

The Berean.

THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH ALL READINESS OF MIND, AND SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, WHETHER THOSE THINGS WERE SO.—Acts xvii. 11.

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THE BRIDE'S REPLY TO THE MIS- SIONARY.

(See last number of the Berean.)

Is there a danger I might not share,
A sorrow with thee that I could not bear?
Nor perils around me, nor griefs from above,
Can rival the might of deathless love;
In the flood, in the flame, no terrors I see;
I go for my Lord, and I go with thee!

In pompous arm'd, to the world unknown,
We'll brave the conflict, and snatch the crown;
Hope be our anchor, the veil within,
And our bliss the souls that for Christ we win!
I hear his voice o'er the distant sea,
And I come to the help of the mighty with thee!
From Sacred Poetry, Second Series.

COINCIDENCE OF IRVINGISM WITH TRACTARIANISM.

A Review from the Dublin Christian Examiner.
Abstract Principles of Revealed Religion. By
Henry Drummond, Esq. London. John
Murray. 1845.

When the legislature, which was bound to protect, used the trust to rob, when, not content with robbing, it exercised an arbitrary power, and entering on the very spiritualities of the Irish branch of the united church, at one fell swoop ten of her bishoprics were crushed, when blow after blow was dealt at that establishment by those who obtained the power to injure, in virtue of solemn engagements to protect, the consequences were felt not only or chiefly by the individuals robbed, or the particular institutions crushed: the sensation extended itself of necessity to all the members of that united church, yea, to all who professed the faith which that church was commissioned to uphold. When the wave strikes the bow of the storm-tossed vessel, tears away her bulwarks, and sweeps some of her gallant crew into the deep, not only does the ship quiver from stem to stern, while every plank groans under the blow inflicted on one; but the passenger who had been reposing comfortably in his berth is necessarily roused to sensibility and to fear, if not for others, for himself. It was his to lie at ease while others were struggling with the tempest, faint with fatigue and hunger, while their dripping garments chilled rather than sheltered their almost benumbed limbs; but should an hour of deeper trial come, should the gallant vessel fall, and each be left to his individual energies, the picture will be awfully reversed, and the poor child of ease and indulgence will find it difficult indeed to learn to strip, to struggle, to suffer like the hardy sons of the ocean. The spoliation of the Irish Church was accomplished, not by the enmity of Popery, or truckling of Whiggery, but by the indifference (may we not say the cruel indifference) of the English Church herself. This is frankly avowed by no less an authority than the Quarterly Review, in an article currently, and we believe, correctly supposed to emanate from the pen of Professor Sewall.

The consequences to the Irish branch, with some slight exceptions which we must hereafter notice, were such as might be expected even from natural causes, looking at the better feelings which still are found in fallen man.

"And as a child, when searing sounds molest,
Clings close and closer to his mother's breast;
So the loud torrent and the whirlwind's roar,
But bind him to his native mountains more."

But there was found in that stricken body something more than the mere impulse of generous and high-minded devotedness; there was something which was not of the flesh, or of the world; there was that faith which enabled an apostle to tread the wave as on a marble pavement, or to utter the cry, the sure precursor of safety, "Lord save or I perish!" that love which when one member suffers makes all the members suffer with it, binding them together in one as the body of the one Christ. The result, therefore, to this branch of the church we may safely affirm has been not merely to quicken their desires for their Master's appearing, to warm their zeal, to call forth their energies, to deepen their spirituality, but to lead to a fuller understanding and juster appreciation of, and more simple and devoted affection to, the forms, ordinances, and constitution of that church which they see to be trodden under foot of men, even in proportion as it is owned of God in the calling and building up of those who shall be heirs of salvation. But to her who looked on and smiled while her sister suffered, the reaction was fearful. Alms, it is true, were liberally showered when the servants of that sister came before her in *forma pauperis*, but had the English Church made common cause with us, had they resisted the wrong to us with half the energy exhibited in resisting the increased grant to Maynooth, the heavy blow and deep discouragement never could have been inflicted. But what was the result to her? Let those who have done her far more injury than the fall of all her cathedrals and all her palaces could inflict, answer for themselves. We do not believe that Tractarianism as existing in the minds of its originators was the result of anything like a deep and well digested plan; but we firmly believe that the shock which public opinion received in the treatment of the Irish branch of the church gave the opportunity so readily and so wisely seized, for sending out their poison; so that Tractarianism (not in its origin, but in its extension in the English branch), is the result of the injuries and insults heaped upon the weaker member in Ireland. But apart from these, two great results or reactions from the unrighteous interference of the secular power, there was another of little comparative importance to the nation or the national church, but involving vast numbers of immortal souls in dangerous, if not fatal errors.

The gifted Edward Irving, after having brought before the church truth after truth which had been overlooked or neglected, intoxicated with success and flattery, began to lose all spiritual discernment, and, utterly confounding truth and falsehood, sought only to bring forward what was novel and exciting. He had, in the climax of his popularity, brought forward what at the time appeared to us very unsound propositions regarding the divine nature of Christ, propositions which, so far as our observation extended, passed without censure; and he next proceeded, doubtless expecting equal impunity, to announce doctrines equally erroneous and more startling respecting his humanity. He was brought before the tribunal of the Church of Scotland, to which, though exercising his ministry in England, he belonged, and was formally deposed and driven from the chapel he had rendered so celebrated; and from this moment his downward career (we will not say commenced, but) progressed with railroad speed. The heresy was to be attested by supernatural voices, and the voices were to be interpreted to suit the exigency of the case, miracles were to be wrought and they did not succeed, (which was generally the case, for they were fanatics, not impostors, and therefore could produce no extaticas or adoloratas,) therefore, the nature of miracles must be explained away to bring the bungling quackery under the desired classification.

Then it was discovered that miracles were not wrought because the church was not duly constituted, and apostles, masters, evangelists, pillars, prophets, and prophetesses, were called into being, to shadow forth the tabernacle, and restore the simplicity of primitive Christianity! These ordinances were devised as a means to an end, to place the church in such a position that miracles might be restored to it; but that end appearing as remote as ever, it was necessary to direct attention from the end to the means, and therefore to magnify the ordinances, and to make them the important object. Irving had done good service in directing attention to the character of the church, as developed in Scripture, and it was his misfortune to dwell on every truth he contemplated, till he magnified or perverted it into error; so that the character of the church and her ordinances seems to have become, after a time, the essential difference of the sect which bears his name. This sect was just in the most exciting point of its exciting progress at the period of our history to which we have referred, and the wonder is not that so many of our younger brethren were attracted by its pretensions, but that so few were, even for a time, drawn away, when to the discouraged, disappointed, heart-broken labourer, were offered chariots of fire to convey him through the air, with all, and more than all the magnificent privileges of an apostle. Just at the same time arose another sect, as though Satan had, like an oriental sportsman, placed his nets at either end of the wood while he beat the bushes, so that the fugitives who turned to the right might fall into the one, and those who turned to the left, into the other. For the intellectual, the speculative, the inquiring, was prepared Irvingism, with all her mystic rites and hourly developing ordinances—her profound investigations and shadowing inspirations—her high sounding names and glowing hopes—her views of real and substantial grandeur, which gave an appearance of truth to the whole; while for the vain, the shallow, and the self-conceited, Darbyism offered allurements as attractive as Irvingism offered to those of nobler mould. To one was offered the fiery chariot, the apostolic office, the tongue of power, and the eye of vision, instead of trudging through the bogs of Connemara. To another it was found not less delightful to exchange the practice of self-denial in the unpitied desolation of a remote parish, for talking of self-denial around the glowing hearth of an uncarpeted palace. Each sect obtained her votaries; but to some minds mediocrity seems essential, while to others it is impossible. The one sect has been scarcely able to invent a passable heresy to give them a characteristic feature, while the others have rushed from point to point of error, till they seem, though holding some truths tenaciously, and expressing them with a largeness of view which only mighty minds are capable of, to have made shipwreck concerning the very first principles of the faith. While we mourn we wonder, and behold them scarcely

"Less than archangel ruined."

In order to understand the peculiar character of Irvingism as it now presents itself to our view, we must call to mind the circumstances in which the founder stood in the latter years of his life. He had been from the beginning of his career the supporter of national establishments, not clinging with sectarian tenacity to the Presbyterianism of his native land, but maintaining them on the broad and grand principles of the national testimony for the truth. When, therefore, he found himself reluctantly placed in the position of a schismatic, he could not, without doing violence to his own long cherished feelings, take the ordinary ground of dissent, and represent his own little community as a separated few, who differed on some small ground of faith or practice from those who hold the great truths of the Gospel in common. It was necessary that he should assume a grander position, and denounce the church which had ejected him, and that which had approved of his ejection, and did not object many of his followers, as having fallen from their high and holy standing; and, therefore, being in a state of apostasy; and taking advantage of the common error, which, in defiance of plain Scripture, de-

scribes Babylon as a religious system, instead of a local church, he represented all Christendom as Babylon, one national church differing from another only as the streets of the same city; while he stood forth as Elijah, a rejected witness against their abominations. We have seen too that, partly in the natural progress of fanaticism, partly to support his pretensions, he had called out a spirit of prophecy, which, if admitted to be any thing but fanatical and diabolical, must be infallible. This event his master-mind found it impossible either to resist or regulate; so like a charioteer who has utterly lost the command of his horses, he was obliged to let them choose their own road and pace, content to guard them against such collisions as would be fatal, in the hope of regaining his power when their spirits were exhausted. With the same pleasure with which such a driver would see his horses dash towards a wide and open common, must he have found his prophets enter on the arrangements of the externals of church regulations; to-day requiring the appointment of apostles, to-morrow of elders, then evangelists, then pillars, till almost the whole of his male, and the more excitable of his female followers had been placed in offices, which while they gave them a certain employment, restricted them from all extra official efforts. What might have been the result had he survived this ebullition of excitement, it were vain to inquire; but just at the moment when the eyes of his flocks, apostles, elders, pillars, prophets, and all were directed to the visible, the master spirit was taken away! He who had gained a name and place among the thousands of Israel, and gathered around him admiring (alas! too admiring) multitudes, by the fulness with which he preached a crucified Saviour—who had mingled the warmth and freshness with which our clergy, when taught of God, announce the Gospel, with the more systematic theology of the Scottish Church—who ranging over the wide fields of divinity, and presenting speculations sometimes just as they were magnificent, sometimes false and dangerous, always returned to give unfeigned praise to the Lamb of God, and to lay every power, as well as every emotion at the foot of the cross; he expired just when his people had been led by him to contemplate orders and buildings, and names and forms, leaving his name to those who have departed further from the faith than the Galatians of old; for surely something stronger than the words, "I am afraid of you," will be extracted from every follower of the Lord Jesus who reads the book whose name stands at the head of this article, or even reads the extracts we are about to present.

Mr. Drummond, the author of this book, by his talents, his station, his wealth and generosity, early acquired a high standing among this people; being, we believe, for we have not the documents before us, the only person who filled more offices than one—being head of the apostles, and chief of the pillars, as well as a prophet, while his lady was the principal of the prophetesses. Those who from these absurd and presumptuous designations expect to find a jumble of wild fanaticism will be much disappointed; fanaticism, excitement, enthusiasm, have all past away; the sober reality of a grave denial of the truth remains, a denial rendered the more pointed and powerful by the author's familiarity with the subject, so that he is not like many opponents combating the wind, or dealing his blows at his own shadow. He knows whom he opposes, and with all the powers of an enlarged and highly cultivated mind, was against the faith once delivered to the saints.

To be continued.

SUFFICIENCY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

It may be said, that the New Testament refers only to the beginnings of the Gospel: that the new converts received, indeed, *τα ἀρχαῖα τῆς παιδείας τοῦ Χριστοῦ*,—such truths as were most indispensable, and without which they could not have been Christians at all; but that the full development of the system of Christianity was reserved for a later season; that the Scriptures themselves imply this, inasmuch as, in the epistle to the Hebrews, a distinction is expressly drawn between the first principles of the doctrine of Christ and the going on unto perfection, and the writer of that epistle complains that they whom he was addressing were not yet fit for this more perfect truth. That in this manner the doctrine of the Christian priesthood and of the mystic virtue of the sacraments is not, indeed, fully developed in the New Testament, but was taught by the Apostles at the very close of their career, and received by the Church as their last and most perfect instruction, which was to complete the revelation of Christianity.

It has pleased God that of the peculiar teaching of the great majority of the Apostles we should know nothing; we cannot say with certainty what they taught individually at any period of their lives. But we can say positively that the latest teaching of St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John, contained in it no more perfect revelation concerning the priesthood and the sacraments than they had made known at the beginning of the gospel. St. Paul's second epistle to Timothy must surely be considered as containing his latest views of Christianity; and as being addressed to one who was himself a teacher, it must have contained those views fully; it cannot be pretended that St. Paul had any doctrine too esoteric to be communicated to Timothy. But his latest epistle, amidst many differences of expression from his earlier writings, such as the lapse of years brings to all men, contains in substance the very same view of

Christianity which we find in the epistles to the Thessalonians. Paul's gospel is still Christ's resurrection, God's free salvation, Christ's coming to judgment. He is still as averse as ever to strifes about words; he warns Timothy that the time will come when Christians shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables. He refers him to his own doctrine ever since Timothy first knew him, not as to an imperfect system, to which he was now going to add some great truth hitherto suppressed, but as that very system which he earnestly wished to save from corruption and interpolation. This was Paul's language at a period when he declares that he had finished his course on earth, and had only to enter into his reward.

As we learn St. Paul's latest sentiments from his second epistle to Timothy, so we learn those of St. Peter from his second epistle general. He too speaks of the church his dying admonition, as telling them the things which they might have always in remembrance after he was gone. Does this epistle contain that great doctrine of the priesthood and sacraments which, when he wrote his first epistle, the Church was too weak to bear? In that first epistle, having used the expression "that baptism saved Christians," he hastens at once to explain his meaning, lest any should understand him superstitiously; and says that he does not mean by baptism's saving us, that the bodily washing with water saves; but the answer of a good conscience towards God, when men in repentance and faith were admitted into the fellowship of Christ's redemption. His explanation is clearly intended to draw off our attention from the outward rite to the moral state of the person receiving it: it was the repentance and faith of the person baptized, which, through God's mercy in Christ, saved him; and not the outward rite of immersion in water. Now nothing is to be found in the second epistle which in any degree qualifies this: every word of his latest charge turns upon moral points; upon growth in all Christian graces, on improving to the utmost their knowledge of Christ. He speaks, indeed, of some who would soon introduce grievous heresies and corruptions of Christianity; but for himself he has nothing to add to his former teaching; he is only anxious that it should be remembered, and practically turned to account.

Lastly, Christ's beloved disciple; he who lived so long that some of the brethren supposed that he was never to die at all; he who in an especial manner connects the first age of the Church with the second:—do his epistles, written evidently late in his life,—does his revelation, which so emphatically bears the character of a final declaration of God's will,—contain this supposed perfect doctrine of the priesthood and the sacraments? Not one word of either. Written to those who had an unction from the Holy One, and knew all things, to the Church of Christ, with no distinction of priest and layman, St. John's epistle contains no new commandment, but the same which the Church had received from the beginning: his gospel is Paul's gospel also; God's infinite love in Christ, Christ dying for us; faith working by love; holiness being the mark of God's people: sin the mark of false brethren. Of priest-hoods, of one body of men ministering grace to the rest through certain outward rites which, unless administered by them, lose their efficacy, St. John, like St. Peter and St. Paul, says nothing. Something, indeed, he does say of the spirit of priestcraft, in order to condemn it; there was one Diotrophes who loved to exercise authority, and to cast out of the Church those of God's people who were strangers to his particular portion of it; and reproved those who knew better the largeness of Christian Charity. But Diotrophes, the true prototype of priestly and fanatical presumption, is condemned by Christ's beloved Apostle, as prating against him with malicious words; as disobeying by his bigotry the authority of the loving apostles of Christ Jesus.

The latest writings, then, of these three great Apostles—Paul, Peter, and John,—contain no traces of any other or more mysterious doctrines than they had received from our Lord and taught to their first converts at the beginning of the gospel. And the expressions already alluded to in the epistle to the Hebrews, like the whole of that epistle, are, in fact, directly opposed to the notion of a more mystical Christianity, which was to be the reward of a due improvement of the first principles of Christian knowledge already communicated. The "perfection" of which the writer speaks as opposed to the principles of the elementary doctrine of Christ, is an understanding that the law, its priesthood, and its sacrifices were no longer necessary, inasmuch as Christ, by his eternal priesthood and one sacrifice, had done effectually that work which they could but typically foreshadow. It is well known that the Jewish Christians still observed the ceremonial law; and the Apostles sanctioned this, not only to avoid unnecessary offence to the unbelieving Jews, but also because the converts themselves would have been shocked at the notion of renouncing it. St. Paul, however, and those who followed him, were well aware that this observance of the law was very apt to be coupled with a belief of its necessity in a spiritual point of view; and therefore they represent the full grown Christian as one who feels the unimportance of all Jewish ceremonies; and who places his whole reliance upon Christ. "Let us, as many as are perfect," says St. Paul to the Philippians, "be thus minded;" where his meaning is exactly the same with that of the epistle to the Hebrews, where he speaks of going on unto

perfection. So far, then, was the perfection of Christian doctrine from consisting in the belief in a human priesthood, and in the mystic virtue of outward ordinances, that it was the very opposite of this, and consisted in clearly understanding that Christ's death and resurrection had rendered all priest-hoods, sacrifices, and ceremonies, for the time to come, unimportant. It was because this perfection was not generally attained to, because the minds of so many Christians could not embrace principles so pure, that the doctrine of the priesthood and the sacraments gradually made its way into the church, as the natural successor of Judaism. For when the Jewish temple and sacrifices were destroyed, those Christians who had till then regarded them as important parts of Christianity, were naturally led to substitute another priesthood and another sacrifice of the same sort in the place of those which they had lost: and as they had joined the Levitical priesthood with that of Christ, and the daily sacrifices of the law with his sacrifice, so afterwards, in the same spirit, they made a new priesthood out of the Christian ministry, and a new sacrifice out of the communion of the Lord's Supper.

It may be safely said, that whatever we find in the New Testament, as to a gradual communication of Christian truth, relates to this one point: that the disciples were to be led on gently to a full sense of the unimportance of the ceremonies of the Jewish law. Christianity was given complete, as to its own truths, from the beginning of the gospel, but the absolute sufficiency of these truths, and the needlessness of any other system as joined with them, was to be learned only by degrees: and, unhappily, it never was learned fully. The perfection of which the epistle to the Hebrews speaks as not having been yet reached by those to whom the author was writing, was, by the great mass of the Church, never reached at all. The errors of the Judaizers continued, and assumed a shape far more mischievous; because the Judaism of the succession-priesthood, and the sacrifice of the communion, did not, like the other Judaism, simply exist by the side of pure Christianity, but incorporated itself with Christianity, and destroyed Christian truths to substitute in the place of them its own falsehood.—The Rev. Thomas Arnold, D. D., Head Master of Rugby School.

GOD'S PROVIDENCE.

Here [in an extract preceding, from Dr. Thomas Brown.] we see it is taken for granted that the existence of general laws is contradictory to the supposition of the existence of a particular providence; in other words, that, by establishing what is called the course of nature, God necessarily binds himself from every instance of particular interference, in suspending their operation, or regulating their direction. But there is in the supposed case no contradiction whatever. Is it a contradiction to say, that, by the laws of nature, fire burns, but that the three Israelites in the furnace, intensely heated, were not burned? God may establish general laws, and interrupt them at his pleasure. But a particular providence does not suppose miracle. The great glory of the government of God is, that he performs his providential purposes through the very operation of his general laws. How many houses fell on the night of the late storm, and how few persons comparatively were killed? That beam fell right over the head of that person, but it fell so as to constitute an arch over him for his protection, and not for his destruction. The chimney fell and crushed the floor over that bed, but the person who usually slept in it was absent, or had left it a few moments before the fall. The wonders of Providence are usually performed in perfect accordance with the laws of nature. The philosopher tells us that we cannot think of a combination of both these advantages. We can both think of them and point to ten thousand examples that display the combination. But our conceptions are not the test of possibility with God. That which we cannot conceive may be quite possible to the Almighty, All-wise Jehovah. It is not quite enough that the thing is not seen to be necessarily impossible. If it is not necessarily impossible, it may be true, and if the Scriptures assert it, must be true. The storm of the seventh of January may have happened according to the operation of general laws, but it is no less on that account to be believed in as a work of a particular providence. Not a being perished on that morning, or was preserved in the midst of danger, but by the particular providence of God. A gloomy world it would be, indeed, if God governed by laws which he could not at any moment regulate. The God of the philosopher is not God. He sits bound on his throne, and looks on the wild confusion created by the operation of his general laws, and cannot interfere. It is vain to pray to him. He can do neither good nor evil, but according to the course of nature. Is this the God of creation? Is this the Governor of the universe? No, this is not the God of creation and of providence, more than he is the God of the Bible. This is Jupiter bound by the hundred-handed Briareus.

But if the Ruler of the world is to be restrained from interfering with his general laws, to effect his particular purposes, which I maintain is not a philosophic truth, more than it is a scriptural one, still, could not almighty power, guided by perfect wisdom, have established such general laws that no degree of misery could have had existence? The existence of any degree of misery is not the necessary consequence of general laws. If general laws could have produced universal happiness, there must have been a deficiency either of wisdom or of power. If God is to be excluded from the particular government of the world, as much as the gods of Epicurus, still the question must be