy Spirit for whose influence we all pray, may rest upon this book, and commend its argument to the heart of every one who reads it.

W. H. R.

*July 5th, 1858.*

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