

**THE OLD PATHS: A TREATISE
ON SANCTIFICATION.
SCRIPTURE THE ONLY
AUTHORITY**

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The old paths: a treatise on sanctification. Scripture the only authority by Thomas Mitchell

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BY REV. THOMAS MITCHELL.

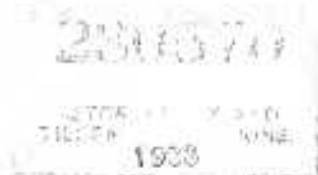
"THUS SAITH THE LORD, STAND YE IN THE WAYS, AND SEE, AND ASK FOR THE
OLD PATHS: WHEREIN IS THE GOOD WAY, AND WALK THEREIN, AND
YE SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOUL.—*Jer. vi, 16.*"

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By REV. THOMAS MITCHELL,

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District of New York.

INTRODUCTION.

TRUTH has nothing to lose, but everything to gain, by impartial investigation. It was once asked, "What is truth?" but Pilate went out before the great master had an opportunity of answering; had he waited to hear this, it would have been, "Thy word (God's) is truth." This comprehends a perfect system of the history of two worlds—the present and the eternal—given in advance by the inspirer of the sacred Scriptures, and of course nothing but the consummate development, or finishing up of the present world, and the establishment of the eternal, can fully unfold the whole of its grand design. From this consideration it follows that as history fills up its written destiny, its divine authenticity not only becomes a matter of demonstration, but its outlines and details correspondingly become better understood. This revelation contemplates the present world

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and its inhabitants as merely temporary; the world a transitory abode, with resources adapted to sustain the transitory race, from among whom the great creator has been from the very beginning, and still is interested in it only for the purpose of selecting subjects whose nature in time becomes harmonized by adherence to the principles it proposes, with the rectitude and holiness of Divine Government. To ascertain precisely the provisions and requisitions adapted to remould human nature for this purpose, is the great lesson imposed upon the race theoretically and experimentally to learn.

That man should have been eighteen hundred years since the instructions were finished indispensable to its conception and made so poor progress, presents a sad reflection, not upon its obscurity nor upon the capacity to comprehend, but has its origin in the heart, and philosophically can be traced to no other cause than the repugnance of the human spirit to submit to its authority.

Whatever other causes were conducive to the rejection of Jesus, by the Jews, the real one had its origin in the purity of his character

and precepts. Were his propositions calculated to pamper human pride and sentiment—conceding man's moral ability to cultivate and develop his own nature for the intimate society of God, in the eternal world, had he even been required to make sacrifices of everything he possessed, even self-immolation, as the condition of entrance therein—think ye not heaven, long ere this, world have been crowded with a population? Could he even have been permitted to enter there on condition of adherence to his own opinions, formed as they must have been in harmony with his feelings, instinctive with pride, and by his own unassisted assiduity and not required to relinquish them when there was conflict with those of Jesus, think ye heaven's gates would not have been thronged, as they never had been, with saintly travelers? Or had this requirement been so modified that the opinions of other men might have been adopted as the standard of those who came after, and they not required to cut them off, though dear as right arms, or pluck them out, though dear as right eyes, when found not to have God's authorship, would not the day

have arrived and the jewels, such as they were, all been gathered within the golden walls of the "Jerusalem which is above?"

The greatest obstacle with which the march of truth, or the revealed thoughts of God have had to contend, indicating his purposes with the race, has been the servile, cringing worship of the human opinion of the past, or the pride of its own.

Seeing this to have been the deplorable course of the church, which had driven it into the midnight darkness of the dark ages, the reformers adopted as the basis of their movements, and gave expression to the sublime sentiment, that the "Holy Scriptures are a sufficient guide to faith and practice." But how has this been followed? The answer is historic, and shows that not a single denomination composing the Protestant church, but which has, to a greater or less extent, outraged this cardinal declaration, by acting upon a narrow bigotry, fearing to think independently as the reformers, Luther, Calvin and Wesley did. But the opinions of these reformers are defended

by such, as tenaciously as though they were divine authority.

Had Luther acted upon this principle, one thunder peal from the Vatican would have driven him ignominiously back into the deadly embrace of the "Mother of Harlots."

Had the godly and heroic Wesley acted thus, the very first onset of the enemies of spirituality in the Church of England, which at that time was dead, would have struck terror to his spirit, and left the world deprived of the great revival wrought by his instrumentality. To concede to any man, since the revelator died, and the book of God was finished, the exclusive or private right to interpret a single passage of Scripture, or to establish a single doctrine not to be questioned by any who came after, is nothing but a servile prostitution of the God-bestowed prerogative. freedom of thought and corresponding responsibility, not to man, but to man's maker. But we rejoice that we live in an age when to trammel the liberty of mind is considered intolerable, when the crafty anathemas of the bigot or the ex-communication thunders of