

*The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church*, by Frederick William Faber. (1840).

THE UNFULFILLED GLORY  
OF THE  
CHURCH.

BY THE REV.  
FREDERICK W. FABER, M.A.  
FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.

I will glorify the house of My glory.—ISAIAH. lx. 7.

LONDON:  
PRINTED FOR J. G. F. & J. RIVINGTON,  
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD,  
AT WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL.  
1840.

*Price Fourpence.*

*The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church*, by Frederick William Faber. (1840).

THE  
UNFULFILLED GLORY  
OF  
THE CHURCH.

WHEN a man is celebrating his birth-day, if he is a religious man, his thoughts run mainly in one direction, upon the trials and blessings he has already received from God, together with an anxious yet not uneasy or fretful looking on into futurity, which he is not able at such seasons altogether to repress. A man's past life does in a measure prophesy of his future life. He cannot indeed see his own immortal soul. He cannot tell where it resides, or how it is gifted, or what shall become of it in the end. He is to a very great degree a mystery to himself. But his own nature, his own powers, and the peculiar bent of his disposition, are disclosed to him in his sins. Where he has failed once, he may fail again; and where he has conquered once, he may, by God's grace, still go on to conquer. Thus his religious experience, and more especially his sins, are year by year getting together fresh materials, out of which he may in part discern his future life, his life, that is, as a religious man, as being a spirit in a state of growth and progress, as having a good beginning in himself, which will be carried on through good and evil, in light and darkness, without intermission, till the day of the Lord Jesus. Thus the anniversary of a man's birth, or still more of his Baptism, his true birth, is a time of thought and silence, of gladness yet full of fear, of rejoicing unto the Lord and yet rejoicing with reverence. Now what we thus naturally do for ourselves on our birthdays, we are called, on the Festival of the Epiphany, to do for the Church, making her past history prophesy of that which is yet to come. It is the birthday of the Gentile Church: the day at which a hundred prophecies touched and met and were fulfilled, and yet went on

*The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church*, by Frederick William Faber. (1840).

prophesying, as waiting for a more complete and glorious fulfilment. Thus both the past and the future are presented to our view; and the present is the ground from which we are to view them. The past filling us with thoughts of joy, not unmixed with sadder and more penitential feelings; and the future being matter of faith, and hope, and prayer, and a loud call to a stricter and more obedient life. The Church, in the lessons which she has selected from Isaiah, puts before us the weight of prophecy which rests upon the Gentile Church; and of which, lying as it does so plentifully up and down the Bible, these two chapters are, so to speak, rich specimens, like the grapes of Eshcol, proofs sent on beforehand, of plenty and abundance yet to be fulfilled. Something therefore may be said of these prophecies, as they concern the Church, and as we ourselves, being Churchmen, are practically concerned therein.

It must be obvious to any one reading the prophecies about the Gentile Church with common devoutness, and who has too much reverence and too much lowly-mindedness to put them aside after the summary fashion in which many do, on the score of allegory, eastern figures, or poetical expression, it must be obvious either that they are yet unfulfilled, except in part, or that the sins of the Church and the littleness of her faith have so interfered with and disfigured the fulfilment that we are not able to recognise it: not able, by comparing the present state of the Church with the lines and pictures of prophecy, to ascertain whereabouts the Church is, to what point she has arrived on that path of mingled suffering and glory which is allotted her in prophecy. Whichever view we take, it renders the past history of the Church Catholic, and her prospects for the future, a subject of lively and indeed of fearful interest. Looking at her present condition, either as regards the restoration of the Jews, or the conversion of the heathen, or the bringing to obedience the powers of the world, or as regards the purity of her ancient faith or the

*The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church*, by Frederick William Faber. (1840).

outward unity of her sons, it is such and so sad, that we should have imagined men would have been very jealous of accounting any prophecy quite and for ever fulfilled; that they would have been anxious to think that as much as possible yet remained to be fulfilled; because then there would be so much the more glory yet behind, which might fall out even in the days of their flesh; by which, at all events, whether among those who are alive on earth or those who are alive elsewhere, they would be very greatly and very sensibly affected. Now the case is so far otherwise, that men do every thing they can to make themselves believe that almost all is accomplished, and nothing to come except those great things which will be the immediate precursors of the second advent of our Lord.

Thus men have, for the most part, treated prophecy in one or other of two ways. Some have been offended at the wild and heretical speculations which have too much characterized later writers on unfulfilled prophecy; and so have been led to regard that whole province of theology as dangerous and unpractical. They have thus, in great measure, failed to keep alive within themselves that affectionate solicitude and eagerness about the Church and her prospects which were so strikingly uppermost in the mind of the ancient Christians, and contributed in no slight degree to their elevation and heavenliness of character. By this too they have weakened that temper of readiness and expectation, which the perpetual belief and waiting for the speedy coming of the Lord could not but form within the soul: a belief which, however lightly spoken of in these times, was as prominent in apostolic teaching as it was influential in apostolic practice. They have come imperceptibly to substitute death in their minds for this more kindling hope, and to urge it on their followers where St. Peter or St. Paul would have urged the immediate advent of our Lord. Death indeed, in their view, was as it were practically and to each of them the second advent. For

*The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church*, by Frederick William Faber. (1840).

they had built a wilful wall between the dead, the world of spirits, and themselves; and, their allegiance to the Church having long sat loosely upon them, they had become absorbed in themselves, and had lost all keen and anxious sympathy with the Church at large, or pious expectation of those glories, which, for so many centuries, have been delayed. Thus prophecy was degraded to a mere evidence, to be coldly weighed and accurately fitted to actual facts, and to be commented upon with much applause out of infidel historians; and texts were picked up here and there out of the Bible to be clothed with effective parallels and striking fulfilments, which should carry conviction to the doubtful, and transmute, by a poor intellectual process, unbelievers into Christians.

Then again there were others, of quicker devotional feelings, who threw themselves into the field of unfulfilled prophecy, and, not carrying along with them the guidance of the early Church, ran into wanton speculations, not always agreeable to the analogy of faith. Their tendency has generally been to find the great bulk of prophecy accomplished and accomplishing in their own times. Thus the Roman Church, the English Church, the infidel schools of the eighteenth century, and finally Napoleon, have been brought into uncouth collision as the respective antichrists, each of a numerous and influential body of expositors. In like manner, the apostacy predicted by St. Paul long remained in the quiet possession of Protestant controversialists, as an undoubted weapon against Rome; but it has been in this day transferred, in the miserable dialect of a late confused and impure writer, to the “Nicene asceticism,” and “religion of the Sacraments” of “ancient Christianity.” To serve their successive purposes, the literal and allegorical interpretation of prophecy have been run together in the most uncritical confusion. It has not uncommonly happened, that half a passage of Scripture has been, by one school, taken literally and the other half

*The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church*, by Frederick William Faber. (1840).

figuratively; which literal and figurative halves have simply changed places one with another in the succeeding school of exposition. This anxiety to find a great body of predictions meeting and fulfilling themselves in their own days, has not arisen from any sympathy or strong feeling with the fortunes of the Church Catholic, but rather from the necessity of some high imaginative excitement for themselves and their adherents, or to escape by means of their theology from the dulness of their own uneventful times, or not unfrequently for the base end of serving some coarse controversial purpose.

It is unnecessary to show what discredit all this profane handling of Holy Scripture has brought upon the study of unfulfilled prophecy, in the minds of too many sober and modest Christians. All history, its little and least events, as well as its greater ones, are doubtless fulfilments of prophecy, and advances to that complete fulfilment which is the glory of the Church; and the only deep Christian way of studying history is as the reflected face of prophecy. And so far the schemes of interpretation above alluded to are not without a portion of truth in them: each may have some little. But what is to be observed as the characteristic mark of both these schools is this, that the Church is dropped out of view: they seem to have forgotten almost throughout that the Church and the Church only, one and catholic, is the object of nearly all this prophecy; the person, as it were, round which prophecy revolves, the form which prophecy clothes, and from which it takes its shape; that these several predictions are, so to speak, the Church's garments, garments smelling of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces whereby her Spouse hath made her glad.

It troubles worldly men and frightens faithless men to think that they are living in a state of miracles, that a miraculous dispensation is going on all round them, and that disclosures and appearances of it may be expected at

any moment. It disturbs their peace and comfort to imagine that they are so near such great things, from the presence and, it may so happen, from the sight of which they cannot escape. They are like the Gadarenes, whose hearts failed them when they besought Jesus that He would depart out of their coasts. They have not the cause of the Church at heart; except where it does not interfere with themselves, where it does not call on them to labour and suffer hardness, to make sacrifices, and go heavily as one that mourneth for his mother. They are not anxious to see all nations and kingdoms, who will not serve the Church, perish, because they know the victory involves trouble and unquietness in which they themselves will be concerned; and so they “see that rest is good, and the land that it is pleasant; and bow their shoulders to bear, and become servants unto tribute.”<sup>1</sup> They do not see any miracles; and it is not likely they will believe what they do not see, when they are so anxious to disbelieve; and thus, however unconsciously to themselves, they use the very language of unbelief; “since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning.”<sup>2</sup> But St. Peter warns us distinctly that the “Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness.”<sup>3</sup> We know then that He has made the Church great promises of glory; we see that those promises are not yet fulfilled, and so we believe they will be fulfilled very soon; because St. Peter tells us “the Lord is not slack concerning His promise.” But worldly men have not set their hearts upon this glory. They are not earnest about it. They do not feel at all unhappy about the Church. They have forgotten Jerusalem in their mirth. They have not remembered her captivity. They are afraid of the trouble and noise which may accompany the bringing in of this glory: and so they do not like to be told that they are living

---

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xlix. 15.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 4.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 9.

under a dispensation of miracles.

But is not this the only true and reasonable account of the state of things under which we find ourselves as Churchmen? The time of miracles is said to have ended, that is to say, of visible miracles. But there may be invisible miracles, and visible miracles may return any day. The Conception of our Lord was a miracle; and a miracle without a witness. The Resurrection was a miracle; yet no one saw it, except perhaps the Angels, as it is written, "He was seen of Angels."<sup>4</sup> His chosen Apostles did not see it. They were only witnesses of it, by having seen Him after He was risen. No one saw Him rise. The time of visible miracles then is over; it is suspended for a while, but not for ever. It seems from Scripture, that the end of the Church will come to pass among far greater and more universal and more terrible wonders than those which stood round about her cradle. But are there to be no miracles meanwhile; that is to say, if the prophecies are ever to find their fulfilment? Will not the restoration of the Jews be a miracle? Will not the conversion of the Gentiles be a miracle? Will not the breaking in pieces of the images of the powers of this world be a miracle? The extinction of heresy, the recovery of unity— will not these be miracles? And some of these things at all events will come to pass, unless God is utterly displeased with His Church. Yet He has told us this very day that He cannot forget her: "Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me. As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with all the nations, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth."<sup>5</sup>

Of course one effect of our sins is this, that we do not know what hold they have taken on the accomplishment of prophecy, what they have interfered

---

<sup>4</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah xlix. 16.



*The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church*, by Frederick William Faber. (1840).

with and what they have not; what will be kept back from us because of our sins, and what will still be given us in spite of them. For example: whether God will ever give His Church unity and outward communion again, in which her strength and dignity so much consist, and upon which so many of the promises evidently depend, seeing that man's sin and wantonness made light of breaking the body of Christ while it was yet entire; and that since then, when from time to time in particular Churches God has restored partial unity, as it were, to try man's heart and see what was in it, man's sin destroyed it all again. It ruffled the waters, and the image of heaven that was reflected there passed away. We are left in doubt. Doubt is the necessary consequence of sin. But, blessed be God! whatever is matter of doubt is matter of faith and prayer also. Complete unity then may never be given us again; but so far as the restoration of the Jews and their reconciliation with the Gentile Church, there seems ground for supposing that it will be granted to us.

Now let us look at the restoration of the Jews, as giving interest to the future prospects of the Church, the thought of which the Festival of the Epiphany almost forces upon us. The Gentile Church, it is true, has a glory of her own, quite independent of the Jews. "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength."<sup>6</sup> Yet how much more glorious if Israel be gathered. Indeed the gathering of Israel seems to be, from many places of Scripture, the office of the Gentile Church; and the verse above quoted may be rendered, though not so well, as we read it in the margin: "The Lord formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, that Israel may be gathered, and I may be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God may be my strength." This gives still further interest to the

---

<sup>6</sup> Isaiah xlix. 5.

*The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church*, by Frederick William Faber. (1840).

Church, as having not only the conversion of the heathen entrusted to her, but in an especial manner the restoration of the Jews. And “if the casting away of them was the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?”<sup>7</sup> There is yet a more solemn thought connected with this subject. The Jewish Church of old imagined themselves as secure in the favour of God as we the Gentile and the Christian Church think ourselves now. They were cut off. Obedience was the condition on which their existence as a Church depended, and obedience is the condition on which our existence as a particular Church depends also. “Boast not against the branches. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well: because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear. God is able to graft them in again. Blindness in part is happened unto Israel, *only* until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. All Israel shall be saved.” Thus, so far as the restoration of Israel is concerned, which is only one of many promised glories, there is enough to quicken our hopes and feelings about the prospects of the Church, and make us look on with eagerness to the time when it shall please God to put such great faith into the hearts of the Gentiles, that they may bring Jacob back again. The Jews have all along been a miraculous people: God hath not dealt so with any nation. They were miraculously distinguished from the rest of the world by God’s favour; and they are no less miraculously distinguished now by His displeasure. Their present condition is a living proof of the fulfilment of prophecy, of which our very bodily senses can assure us. Now, with whatever other circumstances of pomp and grandeur the restoration of Israel may be accompanied, the mere ending of their present state would be an open miracle; a visible putting forth of God’s Hand on behalf of

---

<sup>7</sup> Rom. xi. 15.

*The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church*, by Frederick William Faber. (1840).

His Church; a bringing about a wonderful change on the outward face of things. When it took place we could not but see, our enemies could not but see, that God was with us of a truth.

The restoration of the Jews leads us entirely into the future—the prospects of the Church. Let us look at one more prophecy, which leads us into the past as well as the future: the one contained in Isaiah ix. 12: “The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish.” This is a promise made by God to the Church, that all heathen kingdoms should be brought into subjection to her. It is made in a still more special manner by the prophet Zechariah,<sup>8</sup> where it is said, that whatever nation refuses to come up to Jerusalem to keep a Feast of Tabernacles to the Lord, shall have no rain; and of Egypt, where from natural causes there is seldom rain, and the inundation of the Nile serves instead, it is said that there shall be the plague. The Church of God was then with the Jews, and the promise made to them. When, however, through unbelief the Church passed from them to the Gentiles, all the promises were transferred with her as her own inheritance, as our Lord teaches; and this one in particular is renewed and repeated by Him, lest it should have been thought something peculiar to the Jews. “Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”<sup>9</sup> Where we may observe, that by the word *stone* we are at once recalled to the prophecy of Daniel,<sup>10</sup> where the Messiah’s kingdom is also represented under the similitude of a stone, as well as to the passage in the Psalms quoted by our Lord in the same

---

<sup>8</sup> Zech. xiv. 17, 18.

<sup>9</sup> Matt. xxi. 43, 44.

<sup>10</sup> Dan. ii. 34.

*The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church*, by Frederick William Faber. (1840).

chapter.<sup>11</sup> Now surely, no one can say that this prophecy is yet fulfilled. Let us look into the history of the past—there it has been partially fulfilled more than once. I will take one instance familiar to almost every body: the mortal struggle of the early Church with the Roman empire, according to Daniel's interpretation of the dream. The infant Church grew up, in spite of persecution, in the very middle of the empire, gradually, slowly, silently, as our Lord said it would, like a grain of mustard seed. It grew more hardily for being in the shade.

In time it had eaten away the heart of the old Roman empire, which at last thought fit to adopt Christianity as its state religion. But it was too late. Repentance had been deferred too long. It was like putting new wine into an old bottle. The full and quick spirit that was in it tore its way through the old vessels that would fain have held it in. But they were of man's making, and therefore could not do so. The Church was the destruction of the empire. She killed it at its heart. She was a jealous power, and would not infuse fresh life and vigour into an outworn system which she had not herself created: so she broke it. Now in this she asserted her birthright over earthly powers, and the prophecy was in a measure fulfilled. Yet surely not completely fulfilled. It was but one instance. If it fulfilled the particular prophecy of Daniel, yet it does not come up to the fulness of the general prophecy in the text: and if we look attentively into the prophecy in Daniel, we shall find that even that does not seem quite fulfilled. The iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, are indeed broken to pieces together; yet are they become like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and has the wind carried them away *so that no place is found for them?*<sup>12</sup> It does not seem that this is fulfilled.

---

<sup>11</sup> Ps. cxviii. 22.

<sup>12</sup> Dan. ii. 35.

Now I have selected these two instances, the restoration of the Jews, and the breaking in pieces the powers of the world, for this reason; that it is a great comfort to us, and a great incentive to labour, to know how much is yet behind of the Church's glory; and these two promises in particular, can scarcely be brought about without making much noise, and disorder, and fear, in their fulfilment. No vague notions of a spiritual fulfilment, spiritual, that is, in the sense of hidden and unseen, can satisfy the plain words of Inspiration, on these two points at all events. God will be visibly with His Church, she will be exalted visibly in the eyes of men, she that is great among the nations, and princess among the princes, will visibly cease to be tributary;<sup>13</sup> the solitary city will visibly be full of people;<sup>14</sup> they that despised her shall bow themselves down at the soles of her feet, and men shall speak out loud and call her, the City of the Lord, the Zion of the holy One of Israel; the singers shall sing aloud, so that the joy of Jerusalem will be heard even afar off!<sup>15</sup>

Now this fact, that we are living under a state of miracles, and that most of the miraculous glory of the Church is yet unfulfilled, teaches us one lesson: and the likelihood that man's sin may in some way or other have hindered, and may yet still further hinder the coming of that glory, teaches us another. From the first we learn to be *cheerful about the Church*; and from the second, to be *watchful of ourselves*. We are not to despond. We are not to give ourselves up to mere feeling, and waste our soul's best health and strength in holding mere opinions, and giving way to the indulgence of vain excitement and useless regret. We are not to be weary at fast and feast, in sacraments and prayer. Our faith must grow with our difficulties. We must hope even against hope, courageously

---

<sup>13</sup> Lam. i. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Is. lx. 14.

<sup>15</sup> Neh. xii. 43.

*The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church*, by Frederick William Faber. (1840).

and like men. There is much glory to be wrought out yet for and within the Church. Many persons are inclined to disbelieve this; because it seems so unlikely from the state of the world. To them it is an oppressive and melancholy thing, that all nations, one after another, should have fallen to decay; that man's intellect should no where have reared an enduring structure; that civilization should have moved from east to west, and no trace be left of her presence, except perhaps here and there a half-ruined temple leaning on the mound its own decay has heaped about it. Still more melancholy that it should have been so with the Church in those countries. This fact in her history is a scandal to them; just as our Saviour's life was a scandal to the Jews. They did not think there was enough of glory in it. They did not know His glory was in suffering. And the Church's glory is in suffering also. Her career was not to be always one of victory and triumph, as we may see from that vision of St. John in Patmos, when he saw the holy Church pass on from east to west, like the moon, which is her figure and her type, walking among the manifold shadows of the night. Surely they do not remember that the kingdoms and empires of the world with all their systems and governments, that all the intricate and tyrannical state in which we live, is unreal; that it is merely the divinely ordered apparatus of probation, surrounded by which, single and immortal souls are to move, and be disciplined for heaven. The fall of an old empire, which at far distant intervals sounds an alarm throughout the world, possesses no interest for the Church, except so far as it may aid her in de-cyphering the handwriting of prophecy, graven on the walls of the visible world, and furnish another type, perchance a presage, of the final destiny of man.

But, if the world's history weighs oppressively on mere literary historians and worldly-minded men, there are others, to whom the Church's history brings only despondency and cheerlessness. There is indeed much in it

*The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church*, by Frederick William Faber. (1840).

to make us humble ourselves deeply for our sins; yet it is not so dark and so disheartening as some make it out to be; neither may we, as reverent and earnest men, betake ourselves to any of the rude and faithless theories men have dreamed, in order to get rid of our difficulty. Some have so little had the glory of the Church at heart, that they have depressed the primitive Christians to our own level, as well in the gifts, as in the graces of the Spirit: and, for want of being scribes well instructed unto the Kingdom of heaven, have fearfully misinterpreted the history of that Kingdom all along. They deny that Scripture promises any powers to the early Church which are not equally promised to the Church through all time. Surely men forget that many passages of holy Scripture imply that these powers are to depend greatly upon agreement and unity;<sup>16</sup> which unity the ancient Church had, and we have not. Again, the Epistles mention spiritual gifts as being very plentiful in the Churches, especially in Corinth, the most disordered of all the apostolic communities; and the continuance of these miraculous gifts may be traced for some while in well attested histories, till the Church and the world are too much together, and many lights go out or burn dim within the sanctuary. These gifts are not visibly continued to our times, and so far as we can make out, do not show themselves actively working in the separated particular Churches into which the Catholic body has been so wretchedly sundered. Still there are great promises of mighty gifts made in the Gospels to the Church, and those promises stand to these days unrevoked. It may be partly, as these men say, that we have the same gifts with the Church of old. Surely, in the Church Catholic there doth

---

<sup>16</sup> For example, St. John xvii. 20, 21, 22, 23; where our Lord first makes what he is about to say belong to the Church of all ages, as well as the Apostles; and then makes the power of the Church to convert the world—her glory—her perfection—to consist in her having a unity, mysteriously like the circuminsession of the Father and the Son.

*The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church*, by Frederick William Faber. (1840).

still abide this miraculous life, and power, and energy, latent because of separation, enfeebled because of sin, in abeyance because of want of faith. Are we then to render the recovery of the Church's vigour still more improbable, by holding off from and multiplying causes of jealousy with other communities? Are we to separate ourselves more and more from the ancient Church in doctrine, in morals, and in tone of thought and feeling, and make it too a foreign Church, as these men would have us do? Should we, as they do, in profane pride, too much forget our own sins and self-indulgences, our ungodly literatures and fearful separations, and rife heresies, and lightly regarded schisms, and rude handlings of Scripture, and endeavour to render the ancient Church contemptible and hateful in men's eyes, throwing upon it all that is evil in our present state, and arrogating to ourselves all the light that is still left within us? Surely, were that true, our light would be a very Egyptian darkness. It may be well for us, politically speaking, to be an island: but woe be unto us if we be insulated from the continent either of ancient or later Christianity. Again, there are some few who would have their theology thought enlarged and philosophical, when they maintain that Christianity, like science, or literature, or civilization, has been continually improving; which, to be consistent, must mean either that the world of this day is getting beyond the Bible, (which is not at all unlikely,) or that it now understands the Bible better than the disciples, friends, or episcopal successors of the Apostles did (which is most unlikely): or, as this view is modestly worded by one writer,<sup>17</sup> that "popery is a corrected expression of the

---

<sup>17</sup> The author of some tracts called *Ancient Christianity*. His view, so far as we can gather it, from the confused arrangement and ambiguous oracular style of his book, may be stated thus:—That Christianity was never less Christian than when it was ancient (p. 99); that Nicene Christianity was the apostasy predicted by St. Paul (p. 299); that Romanism is an improvement upon it, and has done the best it could



*The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church*, by Frederick William Faber. (1840).

Christianity of the Nicene age.”

It is unnecessary here to enter into a refutation of this view, which makes the Church depend upon the world, instead of the world depending upon the Church. To reply to a line of argument, which at every turn contradicts the Articles, the Homilies, and the Prefaces to the Book of Common Prayer, would almost seem a patronizing of the Church rather than receiving instruction from her. We are only speaking here to humble Churchmen, who may have been disappointed and discomforted by the study of Church history. Humble minds need no caution against such a view of things. It may be let alone, and left to its fate, with that constant esteem for antiquity and steady reference to the primitive centuries, which has been so long and so deeply worn by political trial and distressing controversy into the very heart of the English branch of the Church Catholic. Let as many, then, as feel a deep and anxious interest in those glories of prophecy, which are yet to be fulfilled, labour rather to bring them on, by uniting themselves more and more closely with the ancient Church. Let them be ancient Christians in doctrine, in customs, but, above all, in habits of thought. Let us fix our gaze with such affectionate steadiness upon the austere beauty of their features, that their expression may imprint itself on us, their lineaments transfer themselves upon ours, their eyes be kindled again in our eyes, their voices wake and speak in ours.

For ourselves and our own practice, however, we must remember that God withdraws Himself, and removes

---

with it (pp. 78, 79); that, however, the Church did not cast off the slough of Gnosticism and apostasy till the Reformation (passim); that up to that time oriental Christianity was mainly Sooffeeism and occidental Christianity mainly Brahminism (p. 147, et al.); that the Reformers themselves were too much addicted to “*demonology*,” that the English Church is “*untowardly*” Nicene in her formularies; finally, that we must emancipate ourselves forthwith, the means of doing which the author has not yet published.

*The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church*, by Frederick William Faber. (1840).

the candlestick where there is unfaithfulness. The life of the Church is in the faith of her children, her strength is in their purity, and her hope in their obedience. We must not attempt great things. We must neither dream nor do for ourselves, in thought or deed, it were better not even in our secret imaginations, what we ought rather to leave for God to do for us. We must not talk too much of the evils of the Church, lest perchance we cease to feel for them. We must remember, that from mere mortals we have been by baptism marvellously made into sons of God: and we must live as beseems our heavenly nobility. By discipline and hardness, by constancy and self-denial, by meekness and gentleness, by doing our plain duty just as it comes before us, by prayer and watching, and above all by frequent sacraments, we shall build up the waste places of Jerusalem. The whole Church is bettered by each single man's obedience. This is beyond a doubt. Only we must not look to see our own work. Great works are slow, and the foundation stones of God's works are laid in depth and silence: the feast of the Epiphany teaches us this. The proud Romans and the other nations of the world little thought, when the wise men were at the Lord's feet at Bethlehem, that homage had been paid in their name to a King they did not know, and when they knew Him, despised Him, and made light of His Cross. The first-fruits of the Gentile Church, which we commemorate on the Epiphany, were offered in secrecy and silence. So every little thing we do, every hearty sacrifice for the sake of the Church, no matter how humble, may be a beginning of the fulfilment of some glorious prophecy. Never forget that we are living among miracles. We may not reap the fruits of our labours, any more than we shall enjoy the shade of the forest-trees we plant for our posterity. Our fathers laboured for us in many ways; for instance, in settling the canon of Scripture, and in determining the true faith respecting the most Holy Trinity, and the two Natures in Christ. So they laboured for us; and

*The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church*, by Frederick William Faber. (1840).

so we have entered into their labours. We may be called to different sorts of labour; as for example, to the vindication of the Old Testament from profane criticisms, or to the recovery of ritual communion in the Church Catholic; but whatever it be, if we are holy in it, and self-denying in it, it will endure, and those that come after us will enter into it. Let not this be a discouragement to us; else we may have reason to fear that we are labouring not for Christ's sake, but for our own: not for the Church, but for our own reward, our own reputation, our own greatness; forgetting that love has no reward, but in the happiness of its beloved. If we love the Church, we shall keep the least of her commandments; and by keeping her commandments bring about her glory. We may die before all these things come to pass. But we are not separated from the Church by death. We shall only enter deeper into it. The souls beneath the altar are as earnest for the future as we can be. The spirits are still alive, still alive in the Church, still feeling with the Church, still waiting for her glory. Thus then we must live and work steadily and quietly, just as if nothing was wrong, as if every thing about us was as it ought to be; for in that is the only hope that it ever will become so. We must never suffer ourselves to be unsettled by appearances of evil, or to be ruffled by the power and tyranny of wickedness. We must not always be gazing up into heaven, lest perchance we stumble upon earth; or be looking out fretfully and feverishly for the changeable and unsafe symptoms of the times. Faith is deep, and keeps her own secrets, and is difficult to disturb. "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. As thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper,

*The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church*, by Frederick William Faber. (1840).

either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.”<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Eccl. xi. 4.