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MR. WILLIAM KELLY AS A THEOLOGIAN.

THE death of Mr. William Kelly has removed the last theologian who could be reckoned amongst either the makers or accredited exponents of the theological system best described as Darbyism. The system is one that exercised fifty years ago quite an extraordinary force of attraction and repulsion, and the moment seems opportune for presenting a summary account of it in the form it assumed under the hand of Mr. Kelly, who was unquestionably its most learned, systematic and lucid representative.

It is implied that Mr. Kelly was essentially the interpreter of Mr. Darby, and he himself would assuredly have desired no higher honour; but Darbyism, apart from Mr. Kelly's interpretation, would have remained dumb to the whole circle of the uninitiated. Elucidated by him, it becomes readily amenable to scientific treatment; but the honours, whatever they may amount to, of origination in the strict sense belong to Mr. Darby. "As abruptly and brokenly as sometimes his sentences would fall from him about divine things," says William Penn of his master Fox, "it is well known they were often as texts to many fairer declarations." This defines Mr. Kelly's position. He was Barclay to Mr. Darby's Fox. But that relation suggests that his function was almost indispensable.

In most periods of restless life in the Church, chiliasm has been a stirring element; but in the case of the movement with which Mr. Kelly became identified, chiliasm actually gave birth to a widely extended and very vigorous community that existed in great part as its organ. This fact gives to the theological system he represents its unique place in the very wide and complex chiliastic movement of the nineteenth century.

Chiliasm found a congenial ally in an intense anti-Erastian [71] sentiment that produced a peculiar modification of High Church theory. In speaking of Mr. Kelly as a theologian, it is almost inevitable that we should begin with *ecclesiology*; and within that domain, his most distinctive and radical principle – a principle adopted by no other communion than the Brethren, and avowed in terms by hardly any Christian outside their ranks – is *the ruin of the Church*. The origin of this doctrine must be sought in Mr. Darby's youthful position as an ardent High Anglican. He was deeply impressed with the necessity for a visible organized unity; but he could not rest in the fiction that Episcopal Christianity fulfilled the essential condition. Ruling out the non-episcopal bodies did not touch the difficulty; the rents that were left behind were quite as glaring and as hopeless as those that were removed. It remained, therefore, that the Church was ruined; it had "entirely lost its original and essential standing." And God would not again set up that which had broken down. "The resource of the faithful in the ruins of Christendom," to use Mr. Kelly's own expression, was to be found in Matthew xviii. 20. The Lord would always be in the midst of two or three who met in His Name, and His Presence involved the fulness of blessing to those who counted upon Him. Organization was at an end. The Church of God could hope for no corporate witness to Christ, but faithful souls would not be deserted. It is obvious that such a view could never have existed apart from the feeling that the Second Advent was at hand to put a term to the present confusion and consequent impotence. The same text has been pleaded as the warrant of the congregational polity, but the standpoint occupied by Mr. Kelly was totally different. Polity was at an end, and the promise of Christ was the solitary boat saved from the sinking ship; but it would suffice to bring the crew to land. The history of the ruthless ecclesiastical administra- [72] tion of Darbyism is a melancholy satire upon the practicability of the theory with which it started.

The original community of the Brethren – and Mr. Kelly became associated with them before their earliest disruption – was therefore not a church.¹ It was not even a society with a defined membership. All Christians were Brethren; and if they were known to be Christians, they could take their place, of right and not of favour, wherever the “two or three” assembled. Any new comer, or any occasional visitor, to their meetings, if they judged him a Christian, shared with them, as a matter of indisputable prerogative, all their privileges and all their rights. They acknowledged in theory no fellowship and no membership except those of the Body of Christ. A simple corollary is that when, for presumed heresy or for misconduct, any person habitually communicating with them was “put away,” he was cast forth, not from the society of the Brethren (for no such thing was reckoned to exist), but from “the Church of God on earth.” Nor did Mr. Kelly and his friends hesitate to adopt the corollary. As a matter of fact, practice diverged so startlingly from theory that a few little companies professing these principles, and having therefore (apart from their common Christianity) no ostensible bond of union, either one with another or each in itself, developed into the most inelastic of all ecclesiastical organizations. The gulf between the theory and the practice was bridged of course by a series of legal fictions which it would be out of place to examine.² What has been said is essential, however, to the exhibition of Mr. [73] Kelly’s fundamental standpoint. His theology, like that of all his school, started from what he deemed a correct view of the Church; and this in turn was bound up with a correct view of unfulfilled prophecy, of which something will be said below.

To the question what the Church essentially is, Mr. Kelly returned an answer that would generally be considered inconsistent with the dogma of its ruin. He utterly rejected all thought of a Church before Pentecost. The idea of a continuity between the Jewish and the Christian Churches, or indeed of a Jewish Church at all, was peremptorily rejected. Equally was the notion ruled out of a Church gathered round Christ in the days of His flesh, or receiving His instructions after the Resurrection. The descent of the Holy Ghost to indwell for the first time a company of men on earth constituted the Church of God. “By one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body.” “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” But Mr. Kelly did not draw the inference that the Church is therefore indestructible, for he did not exactly hold that the aggregate of those thus indwelt do, by the invisible bond of that Divine indwelling, constitute the Church. Personally they constitute it, no doubt; that is to say, they make up its *personnel*. But the outward union, which is essential, may be (and unhappily is) lacking: therefore, we have nothing left but a ruin. Such, at least, is the way in which I understand Mr. Kelly. “What people think and talk about as the ‘invisible Church’ – though scripture never uses the expression – was substantially in existence before ‘the Church’; and, in fact, this invisible state of things is what the Lord was putting an end to when He formed the Church ... There was no such thing as ‘the Church’ – no gathering together of the scattered believers into one, till the death of Christ. The children of God had been scattered abroad, [74] but then they were gathered together. Henceforth disciples in Israel were not only destined to salvation, but they were gathered into one upon the earth. This is the Church. The assembly necessarily supposes the gathering of the saints into one body, separate from the rest

¹ “It is not our duty – far from it – to form a new church, but to cleave to that which is the oldest of all, and the only Church that is true – the assembly of God as it is exhibited in Scripture.” – Kelly, *Lectures on the Church of God*, p. 106.

² I have discussed the whole question in the *History of the Plymouth Brethren*, especially in chapter x.

of mankind. There was no such body before. Hence, to talk of 'the Church' in Jewish times, or in earlier days, is altogether a mistake. The mixture of believers with their unbelieving countrymen (i. e. what is called 'the invisible church') was the very thing which the Lord was concluding – not beginning – when He 'added to the Church daily such as should be saved.' The common error upon this subject is, that the aggregate of those that are to be saved composes the Church." (*Lectures on the Church of God*, p. 82.)

It may be added, however, that Mr. Kelly goes a long way towards reinstating the distinction he so disliked between the visible Church and the invisible, by the view he held, in common with Mr. Darby, as to the meaning of *the Kingdom of Heaven* in respect of its present manifestation: "The kingdom of heaven is not the same thing as the Church, but is rather the scene where the authority of Christ is owned, at least outwardly. ... Every professing Christian ... is in the kingdom of heaven. Every person who has, even in an external rite,¹ confessed Christ is not a mere Jew or Gentile, but in the kingdom. It is a very different thing from a man's being born again. ... Whoso bears the name of Christ belongs to the kingdom of heaven. It may be that he is only a tare there, but still there he is." (*Lectures on Matthew*, p. 280.)

In respect of ministry, whether within the Church or [75] proceeding from it (i. e. mission work), the theology of Mr. Kelly and his school did not widely differ from that of the Society of Friends. It is true that the Brethren were much more careful than the Friends to disclaim inspiration in days when the inspired was not regarded as shading off into the uninspired, but as separated from it by a gulf such as divides between different genera. And this is easily explained by the intense Biblicalism which amongst the Brethren occupied the place of the inner light of the Friends. It may be observed that Mr. Kelly's references to Quakers are generally unfriendly and disparaging. He was not the man to be deceived by merely superficial resemblances, or by resemblances which, though not superficial, yet afforded no counterpoise to grave differences that were strictly fundamental. Still, on the subject of ministry his divergence from them was for the most part terminological. In his view, all other communities (except, I presume, the Friends) stood condemned – to the extent that separation from them was imperative – by the absence of liberty for the Holy Ghost to minister to the needs of the Church by whomsoever He would. "All I stand to now is, that the free action of the Spirit, among the gathered members of Christ, is the one principle of the assembly of God laid down in His word. There can be no other that He sanctions. ... Let me ask ... what you did last Lord's Day. Did the various members of the body come together trusting to the Holy Ghost to guide them, with an open door for this or that believer, as each had received the gift, to minister the same one to another, as good stewards of God's manifold grace?" (*Lectures on the Church*, p. 107.) One characteristic difference there was between Brethren and Friends. The Friends, carrying their principle out unflinchingly, recognized the ministry of women. The Brethren, out of deference to a positive Biblical injunction, as they supposed, forbade it.

[76] In respect of ministry apart from church worship, there is the same substantial coincidence with Quakerism. "Juts [sic] as the Church is a divine thing, so is ministry. It flows neither from the believer nor from the Church, but from Christ, by the power of the Spirit. The *Lord* calls, not the church; the *Lord* sends, not the saints; the *Lord* controls, not the assembly. I speak now of the ministry of the word. There are certain functionaries

¹ This clause was apparently designed to bring persons baptized in infancy within the kingdom. This would be of the nature of a concession to Mr. Darby, for Mr. Kelly was a convinced Baptist, though he gave no prominence to his views.

whom the Church does or may choose: for instance, the assembly may nominate the persons it thinks fit to take care of the funds, and to distribute of its bounty. So it was done of old, as we read in Acts vi. But we never find this kind of selection where the ministry of the word is concerned. ... The difference between that which the word of God acknowledges, and that which is seen nowadays, lies in this, that according to Scripture the ministry of the word, in its call and in its exercise, is more truly divine than that which is now substituted for it in Christendom. ... If preachers be sent *by men*, it is an usurpation of the Lord's prerogative, and the gravest detriment to His servants who submit to it. What is the effect of ministry exercised according to Scripture? The most perfect freedom from all that is given of God for the blessing of souls." (*Lectures*, etc., pp. 114 sqq.) In practice, Mr. Kelly's school did not follow the Friends in "recording" ministers whose gifts approved themselves, nor was there any system for expressing a meeting's "unity" with travelling ministers; but the differences lie outside the theological sphere.

As the Church is constituted by the indwelling of the Spirit, and not by any appointment of human channels for the transmission of grace, and as authority in the Church depends on Christ's Presence, and not on any order or prescribed administration, Mr. Kelly becomes a champion of advanced Protestantism in assigning all the prerogatives [77] of the Church of God to the twos and threes that gather in Christ's Name. To remit and retain sins is not the work of a special priesthood; it is not, as a feeble compromise would make it, a prerogative confided to the apostles, and lapsing at their death. "The spirit, form and substance of [the gospel of John] are devoted to what is intrinsic and essential and what passes not away. ... The Lord Jesus has 'the disciples' as such before Him, and to them He imparts the Spirit as the power of risen life; them he thereon charges with this spiritual commission." ("*Receive ye the Holy Ghost*," p. 9.) He seems, however, to limit the prerogative to a power on the part of the Christian society to adjudicate on the claims of candidates for admission to it.

Passing to *eschatology*, Mr. Kelly's views are too well known to require a lengthy description. He was a resolute Futurist, and probably the most important of the exponents of the Apocalypse who have introduced into Futurism the doctrine of the Secret Rapture of the Church. According to this doctrine, which seems to have first come into notice in England amongst the oracles of the inspired Irvingites,¹ the Church is to be secretly caught up "to meet the Lord in the air" at a period considerably anterior to Christ's coming to establish His personal reign on earth. Mr. Kelly, however (*The Rapture of the Saints: who suggested it?* 1903), has recently denied that the Brethren received the doctrine from such a discredited source as Irvingism. The removal of the Church is not perceived by the world except partially, and then only by its results. It closes the probation of Christendom. The doctrine certainly harmonizes with the general type of eschatology represented by Mr. Kelly. The Church is as it were a piece of by-play in the development of the Divine dispensations. When [78] it has been removed, there is a return to the state of things that existed before it was called into being. A godly Jewish remnant – a hypothetical company that plays a large part in Mr. Kelly's doctrine of last things – comes into being. It is repentant, and has the "testimony of Jesus," but without Christian status, and it constitutes the germ of the converted Jewish nation which is to be the organ of universal blessing. An unprecedented storm of persecution (the Great Tribulation) is the prelude of the appearing of Christ to judge the nations, bind Satan, and reign with His saints a thousand

¹ It had, I believe, been previously taught by the Spanish Roman Catholic priest Lacunza, who wrote under the *nom de plume* of Ben-Ezra.

years. It is the peculiar honour of the Christian Church that it escapes the Great Tribulation.

Mr. Kelly agrees with chiliasts in general in affirming the personal character of Christ's reign, the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, the rebuilding of the temple, the resumption of material and even of animal sacrifices, which are to be offered throughout the millennium. But unlike most of his fellows, he feels the difficulty from which he nevertheless sees no escape. "Beyond a doubt," he says in his *Notes on Ezekiel* (p. 217), "the main stumblingblock in this section to most Christians is the plain prediction of sacrifices, feasts, and other ordinances according to the Levitical law. ... Earthly priests distinct from the people, with a position quite peculiar to the prince [whom Mr. Kelly prudently declines to identify with the Messiah], a material sanctuary with tangible sacrifices and offerings, are distinctly predicted by Ezekiel; but these are evidently wholly foreign to Christianity. One as much as the other would be inconsistent with the doctrine set down in that Epistle [Hebrews] for the 'partakers of the heavenly calling'; but will they therefore be out of place and season for those who have the earthly calling, when Jehovah again makes choice of Jerusalem, and glory shall dwell in the land? ... [79] No doubt it is not Christianity; but who with such an array of inspired witnesses against him will dare to say that such a state of things will not be according to the truth, and for the glory, of God in that day?" It is very likely that nothing but the overwhelming weight of the influence of Mr. Darby's scheme prevented the difficulty from growing to irresistible proportions in a mind so penetrating as Mr. Kelly's.

Mr. Kelly's *christology* was of a much more orthodox complexion. His close adherence to the traditional doctrine of the Church in this respect is of great interest. He was certainly not animated by any love of orthodoxy for mere orthodoxy's sake: indeed, his tendency was rather to exaggerate, perhaps even wantonly at times, his divergence from ordinary views. It was characteristic of his school to feel that they had all Christendom to correct. Yet Mr. Kelly was the staunchest upholder of the entire Nicene and Athanasian doctrine. No divergence whatever from the "teaching of the Church" discloses itself until we come to the later refinements of œcumenical doctrine; and even then the differences are small. We have fortunately a very recent statement of his position (*Life eternal: Christ's Person*, 1902). A certain tendency – I would not call it more – towards an Apollinarian point of view is discernible among Mr. Darby's followers as far back as sixty years ago. It long remained comparatively in abeyance, but came at last to a head in the teaching of the late Mr. F. E. Raven, whom Mr. Kelly charged roundly with the heresy of Apollinarius. Mr. Raven seems at some points to have gone the length of monophysitism, for he only allowed the form (i. e. evidently the outward form, *σχήμα* not *μορφή*) of man to have been taken by Christ from woman. But rather oddly he adopted the church doctrine (or at least the term) of the "impersonal humanity" of our Lord. Here Mr. Kelly again joins issue [80] with him. So at least I am disposed to understand Mr. Kelly's complaint that in Mr. Raven's "theory the soul does not enter Christ's personality, which is exclusively the Logos." But the impersonal humanity, though "church doctrine," is church doctrine at its point of perilous approximation to monotheletism, and I judge that Mr. Kelly meant to deliberately reject it. It is the doctrine of no council (Schaff), and Mr. Kelly with his contempt – it was nothing less – for the Fathers as theologians, and with certainly no servile respect for councils of the Church, would have smiled at the idea of receiving his christology at the hands of John of Damascus.

The christological question is of great importance, for Mr. Kelly's school has by two or three writers been suspected of a Socinian bias. The imputation is simply ridiculous, and it is worth while to point out that its basis is nothing but the fact that Mr. Darby and Mr.

Kelly both translated διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ ἰδίου (Acts xx. 28), 'by the blood of His own (Son).' As a matter of fact they were better exegetes than to accept the rendering of the English versions as satisfactory; and though their translation is probably inadmissible, it is nearly equivalent in sense to Dr. Hort's suggestion: "through the blood that was His own,' i. e. as being His Son's." Dr. Hort, moreover, by an almost convincing conjectural emendation, would bring the Greek text into absolute conformity with Mr. Kelly's English. If Mr. Kelly had any dogmatic bias in this instance, it was assuredly not Socinian, but anti-monophysitic. He defends his rendering at considerable length in his commentary on Acts, discussing Dr. Hort's note, and declining on principle to entertain the conjectural alteration of the text. "Conjectural emendation in N. T. Scripture has never," he says, "approached a proof of its need or value in a solitary example." It may surely be questioned, however, whether [81] both need and value are not exemplified in the case in point.

It is in the kindred subject of *soteriology* that Mr. Kelly's views have probably their greatest interest. Whether correct or erroneous, they are acute, independent (apart from his relation to Mr. Darby), and at the same time sober.

The *atonement* "lies at the very basis of all God's ways"; it "has incomparably the deepest place of all truths in Scripture, save only Christ's person." (*Peutateuch* [sic], pp. 264–5.) Atonement is effected by Christ enduring Divine wrath as the penalty for sin; but Mr. Kelly avoided the stumblingblock of estimating the atonement by quantitative standards. "What had the work of Christ in view? Not only the entire, present, and everlasting removal before God of all our iniquities, but the glorifying Himself even about sin by virtue of Christ's atoning death." (*The Day of Atonement*, 1902, p. 11.) "Had He not been man, of what avail for us? Had He not been God, all must have failed to give to His suffering for sins *the infinite worth of Himself*." (*Jesus Forsaken of God*, p. 3. Italics mine.) Mr. Kelly immediately adds: "This is atonement. And atonement has two parts in its character and range. It is expiation before God; it is also substitution for our sins (Lev. xvi. 7–10, Jehovah's lot and the people's lot.)" Mr. Kelly's position, therefore, was not precisely what is meant either by a universal or by a limited atonement, by a general or by a particular redemption. I think his thought would fairly be represented by saying that propitiation is general, substitution particular. The expiation of sin is of infinite value, and therefore essentially unlimited; substitution is restricted to those who, after the analogy to which he appeals in Leviticus xvi. 21 sqq., confess over the head of the sacrificial Victim their iniquities, transgressions and sins. Of course, this view concedes the crucial point claimed by the doctrine of universal atonement.

[82] With regard to *justification*, a brief summary must suffice. Mr. Kelly deals largely with the topic. *The Righteousness of God: What is it?* and the *Notes on Romans*, which obtained a merited encomium from Messrs. Sanday and Headlam, may be consulted. It is notorious that Mr. Kelly denied that the believer is justified, in whole or in part, by the imputation to him of the righteousness that Christ obtained by keeping the law; but it is by no means the case that he identified justification with forgiveness. The believer, he taught, is justified by Christ's death. Death is the denounced penalty of sin, and those that have died have paid the penalty and obtained their quittance. Since the believer is reckoned to have died with Christ, he is necessarily reckoned righteous. Over the dead the law has no claim: he is justified.

Closely linked in Mr. Kelly's mind with this doctrine of justification is his explanation of the phrase, the righteousness of God. This is not God's gift of righteousness, nor anything in the same order of ideas. Neither is it God's attribute of righteousness. It is God's personal righteousness in the act of justifying the ungodly. This sense, which seems to be

required in Romans iii. 25, 26, Mr. Kelly assigns to the expression throughout St. Paul's argument. God "is just, because sin has been met in the cross; sin has been judged of God; it has been suffered and atoned for by Christ. More than that: the Lord Jesus has so magnified God, and so glorified His character, that there is a positive debt now on the other side." (*Righteousness of God*, p. 22.)

Mr. Kelly considered that his view, by making justification depend simply on the efficacy of Christ's atonement, did honour to His death without disparagement of His life. He totally rejected, it is true, the view that any sufferings of Christ, other than those of His death, were in any sense [83] vicarious or of redeeming efficacy. He equally denied that Christ's obedience, except in death, justifies; but he distinctly disclaims the denial "that the ways, the walk, the life of Jesus, the magnifying of God in all His ways, are anything to our account. God forbid!" he says; "we have Jesus wholly, and not in part. ... I am not contending now at all against the precious truth that, Christ being our acceptance, we have Christ as a whole." (*Op. cit.* p. 10.) "But then, say they, you need righteousness besides [i. e. in addition to the blood of Christ]; and for this God needs Christ to obey the law for you. And what does Scripture say? It gives me the life of Christ, but life on the other side; not Christ keeping for me the law on the earth, but Christ risen: it is life in resurrection. ... Union is not with the blessed Lord as under the law, but with Him risen and exalted on high" (p. 31). The thought is that the believer has passed, in Christ, into a sphere where law does not apply. It is not made for the righteous man; and those who stand in Christ on the far side of death (and therefore of judgment) are not amenable to a legal verdict. To base their justification on the imputation that they have kept the law is therefore to deny the essential blessings and glories of Christianity.¹

This view of justification gives the clue to the antinomianism with which Mr. Kelly and his school have been so pertinaciously charged. Dr. William Reid, in his famous polemic, cited the Ten Commandments one by one, and [84] asked if the duties they enjoin are duties no longer. But this was a notable *ignoratio elenchi*. Mr. Kelly held that the principles of the Decalogue were included (unless it were in respect of the Sabbath) in that righteous requirement of the law which is fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. But the Spirit and not the law is the guide of life, and the instrument of the discipline and culture of life. The law, not being made for the righteous man, is essentially restrictive, and what Christians require is not restriction, but liberty of expansion for the new life. The allegorizing of St. Paul on Abraham's two sons is, to the school represented by Mr. Kelly, the profoundest word that can ever be spoken on the secret of the victorious life of Christian holiness. "Give liberty to the son of the free-woman" (i. e. to the expansion of the new nature), was one of their watchwords. Mr. Kelly absolutely denied the abrogation of the law. The law is not dead, but the Christian is dead to it. "The grace under which the Christian is widens the sphere and deepens the character of Christian obedience, the directory of which is all the word of God, which the Spirit alone can enable us rightly to divide and really to carry out." (*The Evangelical Organs of 1866*, p. 21.) Many theologians, unfriendly to Mr. Kelly's general standpoint, would not hesitate to reckon such antinomianism strictly Pauline.

¹ Mr. Kelly distinctly reckons this status in the risen Christ a part of justification. It corresponds with the "positive" justification of the ordinary evangelical scheme; and so far it is true that he held "justification in a risen Christ." This, according to Mr. Kelly, is the force of δικαίωσις ζωῆς in Romans v. 18. But there is no question of basing justification on an "inherent" or "infused" righteousness. It is the Christian's place in Christ, and not the change of heart and purpose that affords a ground of justification.

The *sacraments* have nothing to do with salvation. *Regeneration* is wholly by the Word and Spirit. "Water" in John iii. 5 is a symbolical designation of the Word of God in its cleansing power, after the analogy of John xv. 3¹ and [85] 1 Peter i. 22, 23. Baptism was the one subject on which Mr. Kelly differed seriously from Mr. Darby, and probably on that account he expressed his views very sparingly. When he wrote expressly on the subject, it was to denounce the "superstition" and "delusion" that baptism saves. Neither was the Lord's Supper a means of grace. It was indeed of immense importance, and the stress laid on its regular weekly observance and on its central position in Christian worship is of course one of the great outstanding features of Mr. Kelly's school of thought. But its character is commemorative and eucharistic, and Mr. Kelly would have thought it degraded by association with the thought of benefit to accrue to the partaker. He also attached great importance to the social aspect of the observance, and to its expression of the unity of the Church. It "is the symbol of unity with Christ, founded on His death Who is now on high. That those who partake of the one loaf are the one body of Christ is the great idea, as well as the announcement of His death. Hence the Apostle Paul, who beyond all made known the mystery of Christ and the Church, has a special revelation concerning this given to him from heaven." (*The Lord's Supper*, p. 8.) "He blessed; but there is no thought of consecration here, still less of consubstantiation or of transubstantiation. He gave thanks; but he did exactly the same when distributing the five barley loaves and two fishes. ... The disciples ate bread and drank wine; and the whole blessing is the power of faith coming in and investing what was before it, though the simplest materials, with the deepest associations of God's grace in the death of His beloved Son. ... Every scheme which exalts the elements, or aggrandizes those who 'administer' to the communicants, takes away from Christ." (*Ibid.*)

[86] Mr. Kelly's system was of course based on the doctrine of plenary verbal inspiration, but he insisted strongly on the human element. God, he tells us, was pleased to work "on man and in man, so that the reproach of 'mechanical' is unfounded, no less than the setting up of 'dynamical' is cold and insufficient. The inspired are through His goodness far beyond being His pen or even His penmen. ... Their minds and affections He uses as well as their language." In textual matters Mr. Kelly allowed himself a free hand, and his conclusions, though moderate, are not extraordinarily conservative.

Mr. Kelly's writings are injured by prolixity, and too often by the more serious fault of a certain acrimonious tendency in controversy. The fault was that of a less tolerant age than our's, rather than one special to him. Indeed the virulence displayed on the opposite side of many of his controversies was extreme. On the whole, a closer acquaintance with his work, though it would seldom nowadays lead to a general agreement with him, would ensure respect for his earnestness and devotion, his acumen and learning, and the strength of his grasp of all the ramifications of an extensive system. He knew his own mind on every passage of Scripture, and he had studied them all minutely. "A man who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind by Darbyism," was Mr. Spurgeon's verdict, and he did not go too far. The judgment indeed is erroneous if it means that Darbyism might be disentangled from the web of Mr. Kelly's theology and leave something substantial by which to estimate him. But it is perfectly right if understood to mean that, could he only have

¹ On this passage, in his *Exposition of the Gospel of John*, Mr. Kelly observes: "The cleansing efficacy of the word is a cardinal truth of Scripture apt to be forgotten, not merely by the Romanist who trusts in ordinances, but by the Protestant who speaks exclusively of the Saviour's blood 'that cleanseth from all sin.' God forbid that a word should be said to obscure that blood, or to turn a soul from its justifying value. But [85] out of the Lord's side flowed water and blood; and we need both. The blood atones, the water purifies."

been freed from the life-long bonds of his youthful enthusiasm for Mr. Darby's system, Mr. Kelly had qualities that would have enabled him to leave a permanent mark on the development of theology.

W. B. NEATBY.