
**The Manifesto, Or a Declaration of the Doctrine and
Practice of the Church of Christ. Repr**

Dunlavy John

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Author: Dunlavy John

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THE
M A N I F E S T O,

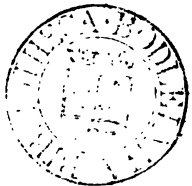
OR

A DECLARATION OF THE DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE

OF

THE CHURCH OF 'CHRIST.

BY JOHN DUNLAVY.



“Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.”

“We are made as the filth of the world—the off-scouring of all things unto this day.”

: והיא כתובה מנים ואחור וקלוב אליה קינים והנה ודי : Ezek. ii. 10.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE publishers of this second edition of the Manifesto would inform the reader that it is not pretended to be a revised copy of the first. But as the author has deceased since the publication of the original work, some small corrections have been made by those of his friends who best knew his mind and feelings, and which are in accordance with a request made by him before his decease.

Some improvements might probably have been made in the arrangement of the work, by dividing long chapters and paragraphs, and also by a division of very lengthy sentences ; but as such alterations might have a tendency in some instances, to obscure the author's meaning, few attempts of the kind have been made. A few notes have been added for the reader's information ; but in general the original has been strictly followed.

Believing that this valuable work will be acceptable to honest inquirers after Truth, in the present fluctuating state of religious opinions, and the serious awakenings which at present prevail among many classes of people, the publishers now present this edition to the public, earnestly soliciting their candid perusal and their serious reflection upon the all-important subjects herein contained, which have been so ably discussed and so clearly illustrated by the truly pious author.

Those who may wish for further information on these subjects and of the religious community from which they emanated, are hereby referred to a work, entitled, "The Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing," and to a small duodecimo volume, entitled, "A Summary View of the Millennial Church."

THE PUBLISHERS.

NEW LEBANON, N. Y., 1847.



P R E F A C E .

Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh. The writing of so many books on various religious subjects, may appear irksome to some, and lead them to conclude that nothing will be gained by reading any more, for matters never come to such a concluding point as to remove uncertainty and promote union and common agreement among professors. And among the various sentiments industriously propagated, how shall the inquirer know with whom to cast his lot? But admitting that little is yet effected to the satisfaction of the multitude, this is no reason that men should cease to search after the hid treasure; for every one who believes there is truth, must acknowledge that it is attainable. And what if considerable labour be expended in acquiring it?

The first chapter, containing a very concise essay on the Being of God, was not occasioned by the expectation that sentimental atheism is generally or extensively prevalent; although it is known to have its advocates in places, who are not backward in attempting to infuse the poison into others. It was therefore considered not improper to state a few particulars for the relief and strength of honest people, who might be beset with its corruptions. Unbelief of the Holy Scriptures, or infidelity towards an ordinary revelation and the correctness of the Christian faith, is more prevalent; yet neither was the second chapter, which relates to the truth of the Scriptures, designed as an attempt to convince mankind by the dint of argument in the letter; but rather, together with the former, as a prelude to the following work, that it may give, at least, an honest exhibition, or rather declaration, of the basis on which the practical work of the Gospel, to which it relates, is built; and in the mean time, that a few useful reflections might be presented to the thinking part of mankind.

The following sheets have been written in great plainness and familiarity; as usefulness and information have been more studied than elegance of style or even systematic order. I have made a free use of the original languages, particularly the Greek, frequently using an appeal to the learned for the correctness of the amendments of the common reading. Few, if any, amendments are offered to the translation from the Hebrew scriptures, without the support of Hebrew critics in one view or another: and I have built no doctrine on a criticism drawn from the original text, but

used it only for elucidation. For it has not been my object to provoke to a contention of letters, but to minister truth to those who desire it. And when we have opened the faith of the Gospel, and shown wherein we and others have been in error, it is not done for contention or to provoke others to resist. And should any be inclined to do so, they may consider, that we feel very little inclination to contend with dry systematics, but to inform those who seek salvation. If we should ever make a reply of any considerable labour or extent, we shall first look to see something of more weight and reason than those things which have been written heretofore; as the malicious slanders of some, the fabricated aspersions of others, and the disingenuous attacks of B. W. Stone would likely never have been noticed in public, only for his peculiar standing.

By treating a variety of subjects nearly connected, and yet not closely enough to be discussed together, sundry repetitions occur, which have unavoidably swelled the volume to a greater size. But considering that many, not to say most readers, would feel the force of evidence better, by having it laid open freely on one subject at once, than by being referred from one to another, I have used freedom in that respect, the increased size of the book, and censure of speculating critics, notwithstanding. One subject is generally enough to digest at a time; and a man who buys a book, is no more obliged to read it through and digest it all at once, or on a sudden, than he who kills a beef, is obliged to eat it in a day.

To have found the everlasting Gospel, the perfect work of God, is one thing, and to be perfected in the knowledge and experience of the same is another. Of the first we speak confidently, having no remaining doubt. But as to the second, our proficiency is only according to our time and travel. The everlasting Gospel is only in its increase on the earth, as yet far short of its meridian; and my experience only in minority. If therefore a much clearer elucidation of many subjects in the following work should hereafter appear, it will be no disgrace to the Gospel, in the one faith, one cross, one self-denial, and one Christ. And my junior age and short experience in the Gospel is a sufficient apology for the imperfection which in time may appear in the following work; or rather which appears already; for were the whole work to be reprinted immediately, I can see many places which could be stated in much greater perfection. And it is our privilege to grow in the knowledge of God. Or should any calculation of time which depends on the letter, and not clearly expressed, hereafter be more correctly and satisfactorily opened as the light increases, it will not be inconsistent with our present faith. Had the work been inspected by those who are farthest travelled in the faith, it would no doubt have been much more perfect: but they were at too great a distance.

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PART I.
ON THE DECREES OF GOD.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE BEING OF GOD.

THE *belief* of the existence of God, of his character, and the relation which subsists between God and men, is the foundation and spring of all religion. The existence of God is proved, in the first place, by the consent of all nations; and the argument is corroborated by that consent increasing and becoming more confirmed, as any people become more enlightened in general and consistent knowledge; so that it may be fairly concluded, that none, in any enlightened land, deny the being of God from real belief; but that those who do, only use such denial as a pretext for giving latitude to their own desires, and not being subject to the will of God, whose nature and ways they do not love, being lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

But that the belief of the being of God prevails among the nations of the earth, is an undisputed fact. Now this belief was either taught by nature or revelation, these being the only two methods of gaining such belief. If the first; that belief is either true, or nature is a false guide, and therefore no more to be trusted; accordingly the necessity of revelation becomes unavoidable, or man must be forever in uncertainty, and existing truth forever unknown; which is absurd. But if nature is true, teaching that God is, the point is proved, and nature is a helper to revelation. But if the belief of the being of God be said to be through revelation from God, that saying acknowledges that God IS.

And that God doth exist, is farther proved by the existence of the things which are seen. For the existence of that which is seen and otherwise directly meets the senses, is not denied, being self-evident. But that which really exists, is either a necessary existence or produced by another. For it cannot be both; because a created, or produced, necessary existence would be an absurdity, an impossibility; for a necessary existence includes the idea, or the attribute of independence, and therefore also of self-existence and self-government. But no material or visible being possesses these attributes.

Again ; a necessary existence is necessarily what it is, there being no previous or separate being, power or agency, to cause it to be this or that. It is therefore necessarily unchangeable. But no visible being possesses this attribute. A necessary existence is necessarily from everlasting and without any beginning, or initiation into existence ; for, to suppose a time when there was no existence, is to deny existence altogether, contrary to self-evident and conscious fact ; for no cause can produce an effect equal to itself, much less superior, and nonentity, or no cause, could never produce an effect to be the cause of all other things. A necessary being is necessarily perfect and infinite, there being no supposable objection to the necessary or self-existence of an infinitely perfect being which will not equally militate against all necessary existence of the most limited character or attributes ; and there is no superior or previous power to set bounds to a primary and necessary existence. But existences are extant and evident to our senses, none of which, thus in the reach of our senses or subject to our immediate contemplation, exhibit or possess the attributes of a necessary self-existent being ; they are therefore all dependent on God, a necessary, self-existent, infinitely perfect Being, whose wisdom, power and other attributes are displayed in his works of creation, providence and grace. On this principle the existence of God is clearly proved to a demonstration. But further :

What is here stated is not intended to contradict this truth, that revelation and the light of nature agree to support the belief of God's existence. For as the belief, or knowledge of God's existence, was received by man in his first creation, he has never been able, through all the windings of his disobedience, to erase the impression from his heart ; however he may have corrupted or transformed it into vain notions ; while, in the mean time, the revelation of God has not been altogether wanting, which has still renewed the impression, and the light of nature and reason have borne witness to the fact, arguing from the works of God in his creation and providence. "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them : for God hath showed it to them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood [contemplated] by the things which are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, that is, Deity."

It is vanity to plead that the belief of God's existence may be the fruit or workings of the imagination. For the imagination is the imagery, or power of forming on the mind the imagery, of things which do exist ; and though this imagery may be transformed into a thousand corrupt and inconsistent shapes, it always proves the existence of the original, and the imagination can never extend so far as to a nonentity or annihilation, there being no prototype. And if the mind infers the existence of God from the contemplation of things which are seen to exist, there is a correct testimony of nature that God is. Thus false notions of God among mankind, though formed according to their corrupt inclinations, who have departed from the true God, prove the existence of the true God ; and a false worship, or worship offered to idols, proves the propriety of worship offered to the true God according to his own appointment, which has been the original instigation of that impious worship of idols, through the sub-