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ART. I.

FERRIER'S INSTITUTES OF METAPHYSIC.

Institutes of Metaphysic; or, the Theory of Knowing and Being. By JAMES FERRIER, A. B., Oxon, Professor of Moral Philosophy and Political Economy, St. Andrew's. William Blackwood & Sons. Edinburgh and London, MDCCCLIV. 1 vol. square 8vo.

A DRY study is Metaphysics, and a burden to the patience of the student, even under the most favorable circumstances. Nothing but steadiness of view and extreme perspicuity of exposition can render a metaphysical work endurable; and still higher attractions are required in the rare instances when such treatises become agreeable. A sense of duty—the earnest prosecution of truth through the bewildering fogs of human error and the labyrinths of human sophistry—may tempt us to follow to the end the most perplexed reasonings of those who have been misled in the honest pursuit of knowledge, and may even nerve us to the perusal of the blundering volumes of those whose vocation imposes on them the unpleasant task of dilating on topics which they are inept to understand, or which they have not the genius, so uncommon, to expound. At times, indeed, great originality of thought, or great vigor and rigidity of reasoning, retrieve the obscurity in which new doctrines are involved: less frequently, the novelty of the doctrine is adorned by the lucidity, and

We owe it, then, to truth, we owe it to God and his cause in our world, we owe it to ourselves and our fellow-men, to banish prejudices like these, and contribute what we may to the harmonizing of an antagonism that is as injurious as it is unnatural. What God has joined together, let not man put asunder.

“Let not science and religion be reckoned as opposing citadels, frowning defiance upon each other, and their troops brandishing their armor in hostile attitude. They have too many common foes, if they would but think of it, in ignorance and prejudice, in passion and vice, under all their forms, to admit of their lawfully wasting their strength in a useless warfare with each other. Science has a foundation, and so has religion: let them unite their foundations, and the basis will be broader; and they will be two compartments of one great fabric, reared to the glory of God. Let the one be the outer, and the other the inner court. In the one let all look, and admire, and adore; and in the other, let those who have faith, kneel, and pray, and praise. Let one be the sanctuary where human learning may present its richest incense as an offering to God; and the other, the holiest of all, separated from it by a veil now rent in twain, and in which, on a blood-sprinkled mercy-seat, we pour out the love of a reconciled heart, and hear the oracles of the living God.”*

ART. IV.

THE CHERUBIC SYMBOL.

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THE prevalence of symbolical representation in the Bible is one of its most obvious characteristics. Indeed, it has been made the ground of an objection to it by some cavilling skeptics, as a fact inconsistent with its design as an intelligible revelation of God's will to man. A moment's reflection will show the futility of this objection. It were a sufficient reply to say that the early Orientals, to whom this revelation was first given, were in the habit of using this kind of language; and hence it was necessary that it should be used to them, if the revelation was made in their vernacular. To object to its use would be just as fair as to object to

* M'Cosh. *Divine Government*, p. 451.

the use of the Hebrew or Chaldee language, instead of some modern tongue. But this is not all. It is the only universal language. All nations use it, even now, when the diffusion of letters would seem to make its use less necessary, and even undesirable. Flags, banners, heraldic devices and mottoes, are nothing but symbolical language. The lion in England, the shamrock in Ireland, the thistle in Scotland, the lily in France, and the eagle in America, are all symbols, embodying in visible form some national thought or fact. This idea, whatever it may be, is comprehended at a glance, and takes its place in the national heart more vividly and indelibly by this form of expression than it could in any form of words. Abstract ideas are always comprehended by the many with difficulty, when presented in abstract terms; but when embodied in the concrete form of a suitable symbol, they speak to the mind through the eye, with instantaneous rapidity and effect. Hence, symbolical language is the only universal language. Indeed, most of our abstract terms are taken from some material act or object, and are hence but condensed symbols. A glance at the etymology of such words as *spirit*, *imagination*, *apprehension*, *reflection*, etc., will show that they are only the *exuvie* of former symbols, or metaphors, or some form of figurative language. Hence, to object to the prevalence of such language in the Bible, is to object to its conformity with a universal law of human language, and therefore to its fitness to be a universal revelation.

In looking at the symbols of the Bible, there is no one, judging from its use, that is more significant or important than that of the cherubim. It is presented to us in every dispensation of the Church. In the Patriarchal, we find it planted at the gate of Eden, whence man went forth a weeping exile; and was probably preserved in the teraphim, that long made a part of the household worship. In the Mosaic, we find it in the furniture of the tabernacle and temple, even in the holy of holies, and wrought on tapestries and carvings in every part of the sacred symbolism of the Law. In the Prophetic era, we find it in Isaiah and Ezekiel, presented by the Divine Spirit in the most sublime pictures ever unfolded to the eye of man. Under the Gospel, we find it exhibited to John in Patmos, amid the grand imagery of the Apocalypse. A symbol that thus stretches from Genesis to Revelation, from the gates of Eden below to the streets of Paradise above, must have some special significance, and must have been designed to challenge our inquiries into its meaning. Its remarkable repetition indicates its unusual importance, and our duty to try and discover what it signifies. It is this task that we propose now to undertake.

We need scarcely remark that the cherubim is a symbol, and not a real

existence. It is an ideal creature, combining the parts of different creatures in combination, for the purpose of presenting symbolically some great truths. It was not invariably the same, as we shall afterwards see. Perhaps the main idea of the figure was that of a winged man, or men, between whose outstretched pinions the Shekinah appeared, and which, in the visions of Ezekiel and John, had the additions of other figures, to make the symbolization more complete. The explorations recently made in Egypt and Nineveh, show how common such figures were among the ancients, and hence how significant they must have been. What, then, is the meaning of this winged man, that in some cases appears with the adjuncts of the faces of a lion, an ox, and an eagle? What truths was it designed to symbolize, and what communications, therefore, was it intended to make to us? On the answer to these questions depends the interpretation of a number of very important passages of Scripture. It is, then, worth while to give some pains to obtain a correct answer. To do this, we must examine the answers that have been given, and test their accuracy.

Among the ancients, there does not seem to have been uniformity of opinion on this subject. Josephus declares that their forms were unknown. Philo supposed that the two cherubim of Eden signified the two hemispheres. Irenæus regarded the four-faced cherubim of Ezekiel as emblems of the four elements, the four quarters of the globe, the four Gospels, the four universal covenants, etc. Tertullian supposed that the fiery sword signified the torrid zone. Justin Martyr considered the cherubim of Ezekiel as emblematic of Nebuchadnezzar in his banishment, when he ate grass like an ox, had hair long like a lion's mane, and nails like an eagle's claws. Athanasius thought that they represented the visible heavens. These puerile conceits of course require no refutation, and only serve to show of how much value "the consent of the Fathers" is, in the interpretation of Scripture.

Among the moderns, there have been several distinct opinions on this subject, each of which has found able supporters.

The first is that which regards this symbol as emblematic of *the Divine nature*. The main advocates of this opinion are found among the Hutchinsonians, or followers of the celebrated John Hutchinson. Believing as they did that the mystery of the Trinity is conveyed to us by sensible images, and that the whole framework of creation was constructed to express this great doctrine, it is not to be wondered at that they found it in the cherubim. They regarded the union of the lion with the man as symbolizing the Incarnation; and the other parts of the figure as representing the persons of the Trinity, in covenant to redeem man. This opinion

found able supporters in Parkhurst, the lexicographer, Bishop Horne, Mr. Romaine, and others eminent for piety and learning. Grotius, Bochart, Rosenmüller, and De Wette also favor the opinion that it symbolizes the Divine nature.

The objections to this opinion are conclusive. Moses was expressly forbidden to make any image symbolizing the Deity, since it would so inevitably have led to idolatry. The Second Commandment emphatically forbids it. Hence, the cherubim could not have been such an image, or it would have violated these injunctions. The shekinah was the only symbol of the Divine presence, and that is always spoken of as distinct from the cherubim. It inhabited the cherubim; and it is inconceivable that the two symbols, thus related, should mean the same thing. Hence, this opinion is now generally abandoned, except in a modified form.

The second opinion, and that which has received the ablest support, is, that it symbolized angelic nature. This has been maintained by eminent divines, such as Witsius, Owen, Doddridge, Mant, Patrick, Wesley, Watson, Hofman, Delitzsch, Kurtz, and others. It is a plausible opinion, but liable to insuperable objections also. It is utterly irreconcilable with the appearance of the symbol in Revelation v. 9, where they are represented as saying, "Thou *hast redeemed us* to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." This text is decisive. Equally so is Ezekiel i. 5: "They had the likeness of a man;" intimating, thus, that they symbolize something human, and not angelic. It is also an objection to this theory that it would be a violation of the Second Commandment, equally with the first, as it would be an image of something in "the heavens above." It is a further objection, that the two are never united in Scripture, nor any clear intimation given of their angelic reference. It would have been passing strange if a symbol of angelic nature had been placed in the tabernacle, whilst none of human nature, for which it was erected, had been admitted. The utter failure of this theory to bring out the teachings of the symbol, will appear as we examine the passages where it is presented.

The most plausible ground on which it rests is 1 Peter i. 12: "Which things the angels desire to look into." It is assumed that the apostle here alluded to the position of the cherubim in the ark. This is, however, mere assumption, and too narrow a ground on which to base a theory of this symbol. We regard this form of expression as wholly undesigned, in reference to the cherubim, and hence, as not intended to furnish any explanation of the meaning of the symbol.

Another view regards it as symbolizing *creature life*. Some affirm that the things symbolized are the elements, or the great physical powers by

which God conducts the operations of nature. Hengstenberg, in his Commentary on the Apocalypse, alleges that "they are the representation of living beings, of all that is living on the earth." In his Egypt and the Books of Moses, he—improperly, as we think—admits an Egyptian origin of the cherubim, forgetting that they were stationed at Eden, and hence older than Egypt itself. He supposes them to be derived from the Egyptian sphinx, and says that "the difference would perhaps consist only in this, that, in the cherubim, the Divine properties were only indirectly symbolized, so far as they came into view in the works of creation; whilst, in the Sphinx, directly—a difference which cannot be considered important." This view of the origin of the symbol is utterly at variance with the Book of Genesis, which represents it as known to Adam and Eve, and hence older than any monument on the Nile.

Bahr, a distinguished German writer, who has written very ably on this subject, presents a similar view. He remarks that this symbol "is such a being as, standing on the highest grade of created existence, and containing in itself the most perfect created life, is the best manifestation of God and the Divine life. It is a representation of creation in its highest grade—an ideal creature. The vital powers communicated to the most elevated existences in the visible creation are collected and individualized in it." Both these views, and especially the latter, approximate the truth very nearly. They are defective mainly in omitting the great idea of a redeemed creation, that we shall find to be the striking feature in the teaching of this symbol.

It is useless to enumerate further opinions, such as that of Michaelis, that they were like the thunder-horses of Greek mythology; Wordsworth, in his recent work on the Apocalypse, that they symbolized the four Gospels; Stuart, that it is the attributes of God; Barnes, that it is the government of God; Mede, the Church on earth; Daubuz, the ministry on earth; Vitranga, the most eminent of the ministry in all ages; and Hammond, four apostles, symbols of the saints who are to attend the Almighty as assessors in judgment! Some of these are very near the truth, whilst others are as far as they can readily be from any thing like it.

The true view, as we regard it, is taught in the opinion that the symbol represents the redeemed and glorified creature, man, in his last and highest form of life, the Church of the living God, the ransomed from every tongue and nation. This opinion is maintained by Pyle, Hales, Faber, in his *Three Dispensations and Horæ Mosaicæ*; Fairbairn, in his *Typology and Ezekiel*; G. Smith, in his little work on the Cherubim; Holden, in his *Dissertations on the Fall*; D. Macdonald, in his *Creation and the Fall*; Professor Bush, in lectures delivered some years ago, which we have never

seen in print; and other writers of eminence. This we believe to be the true view of this symbol, and shall now endeavor to establish it by an examination of the nature of the symbol, and the passages in which it occurs.

It is useless to discuss the etymology of the word cherub, as its uncertainty prevents us from making any use of it. Parkhurst, Newcome, and Kirby each gives different etymologies. Rosenmüller follows Newcome, and derives it from a word meaning to plough. Gesenius gives no decided opinion of his own. Eichorn and Fürst derive it from a root signifying to seize, and consider it the same with the griffins of the Persians and Greeks, and the sphinxes of the Egyptians, although Fürst carefully affirms that these figures were imitations of the cherubim, and not the cherubim copied from them. Nothing satisfactory can therefore be obtained from the etymology of the word.

We turn, then, to the passages where the word is found. In looking at them, we see an obvious development of the symbol, from its uncertain form at Eden, to the definite figures in the ark, with human faces and wings; then the perfect form of the symbol, as we find it in Ezekiel and the Apocalypse, where there are four faces and a varying number of wings. It is, then, obviously in its perfectly developed form that we are to study it, and learn its meaning.

The first fact that is apparent from Ezekiel and John is, that it symbolized *life* in some form. Ezekiel (i. 5-13, etc.) calls them "the living creatures." The LXX. translate this word always by ζῶα. This is the name given to the figures by John, (Rev. iv. 6-8.) In the Apocalypse this word is most unfortunately rendered "beasts," thus concealing the idea most unhappily. Θηρίον is the word for "beast," and is used repeatedly in the Apocalypse: ζῶον means a living creature, from ζωή, life. Hence, the grand characteristic of these figures, as evinced by their names, was, that they symbolized *life* in some form.

But what kind of life? Not Divine, or angelic, as already stated, but human life. The human form is the predominant one in the figure, showing that it was some form of human life that was symbolized. This is further apparent from Ezekiel i. 5, where it is expressly asserted that "they had the likeness of a man." But is it human life as a whole? Is it man as he now is? This cannot be, as appears from the symbol itself, where the qualities of other creatures are appended to the human form, showing that it represents man as he *ought* to be, man as he *shall* be, when God's purposes are fulfilled. This appears with unanswerable clearness from the final form of the symbol in the Apocalypse, where they are connected with the throne in the midst of which is the "Lamb slain,"

(Rev. v. 6,) and where they expressly say of themselves that they are *the redeemed* out of every kindred, tongue, and nation. Rev. v. 8, 9. These passages are, therefore, decisive as to the symbol, that it was designed to represent man, not as he is now on earth, blind, weak, wilful, and grovelling, but man as he shall be hereafter in heaven, redeemed, transformed, and glorified; the general assembly and Church of the first-born; the bride, the Lamb's wife, bought and saved by his blood. Such is the meaning of the symbol.

An examination of the component parts of the symbol will show how strikingly and beautifully it was adapted to this design. It was composed of parts of the ox, the lion, and the eagle, attached to the winged form of a man. The meaning of this combination is embodied in the old Jewish proverb, which says, "Four are the highest in the world: the lion among wild beasts, the ox among tame cattle, the eagle among birds, man among all; but God is supreme over all." This adage conveys what was probably the prevalent opinion among the Jews of the meaning of this symbol, at a time when inspired interpreters of it were yet living. It selected the highest forms of created life, and combined them in an ideal creature, to symbolize what man ought to be, and would be, when the great plan of redemption was completed. An examination of the several parts of the symbol will show how wisely they were selected.

The *ox*, in modern times, is so associated with sluggishness and stolidity, that the force of the symbol is obscured to us. But its constant use in ancient husbandry made it to early nations the representative of productive, and so of creative power. Hence it was the most extensive symbol of Deity. The Egyptian Apis, the symbol of Osiris, the winged oxen of Nineveh and Babylon, and the sacred animals of Persia and Greece, all show how widely this idea was diffused. The horse was associated with war; the ox with peace, plenty, and prosperity. Hence the Israelites in the desert, and even in the Holy Land, worshipped God under this similitude. As applied in the symbol to describe redeemed human nature, it is the type of *patient, productive toil, and untiring, un murmuring obedience to God.*

How far man is from this characteristic of his nature, is but too obvious. His toil is unproductive—a hewing out of broken cisterns, a sowing of the wind, a laboring in the fire for very naught. His spirit is impatient of all restraint, soon weary of God's service, disposed to murmur at God's appointments, and esteeming the Christian life the drudgery of a hard master. Hence, this symbol is precisely the lesson that he needs, and presents the attributes that he lacks. In its patient, productive toil, and untiring, un murmuring obedience to God, it presents that strong and

beautiful subordination of all the powers to God, that is the foundation of all true nobleness, and the result as well as source of that sublime petition that is the culmination of all piety: "Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven." Then, as the real greatness of the mountain is not in its waving forests and its leaping streams, but in the mighty mass of unmoving granite that sustains all these, so the greatest attribute of man is not in the lion-like or eagle-wise qualities that adorn and complete his nature, but in that deep, un murmuring submission of his soul to the will of God, in doing and suffering, that is symbolized by the obedient and productive ox.

The *lion* is the universal symbol of *undaunted courage and kingly might*. A glance at any Concordance will show how frequently it is so used in Scripture; whilst a similar glance at the banners and devices of all nations will evince the same fact. Illustration of this point is needless.

In its application here, it is also strikingly significant. Man, by nature, in spiritual things is both a weakling and a coward. He is unable to serve God as the law of God requires, and he is afraid to do what he is able to do. He is afraid of the world's dread laugh, if he is suspected of thinking about his soul. This cowardice is one of the most prevalent obstacles in the way of every sinner. And even after a new heart is given him, he is often afraid to follow Christ fully, because fashion or custom might make him singular and conspicuous. Hence, the Christian needs the heart of a lion, not merely to face the martyrdom of the stake and gibbet, but also the daily martyrdom of the shop, the street, the parlor, the prayer-meeting, and the Sunday-school, where men often find it harder to testify for Christ, than in circumstances of more menacing danger. To the patient will and the obedient heart, he must also add that lion-like courage that will lead him to fear nothing but sin, and follow none but Christ, and that kingly strength of soul that will make him as one who is hereafter to be a king as well as a priest unto God.

The *eagle* is the king of birds, as the lion is of beasts. The Concordance, and the list of banners, ensigns, and devices, will present the same facts about the eagle that they do about the lion, as a prevalent symbol. The peculiarities of the eagle are in his eye and his pinion, and it therefore represents *extent of vision and loftiness of flight*.

Here, again, man as he *is* contrasts painfully with man as he *ought to be*. As he is, he is blind and grovelling—either a mole burrowing in the earth, or a moth circling round the candle, and not an eagle soaring to the sun. He sees not the glorious light of heaven; he cares not to ascend toward its source. But when the grace of God is granted to him, his eyes

are opened, and he begins to "mount on wings like an eagle." He begins to build the nestling-place of his treasure, not below, but above; not on the spot nearest earth, but the spot nearest heaven; not in the place of shadows and floods, but the place that is above the flood-mark of all human vicissitude, and that catches the earliest and the latest ray of the light from heaven, whilst it commands the widest and truest view of the things on earth. Hence, to the patient toil and unceasing obedience of the one symbol, and the strength and courage of the other, the Christian must add the clear vision, the undazzled gaze, the lofty aspirings, and the large aims of the third, in order that he may approximate on earth to what he shall be hereafter in heaven.

Man, the head of the earthly creation, and the main figure in the symbol, to which all the others were attached, is the representation of *intelligence, moral agency, and immortality*; the being who was created in the image of God, and who is to be restored to that image, when he shall be made "like to him, for he shall see him as he is."

This ideal creature, therefore, with its typical forms of created life, each the highest of its kind, represented the redeemed among men; the same aggregate that is elsewhere called the bride, the Lamb's wife, the body of which Christ is the head, the Church invisible, as it shall at last stand before the throne in glory. This Church, it is thus taught us, shall have all that is best and highest in created life—the productive strength, the submissive will, the fearless courage, the eagle's gaze, and the eagle's pinion; all culminating in the spirits of the just made perfect in the city of our God in heaven.

We are now prepared to take our theory of this symbol, thus shown to be so striking and consistent, and apply it to the passages in which it is found, and thus test its accuracy. However beautiful and ingenious a theory may be, if it bear not this test, it must be unhesitatingly rejected.

The first passage in which we meet the cherubic symbol is Genesis iii. 24:

"So he drove out the man; and he placed to the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

This text has been singularly misunderstood, in consequence of the misapprehension of the meaning of this symbol. It has generally been supposed to mean that God planted angels at the gate of Eden, to guard it, and drive away with a flaming sword all intruders who would attempt to break their way to the tree of life. Thus understood, it is not to be wondered that skepticism has urged it as a great objection to the literal truth of the Book of Genesis, and asked, Why were angels needed to guard

this place? and why was a flaming sword added to them, as if they were insufficient? and why but one sword to a cohort of angels? These questions have driven such critics as Grotius, Le Clerc, and Rosenmüller, to the absurdity of supposing that the story had its rise in flames that were fed with the naphtha that abounds in the bituminous plains of Mesopotamia! Herder gravely invents a high mountain, covered with wild beasts and volcanic fires, as the origin of this story! whilst some of the Fathers, Theodore of Heraclea, Procopius, and Theodoret, are joined by Dr. Geddes and Mr. Simpson in absurd suppositions of aerial forms, accompanied with lightning! Much of this irreverent nonsense would have been saved by simply looking at the original, and taking the words in their usual sense.

It is not said that angels were placed there, but "*the cherubim.*" The article is unfortunately left out in our version, thus obscuring the sense. In the Hebrew it is *ha-cherubim*, "*the cherubim.*" It is not said that they were put there to guard the gate of Eden, but "to keep the way to the tree of life." Now, although the English word *keep* has the sense of guarding, it has also the more usual sense of preserving; and this is the sense of the Hebrew word here used, (*shamar.*) It is precisely the same word that is used in Genesis ii. 15: "The Lord God took the man, and put him in the garden of Eden, to dress it and to *keep* it;" not, of course, to guard it, but to preserve it in its beauty by dressing it. It is also the word used in the Fourth Commandment: "*Keep* holy the Sabbath." Hence it is purely a gloss on the passage to say that they were placed at the gate of Eden to guard it. The plain assertion of the text is, that Adam, having lost his right to occupy and keep the garden, the cherubim were put in his place to occupy and preserve the way to the tree of life. In doing this, they guarded it in one sense; but the main idea is not that of defending, but that of preserving; just as Adam was to preserve the garden before.

The next misapprehension is in the word "*yashchen,*" rendered "placed." It is the Hiphil form of the verb *shakan*, from which the noun *shekinah* is derived, and the word that is used to express God's descent and resting upon the tabernacle, (Num. ix. 17; x. 12, etc.,) his abiding on Sinai, (Exod. xxiv. 16,) and the various occasions in which the *shekinah* is said to have appeared as the symbol of God's presence. See Exod. xxv. 8; xxix. 45: Num. v. 3: Ezra vi. 12; and many other passages. Why, then, should a different meaning be given to it here? If it described his dwelling in the visible symbol of the *shekinah* between the cherubim in the temple, as it repeatedly does, (Deut. xii. 11; xiv. 23, etc.,) why should it not so be rendered here? Hence, the literal and obvious rendering of the clause would be, "He drove out the man, and

he inhabited (*shekinized*, inhabited by the shekinah, or fiery symbol, the pillar of fire) the cherubim, at the east of the garden." Hence we have the simple statement that the same thing that was afterwards done at the ark, was here done at the gate of Eden. God, in the visible symbol of fire, inhabited the cherubim. This fact at once explains the phrase, "a flaming sword which turned every way." The Hebrew "*lahat hahereb hamith haphkeheth*," is, literally, "a flame, a destroyer, turning in upon itself;" *i. e.*, a destroying, (or, if the secondary sense of sword is preferred,) a sword-like flame, rolling or turning in upon itself." It is, therefore, exactly analogous to the phrase in Ezekiel i. 4, describing this fire as "a fire unfolding itself." It expresses very vividly the appearance of a flame, rolling and flickering in sword-like flashings, and curling in upon itself, as the Hithpael participle naturally means.

We have now a clear notion of this transaction. When man was removed from that Eden that was to him and to us the type of the Paradise above, God placed at the gate of the garden this symbol, and the shekinah, or fiery cloud, descended and remained there, and occupied the way to the tree of life. It is precisely the state of facts that afterwards reappear in the tabernacle and ark. This explains the reason why no description was given by Moses of the cherubim. It was a symbol known from the earliest times.

But what was its design and meaning? Its meaning is not obscure. Standing, as it did, the type of redeemed man, it was a symbolical utterance of the gospel. It announced the fact that, though fallen man was now banished from Paradise, redeemed man should hereafter be admitted to it again, more perfect and glorious than he was before. The unfolding flame proclaimed the fact that "our God is a consuming fire," and that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. The fact that the ideal man occupied the place assigned before to the actual man, was a proclamation of the fact that man had fallen, and hence was a preaching of sin. The fact that it kept *the way* to the tree of life, showed that there was a way, a new and living way, by which the sentence of death might be revoked, and man be readmitted to the life that should be everlasting. This "way of life," there first exhibited, has since reappeared in all the teachings of Scripture: such as that exquisite passage in Isaiah xxxv. 8-10, "An highway shall be there, and a way," etc., and is fully realized in the teachings of Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life." In the fact that the shekinah indwelt the cherubim, there was not obscurely symbolized the indwelling of the Godhead bodily, that afterwards appeared when the Word became flesh. In the fact that the highest forms of creature life were blended with man, if such was the case in this form of the symbol,

there was presented the fact that man should hereafter reach a loftier form of character than he ever did before, and be the head of the creation again; when the lion should eat straw like the ox, and the millennial glory of the future eclipse the Eden glory of the past. Hence the symbol was a most striking exhibition of the gospel, and presented the doctrines of the fall, the nature of sin, as something that separated from God and cut off from eternal life; the holiness of God, as the glory of heaven and the requisite of an immortality of bliss; and the fact that this condition was not hopeless, but that man should be restored to a more than paradisiacal life, through an incarnation, a dwelling of the Godhead bodily in the form of sinful man.

Nor were these the only doctrines: the great doctrine of an atoning sacrifice was connected with this symbol. We read of "a presence of the Lord," from which Cain went out, (Gen. iv. 16,) and his banishment from which he deprecated as a great calamity, (ver. 14.) What was this? Plainly, the cherubim and shekinah, where they brought their offerings, and where the consuming of Abel's sacrifice by the Divine fire was the token of acceptance. Hence it is obvious that just as the Israelites came to sacrifice and worship at the shekinah and cherubim of the tabernacle, so the patriarchs came to worship before this sublime symbol; and from it Cain, for his sin, was banished to the land of Nod. Here, then, was the completion of the gospel in Genesis, as taught by this symbol; as it spoke of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, whose blood speaks better things than that of Abel.

And this explains the origin of idolatry. The scattered families of man carried with them the memory of the cherubim, and made teraphim—household images—in imitation of them. And as these families expanded to nations, we have the winged figures of Egypt, Nineveh, Babylon, Persia, and Greece, and the various idolatries wherein they changed the glory of God into an image like to corruptible man, etc. Rom. i. 23.

This view of this passage is no novelty; it is really the oldest view that is on record. The Jerusalem Targum renders it thus: "And he thrust out the man, and caused the glory of his presence to dwell of old between the two cherubim." The Targum of Jonathan Ben Uziel renders it, "And he drove out the man, from which time he caused the glory of his presence to dwell of old between the two cherubim." Hence we are simply reaffirming the most ancient explanation of this passage—an explanation doubtless taken from inspired men—in thus contending for the view presented above. We see, therefore, that in this case our explanation of the symbol is most strikingly supported by the cherubim at Eden.

The next passage in which we meet this symbol is Exodus xxv. 18-20:

“And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.” “And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony.” (Verse 22.)

There are two significant facts here in the position of the cherubim: (1,) that they are in the Holy of Holies; and (2,) that they rest on the mercy-seat.

The Holy of Holies, Paul teaches us, (Heb. ix. 24,) was a type of heaven, the holy place not made with hands. Within that sacred chamber was the ark and its furniture, each part of which symbolized some truth. There also was the shekinah, the fiery symbol of God's presence. This symbol hung between the outstretched wings of the cherubim. Here, then, we have the symbol of a present God abiding within the adoring embrace of the symbol of redeemed man. The truths thus taught are very obvious. They are, that man shall be hereafter admitted to a near and adoring access to God; or, as the Apocalypse beautifully declares it, (xxi. 3, 4,) “The tabernacle of God shall be with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;” thus declaring that some of the brightest displays of Divine glory shall be through the redemption of the human race. This was partially forshadowed in the cherubim of Paradise, but more clearly in those of the ark.

The second fact—their resting on the mercy-seat—proclaims the way by which man shall have this access to God. The mercy-seat was the covering of the ark, in which were the stony tables of the law. This mercy-seat was sprinkled yearly with the blood of atonement, by the high-priest. That this symbolized the atonement made by Christ for a broken law, is too plain, from the Epistle to the Hebrews, to need any argument. The first tables of the law were broken, like the first covenant with Adam; but these broken tables were replaced by new and perfect ones—as Christ magnified the law, and restored it to more than its original glory. But this was done by an atonement, a *caporeth*, a covering of the law with his sprinkled blood. And as that covering of the ark was as long and broad as the tables that they covered, the perfect fulfilment of that law by the

work of Christ is thus indicated. Now, the significant fact in the position of the cherubim is, that they rested not on the tables of the law, but on the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat; and whilst their wings enclosed the shekinah, their gaze was directed always to the mercy-seat. Here, then, we have the symbol of ransomed man, resting and gazing on the symbol of a ransoming atonement. Could there be a more striking representation of the gospel? We are taught that to reach heaven and dwell there with God, we must rest not on the law, perfect and glorious though it be, but on the atonement of Christ, the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel; and that our life must be a life of faith, a constant "looking unto Jesus," a gazing of the soul in rapt and adoring love upon the finished work of the Redeemer. Hence in the cherubim of the ark we find a most striking confirmation of the truth of our position, that the symbol represents redeemed man, and not angels or the Divine nature.

There are several passages in the Psalms where the word cherubim is used, as Ps. xviii. 10; lxxx. 1; xcix. 1, 2: 2 Sam. xxii. 11, etc., which require no special notice, as they present no special difficulty, being merely allusions to the tabernacle, and explained by the same principles of interpretation. If our limits allowed, we could also show the probability that the teraphim of Rachel, Micah, Michal, etc., were imitations of the cherubim. The case of Michal shows that they were of human form, since they were mistaken, under the network of goats'-hair, for David; and Hosea (iii. 4) so connects them with worship as to favor this opinion. But we cannot enter at large on this point.

The seraphim of Isaiah vi. 2-6 are, without any reasonable doubt, the cherubim, under another name. They have the same general appearance, occupy the same position, and perform essentially the same acts with the cherubim of Ezekiel and John. They are called seraphim, (*burning ones*,) from their glittering appearance, reflecting as they did the flame of the shekinah. Their act, in touching the prophet's lips with a live coal, was a symbol of the ministry of the saints, and the relation of the Church to the prophetic gift. This burning appearance of the symbol, and the act of touching the lips with a burning coal, were representations of the necessity of holiness in those who would serve God; a lesson that Isaiah felt most vividly, as appears from his words. But we cannot enlarge on this passage.

We turn to the important passage in Ezekiel, (i. 4-28,) the length of which compels us to refer to it without transcribing it in full. We are fully aware of the difficulty of this passage of Scripture, but apprehend that a good deal of that difficulty has arisen from a want of the true view

of the cherubic symbol. We hope to present such an explanation of it as shall commend itself to the reader by its truthfulness and simplicity.

The prophet was about to enter upon his mission, and that mission was to be one of terrible rebuke and warning. Before entering on it, he had a vision presented to him, as had Isaiah and John, intended as an introduction to his prophecy, and a picture of its leading characteristics. This was granted him on the banks of the Chebar, or Chaboras, a river that enters the Euphrates near the ancient Carchemish, or Circesium, about two hundred miles above Babylon. As he looked northward, he saw in the distance a rolling, whirling flame, that presented nothing but a circling blaze, without any distinct figures or form. As it came nearer, he saw the cherubim, (as he expressly calls the living creatures in chapter x. 20,) showing their prominence as component parts of the vision. They were four in number, having each four faces and four wings, and glittering like burnished brass. Each figure had a man's hand and a calf's foot. They touched each other with their wings, and moved as the Spirit directed them, with the rapidity of lightning. As they came still nearer, he saw that they were connected with a system of wheels, in which there was a wheel within a wheel; *i. e.*, instead of each wheel being a single circle, that could only move in one direction, it was composed of two circles, at right angles, like the equatorial and polar circles of a globe, so that the wheel could move in any direction. The rings or felloes of the wheels were very high and dreadful, being full of eyes. The wheels were so connected with the cherubim that they moved and rested with them; indeed, were virtually a part of them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. Above the cherubim was a firmament, or canopy, glittering like crystal, and terrible in its intense glare. Above the firmament was a throne, of a sapphire color, the clear blue of the sky, and upon that throne the form of a man, and around that throne an encircling rainbow. Such was the vision. What did it mean?

The first fact that strikes us is, that it is the imagery of the Holy of Holies, with some additions, furnished with means of locomotion, as if it were about to depart from its former habitation and traverse the earth. This main fact is an obvious warning that the thing symbolized by that imagery was about to depart from those who had hitherto enjoyed it. In other words, God threatens to withdraw from Israel, as an apostate Church, and remove his covenant privileges and workings to others. This is the simple idea of the vision, and it is therefore an epitome of all the prophecies of Ezekiel, and exactly fitted to introduce them. Let us now look at the vision in detail, that we may see its coherence with this view, and the teaching of its different parts.

We begin with the upper portion of it. Here we see a throne, encircled by a rainbow, and occupied by a human form. Surely this is very clear, especially in the light of the Apocalypse. The rainbow crowning the sapphire throne is the token of peace from the eternal God—the assurance that the storm is passed away, the wrath of God appeased, and the sky clear and cloudless. That has been done by raising humanity to a mysterious union with Divinity, and placing it upon the throne of universal dominion; so that at the name of Jesus shall every knee bow, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. The form is that of a man, and not of a lamb slain, as in the Apocalypse; because the sacrifice had not yet been actually made. Hence we have in this upper portion of the vision the truths symbolized that God would be reconciled and his wrath appeased by the Incarnate Son, who would exalt humanity in his mysterious Person to the throne of universal dominion; in a word, the incarnation, atonement, and kingly sovereignty of Christ. Here again is the glorious gospel of the blessed God.

When we come lower in the picture, we find the cherubim, the symbol of redeemed man, and see that this is the central figure; showing that it is in the designs of God concerning the Church that we are to find the main idea of the vision. This symbol is connected with a system of wheels, so constructed that they move with ease in all directions, laterally as well as forwards or backwards. There are four cherubim, corresponding with the four quarters of the globe, to symbolize the fact that the redeemed shall be gathered from every kindred and nation. There are four wheels, to indicate that the privileges connected with the dispensation of the covenant of grace were to be taken away from the Jewish people: "The kingdom of God was taken away from them, and given to a more fruit-bearing people." The number four corresponds likewise with the number of the cherubim. They are studded with eyes, to symbolize the intelligence and wisdom that were in all God's movements regarding his Church; and there gathers around it all a glare of fire, to declare the wrath of God that was thus threatened against them for their sins. The fact that the wheels obeyed the impulse of the cherubim, presented the fact that the various changes of history were all for the advancement of the plan of redemption. Hence we have here at once a threatening and a promise: a threatening in the indication of fiery wrath against Israel for sin, and the consequent removal of the theocracy, or "kingdom of God," from them; and a promise, in the assurance that God's purposes as to the Church shall be accomplished, and accomplished in infinite wisdom. The vision is, therefore, a most striking epitome of the prophecy of Ezekiel, which repeats these warnings and promises in a variety of forms, and con-

cludes with a glorious vision of the future. Hence we find this passage to support our view of the symbol with great force.

We now turn to the last appearance of the cherubim, in the living creatures of the Apocalypse, Rev. iv. 6; v. 6, 8–11. We regret that we cannot enlarge on the peculiarities of this final presentation of the symbol; for they embody some of its richest teachings. That these ζῶα are identical with the living creatures of Ezekiel, is undeniable. They have the same composite forms of animal life; the same position near the throne; the same studding of eyes; the same crystal firmament and throne encircled with a rainbow; and are called by the same name, living creatures, and by the very word used in the LXX. in Ezekiel. Hence their identity is undeniable. There are some significant differences. There is no flaming sword keeping the way to the tree of life, for then that tree has been reached, and the redeemed all gathered to a blissful immortality. There is no stony table of the law, or blood-sprinkled mercy-seat; for the law of love reigns supreme, and faith has given place to sight. There are no terrible wheels, for the roll of human history and the changes of the militant Church have ceased. The kingdom has come. There is not a human form, but a Lamb slain in the midst of the throne; for Calvary and the cross have been revealed to men. The crystal firmament has become a sea of glass mingled with fire, to show the mingled knowledge and holiness that then shall pervade the heavenly state of the redeemed.

Here we learn, with unanswerable certainty, that the cherubim symbolize the redeemed; for we learn it from themselves, (chap. v. 9,) where they say, "Thou hast *redeemed* us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people." This also explains the otherwise difficult fact, that the cherubim are said (chap. iv. 6) to be "in the midst of the throne." It is to declare the great fact that the nature symbolized by them is identical with that borne by the Lamb—the nature of man. The twenty-four elders are not located there, for they symbolize the official character of the redeemed, as kings and priests unto God; being the combined number of the tribes of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New. This is an independent proof of the correctness of our view. Hence we have here the same teachings of the incarnation, the atonement, and the necessity of holiness, that we have seen in former cases, combined with rich promises of knowledge, purity, and power, and admission to a most near and wonderful relation to God. Indeed, the very name, "living creatures," is a rich promise; a promise that then there shall be an endless life, that there shall be no more death, and hence no more sorrow and no more sin.

We have thus glanced at the passages in which this wondrous symbol appears. We find it in each great dispensation—the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, the Prophetical, and the Christian. We find it everywhere teaching the same great truths of sin and salvation, incarnation, and atonement by sacrifice, and holiness as needful to an admission to the presence of God. We find each appearance of it becoming clearer, until at last, in the song of Moses and the Lamb, it is announced as the symbol of the redeemed. Hence it is a glorious promise, in hieroglyphic, of LIFE; eternal life to a race dead in sin, and life through a suffering Saviour; and a promise that when the mystery of God is finished, then man shall be raised to a more than Eden glory, and shall find a tree of life, beside which there shall be no tree of knowledge, but a river of life everlasting.

ART. V.

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.

[From the Studien und Kritiken.]

By JOHN D. KELLEY, Petersburg, Virginia.

1. *Verhandlung over de echtheid der Johanneische schriften.* By A. NIERMEYER.
2. *Die Echtheit des Evangeliums nach Johannes.* By Dr. C. K. MAYER.
3. *Die Echtheit des Johanneischen Evangeliums nach den äussern Zeugnissen.* By H. F. TH. SCHNEIDER.

THE controversy about the Gospel of St. John is one of the most interesting in critical theology, not only among the Germans and within the sphere of the evangelical Churches, but also with the Catholics, of which the second work in our list is a proof, being the production of an eminent Catholic divine. So much depends upon the accurate settlement of this question in reference to critical, historical, and dogmatic points, that it is scarcely possible to over-estimate its importance. Indeed, the entire conception of Christianity has to be modified, if this Gospel is not authentic! Hence, a discussion like the present is not a mere play of historical learning or critical skill, interesting only to the scholar or the scholastic divine: no, its results will be an essential departure from some of the