

**ON SPIRITUALISING
SCRIPTURE:
THE CONFESSIONS
OF A MILLENARIAN**

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On Spiritualising Scripture: the Confessions of a Millenarian by Wm. Graham

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WM. GRAHAM

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THE
CONFESSIONS OF A MILLENARIAN.

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P R E F A C E.

1st.—ONE of the principles mentioned in this work is “interpretation by *contraries* ;” and this principle I hope the reader will apply to these “Confessions.” In using solemn *irony*, I follow the example of Elijah and others. This, of course, the Christian reader should not forget in perusing these pages.

2nd.—Let those who indulge in the hope of the advent, keep clear of this pamphlet, for its ostensible object is to put that event as far off as possible, and direct the mind of the bride to the coming of the Bridegroom, which is DEATH, the hope of the present church.

3rd.—Let no one who inclines to a literal interpretation of Scripture have anything to do with this book, for it seeks to confirm the present traditional theory of SPIRITUALISING, by which Origen corrected the faith of the Primitive Church.

4th.—Lest any of my learned friends should charge me with plagiarism, it seems necessary to assert solemnly that I am not conscious of that crime. It is

true I have read the *Confessions* both of J. J. Rousseau and Augustine, but I think the candid reader who takes the trouble to examine the matter, will find that this pamphlet, both as to matter and manner, is entirely different from the productions of these celebrated men. Hoping, then, that this little work may help on the study of the prophetic record in some earnest but hesitating minds, I commit it to the conscience and candour of the Christian public.

On Spiritualising Scripture.

CONFESSION THE FIRST.

IT is not without grief that I make the following confessions, as they will show you, dear friend, that my views and sentiments on many subjects have become totally changed since the last time we held friendly discourse together on the subject of prophecy and biblical interpretation. Of course there is always something manly and consolatory to the conscience and reason in the rejection of long-cherished errors; but the public recantation of them, however proper, is not without pain. To this, owing to higher considerations, I must be willing to submit.

(1.) First, then, it is known in the small circle in which I move that when very young I received (perhaps without sufficient examination) the Millenarian theory and the literal interpretation of Scripture on which it is based. Even in the theological class I ventured, in a prize essay, to advocate the national restoration and conversion of the Jews, on receiving which essay from my venerable

professor, I found written—"Mr. G., reconsider this matter." I did reconsider it; I read all books on all sides of the subject, devoted much study to the text of Holy Scripture, and, after much prayer for heavenly guidance, came to the conclusion that my first convictions were right, that the doctrine called Millenarian, concerning the Advent, the Antichrist, the First Resurrection, and the literal interpretation of prophecy, were salutary and scriptural. This continued to be the state of my convictions for many years; and both in my ministry and in my publications I have not failed to advocate the same opinions. I need not detail the reasons which have led to the change of mind on these matters; I will content myself with the statement of my present sentiments on the subjects referred to.

(2.) First, then, I have come to the conviction that Origen, Clemens' Alexandrinus, and other famous doctors of the fourth and fifth centuries, were right in adopting the anagogical (*τα ανω*, interpreting everything in a heavenly sense) theory of biblical interpretation. The words and literal sense they considered as the mere husk or shell out of which the Divine doctrines were to be extracted, and consequently many things literally false are spiritually true, and *vice versa*. This gives the expositor great and manifold advantages, for there can be but *one literal sense* given to the text of Holy Scripture, whereas the number of

spiritual meanings depends entirely on the genius, wisdom, and sanctified imagination of the expositor. What a field this lays open for the ministers of the Gospel!

(3.) It is quite a carnal, worldly, and Talmudical opinion that the Jews should be nationally restored to Palestine. The Jews are banished from their country because of their crimes; the Christian Church is open to receive them, by holy baptism, into her communion; the distinction of nations has been entirely done away in the Gospel: the scattered nation must yield to the laws of progress and population, and finally become absorbed in the Gentile communities.

(4.) I hold and believe firmly that all the curses and threatenings uttered against Israel have been literally fulfilled, or are to be so; but I deny that on the principles of sound reason you should argue from the curse to the blessing. What! apply all the numerous and glorious promises in Isaiah, and the Old Testament generally, to the literal seed of Abraham! All these promises and blessings found in the Scripture under the name of Israel are to be interpreted spiritnally, and applied to the Christian Church.

(5.) We may err also very much if we do not spiritualise a great number of places and things in both the Old and the New Testament. You read in the prophets of Zion, and Jerusalem, and the mountain of the Lord, and the glory of the