

The Beacon.

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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QUEBEC, THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 1846.

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THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY.

"Ha! the dull dense clouds are breaking,
Slowly—slowly—slowly into light away!
And my mental sense is waking.
Dazzled by a brighter ray,
Than e'er, the east with glory streaking,
Glanced from the opening eyes of day."

"Is it come?—that glimpse of Heaven,
For which my soul so long had striven,
Diving for its obscure and high
In the darkling depths of prophecy?
Avaunt thou, fiend! the woman's seed shall tread
On the fierce terrors of the serpent's head."

"I know him by the light he giveth;—
I know that my Redeemer liveth;—
He shall stand upon the earth,
Godlike in his mortal birth;
In him the sons of sorrow shall find rest,
And all the nations of the world be blest."

"Yes, I know him from afar—
Israel's sceptre—Jacob's star—
For, like him on Zophim's brow,
Him of the gifted eye,
I shall see him, but not now,—
Behold him, but not now."

"Be it so! on other eyes
Let the promised One arise,
While mine own are curtain'd deep
In their last and soundest sleep;
Enough for me, what I hope sublime
Can to her humble child allow;
Enough!—anticipating time,
She feels him and adores him now."

REV. T. E. HANLON,
Ep. Recorder.

OUR CHIEF ANXIETY.

In the meantime our chief anxiety is directed towards the unsound members of our own communion, especially those false brethren, who poison the very fountain of religious education, and insidiously seek to pervert the minds of the young and the partially-informed members of their university, under the specious disguise of superior sanctity and devotion. Many, alas! are from day to day made victims of their dissimulation. Their mode of writing is marked with all the characteristics of jesuitical subtlety. They insinuate rather than assert. They elude the grasp of reason. They profess to venerate antiquity, while they exalt the authority of later ages over that of the first three centuries of Christianity; and under the miserable pretence of development, impudently add to the book of life doctrines and traditions utterly at variance with Divine revelation.

If you have perused the meagre and sickening pages of their later publications, you must have been reminded of the day-dreams of monks, the workings of moody abstraction in vacant minds, and the wire-drawn sophistries of schoolmen, which constituted the theology of the middle ages; presenting an intellectual phenomenon which no man could have anticipated, even in imagination, as likely to be revived in our own times.

Reverend brethren, my heart is full of grief when I contemplate the melancholy change: and you will, I trust, bear with me if I dwell too long or too vehemently upon this topic, in consideration of my own former connection with that university, and will permit me to indulge in some reflections arising out of my own experience there.

More than thirty years of the most active part of life, I spent among them, filling almost every post connected with the discipline and the studies of the place. During that long period I witnessed a continually growing improvement in both; more especially in all that concerned religion, in the performance of its daily duties, and in the elementary instruction which, both in public and private, young men received. Together with this more enlarged view of their Christian duty, and a much more correct and serious sense of the clerical office, there was a corresponding improvement in the tone of manners and conversation, as compared with those of the preceding age; and still more after the system of public examination had been well established, a new life seemed to be infused into all generous and well disposed minds.

In this greatly improved state of the university, I was called away to other and more important duties. And now, what a sad reverse do I behold! A sect or school clandestinely formed, distinguished by peculiarities in performing religious rites approximating to those of Rome, straining all the formalities of our Church so as to make them consonant with the Romish pattern, and indulging a sort of yearning for a re-union to that corrupt branch, notwithstanding the fundamental and irreconcilable differences existing, and which must ever exist between us. All this partiality is, by many of its members, more and more avowed, till at length some of its boldest leaders aver, that the Articles of our Church may be subscribed without relinquishing a single Romish tenet.

When matters had reached this crisis, there was indeed a formal condemnation, by a large majority, of this unblushing heresy; but when it was proposed to deprive the delinquent of honours and emoluments obtained by duplicity and prevarication, how painful a defection was witnessed! What numbers were there who joined in condemning the heresy, but refused to censure the convicted heretic; and were desirous of retaining the infected member in close contact with the untainted, but incautious and unsettled youth whom he was endeavouring to lead astray—although an act of this kind was unquestionably more within the province of academical discipline and duty, than to pass a vote against heterodox publications. It is an abuse of words to call this *moderation*. It betrays a lukewarmness in the cause of Gospel truth, which forces from us the sentence pronounced from high

authority against a wavering Church, "I would thou wert hot or cold."—*The Right Rev. E. Copleston, D. D., Lord Bishop of Llandaff.*

REALITY IN PREACHING.

When you preach, be real. Set your people before you in their numbers, their wants, their dangers, their capacities; choose a subject, not to show yourself off, but to benefit them; and then speak straight to them, as you would beg your life or counsel your son, or call your dearest friend from a burning house, in plain, strong, earnest words. And that you may be thus real, I would counsel you from the first to take as little of your sermons as possible from those of other men. Let them be your own, made up of truths learned on your knees from your Bible, in self-examination, amongst your people. And to make them such as this, spare no pains or trouble. Beware of giving to God and souls the parings of your time, the ends of other employment. Beware of a pernicious facility. However poor or ignorant your people are, you may be assured that they will feel the difference between sermons which have been well digested and well arranged, and those which are put carelessly and ill together. Think your subject thoroughly over; settle, if possible, on Sunday evening the next Sunday's subject, meditate on it as you walk about your parish; pray for power to enforce it; and as you read God's word, and go about your parish, light will break out on it, illustrations occur, applications suggest themselves; and when you write or speak, you will be full and orderly, and this is to be strong. Let every sermon be one subject, well divided and thoroughly worked out; and let all tend to this highest purpose, simply to exalt before your people Christ crucified. Deal much in the great truths which the blessed God has taught us of Himself; beware of always tarrying amongst the graves and corruption of our own fallen and tempted state, but rise up to God and Christ and the Holy Ghost, and bear your flock with you there.—*Charge by The Right Rev. Samuel Wilberforce, D. D., Lord Bishop of Oxford.*

THE MIRROR OF THE WORD OF TRUTH.

Why is it that the word of truth, which is able to save the soul, does not produce its designed effect on all? Because all will not look into this mirror, for the purposes of conviction and instruction in righteousness. Few indeed voluntarily turn to it. Few hear more of "the word of truth" than is obtruded upon their attention by the different services of God's house, to which custom brings them; and they come to it with minds so unprepared, that the seed sown cannot strike root; with hearts so pre-occupied by worldly interests and affections, that the word preached cannot profit them. The most awakening, impressive, and affecting declarations of "the word of truth" strike upon hearts which have been made a hard and beaten thoroughfare to the world and its vanities, and can make there no impression. They can hear Christ himself declare in his word, "Except ye repent ye shall perish; unless a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." They can hear that word of truth declare, that without holiness no man can see the Lord; and not only do these awfully awakening declarations fail in bringing them to examine whether they have been, themselves, the subjects of those important changes, without which this highest and most infallible authority has pronounced that their destiny shall be everlasting perdition, but they fail in exciting even a transient curiosity to know what those mysterious, and to them untelligible, changes mean, while yet they are pronounced thus essential to their salvation. It is true that they thus escape all painful convictions of sin, all the horrors of a disturbed conscience, all distressing fears about the future; but oh! remember that this apathy of soul is but as the dead calm of nature which precedes the bursting of the earthquake or volcano: that it is but the stupor of moral death; that it is but the awful stillness and the dark clouding of the gathering tempest, from which the thunders of an angry heaven will shortly burst, and which will envelop the wreck of a desolated soul in the blackness of darkness for ever.

But there are some in whose minds the hearing of "the word of truth" awakens transient convictions, which yet are as the grass growing upon the house top, that withereth afore it groweth up. Instead of studying to cherish and deepen these impressions; converting every conviction into a prayer for persevering grace; reducing every good to practice, so that it may become a habit of mind and life, they return into the world, and dissipate every serious feeling in levity and worldliness. Thus they live on, now convinced and repenting, the next moment unconvinced and sinning; each flowing wave which the world pours in upon their minds obliterating the faint characters which, during its ebb, "the sword of the Spirit" had traced upon their hearts. There are but few minds formed of such firm materials as to retain an impression through unfavourable and opposing circumstances. To most, the last speaker, who speaks with power sufficient to impress them, gives the tone and character. And, therefore, it would be wise, as it is but decent and seemly, that in our meetings for public worship, the last speaker should be the minister of God; the last voice which each hears in the house of God that which has inspired upon him the blessing of the Sacred Trinity; and that the spirit in which he returns to his home should be that calm serenity; that holy peace, that

unworldly spirit of communion with God, with which the minister of God dismissed him. Instead of this, it is too generally the case, that greeting and salutations, the news of the day, the business of the morrow, cares or pleasures, levity or worldliness in whatever guise, dissipate the impressions which the services of God's house were designed to produce. Upon a meeting in which God has promised His especial presence, another meeting is grafted by Satan, in which every man preaches vanity to his neighbour; and, like the fowls of the air, picks up the good seed sown in his heart, lest he should believe and be saved. When our public services have closed, all should separate as soon as propriety permits. Each should return to his respective home, and seek to carry with him the spirit and the impressions which they produced. He should retire to his closet, and shut to the door, and meditate upon the word spoken, and pray to his Father which is in secret. He should plead with him His own promises for a blessing upon his own word; and in the strength of this spiritual meat, he should enter upon his daily walk of life with renewed vigour, and with renewed purposes of *patient and active obedience*. Then will he be, not a hearer only,—not a forgetful hearer, who has trifled away opportunities, and sinned away convictions; who has resisted, grieved, and quenched the Divine Spirit, until at length he has been abandoned by a long-suffering God, and given over to an undisciplining and unfeeling mind; but he will be one of those of whom the Apostle proceeds to speak, who "looketh into the perfect law of liberty; and continueth therein: he not being a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work;" and of whom he pronounces that "this man shall be blessed in his deed."—*J. M. H. in the Christian Observer.*

TOLERATION IN CHINA.

From the *China Mail* of Dec. 25th, 1845.

The Government notification containing a translation of the Imperial Commissioner's letter for the toleration of all sects of Christians in China, will be read with much satisfaction.

When the original proclamation was first mentioned in our columns, several months ago, some doubt was expressed as to its authenticity, which, however, was afterwards fully established; and the *Chinese Repository*, watchful in all that concerns the interests of Protestant missions, in its last number called attention to communications from Bishop Boone and Dr. Medhurst, tending to show that the proclamation was meant to include only those who in worshipping God "venerate and make offerings to the cross, pictures, and images." It now appears, however, that if the document there referred to was authorized by the Chinese authorities, it must have been obtained under false representations of what constitutes Christianity; and for this mistake ample reparation is here made:—

"Diplomatic Department.

"GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.

"His Excellency Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary, &c., has much satisfaction in giving publicity to the annexed reply from the Chinese Minister to an official note from the Plenipotentiary, in which, with reference to a late edict at Shanghai, equal toleration was claimed for Protestants and Bapists. It will be his Excellency's care, by proper instructions to Her Majesty's Consuls at the northern ports, to ensure the due promulgation of the proclamations promised by the Chinese Minister.

"By order,
"ADAM W. ELSLIE.

"Victoria, Hong Kong, Dec. 23, 1845.

"KEYING, High Imperial Commissioner, &c., Sends the following reply to the Hon. Envoy's despatch concerning equal toleration of the religion professed by the English (here follows an extract of the contents of that letter).

"When I previously concluded the commercial treaty with the United States, one of the articles gave permission to erect chapels in the five ports, and all nations were to have the same privilege, without the slightest distinction. Subsequently, the French Envoy Lagrené requested, that natives, if they were good men, should be entirely exempted from punishment on account of the religion they professed. I, the Great Minister then again represented this matter to the Throne; upon which the Imperial reply was received, that it should be done as proposed, without drawing any distinction between the rites of the several religions.

"As, however, some of the local mandarins seized crucifixes, pictures and images, and burnt them; it was subsequently settled that permission should be given to worship them.

"I, the Great Minister, do not understand drawing a line of demarcation between the religious ceremonies of the various nations; but virtuous Chinese shall by no means be punished on account of the religion they hold. No matter whether they worship images or do not worship images, there be no prohibitions against them, if when practising their creed, they act well.

"You, the honourable Envoy, need therefore not be solicitous about this matter, for all western nations shall in this respect certainly be treated upon the same footing, and receive the same protection.

"I have now addressed a letter to the Lieutenant-Governor of Kiangsoo, to direct the inspector of Soochoo, Sungkeang, Taetsong, to publish another proclamation; and likewise officially request the Governor-General of Fokoen and Ckeang to issue a

distinct declaration of the same tenor in the various ports.

"Whilst sending an answer, I wish you much happiness at this season, and send this important paper.

"TAOUKWANG.
"25th year, 11th month, 22d day
(20th Dec., 1845.)

"Received 23d inst.

"To His Excellency, Her Britannic Majesty's Plenipotentiary, Sir John Francis Davis, Bart., &c.

"True translation.

(Signed) CHARLES GUTZLAFF,
"Chinese Secretary.

"True copy," ADAM W. ELSLIE.

PERSECUTION IN THE CANTON DE VAUD.

Despatches of the Earl of Aberdeen to the Minister Plenipotentiary of Her Britannic Majesty to the Swiss Confederation.

Foreign Office, Jan. 13th, 1846.

Sir.—The intelligence communicated in your despatch of November 24th, respecting the affairs of the Canton of Vaud, and more particularly the conduct of the government of that canton towards the clergy, has been received with deep regret by the government of Her Majesty, and has excited a lively sympathy for the seceding pastois among the various classes of Her Majesty's subjects.

Indeed, the impression produced in this country by recent events in that part of Switzerland has been so painful, that members of different evangelical denominations have requested Her Majesty's government to employ their influence with the authorities of the canton in favour of the ministers who, from conscientious motives, have separated from the Church recognized by the state; but though the petitioners confine themselves to the prayer that the government of the Canton of Vaud will afford to these pastors protection in the free exercise of divine worship, and do not seek their being reinstated in the churches they have been forced to abandon from conscientious motives, Her Majesty's government does not feel competent to interfere, even within this limit, in the internal administration of the affairs of an independent state.

At the same time, I do not hesitate to authorise you, to express, whenever you think the information may be useful, the sentiments of profound regret with which Her Majesty's government have received your report of the proceedings above alluded to, as also their conviction that perseverance in such a course must, sooner or later, involve the canton, and even the Swiss Confederation, in new troubles, and materially hinder the settlement of previously existing differences, which Her Majesty's government has had occasion to deplore.

(Signed) ABERDEEN.

Foreign Office, Jan. 30, 1846.

Sir.—Your despatch No. 4, of the 22nd inst., containing the note addressed to us on the 14th, by the Council of State of the Canton of Vaud, relating to unexpected differences between the government of that canton and a portion of the clergy of the National Church, has been received and laid before the Queen.

My despatch No. 1, of the 13th inst., has sufficiently informed you of the painful impression produced in this country by the conduct of the government of the Canton of Vaud towards the seceding clergy, as also the opinion of Her Majesty's government, that perseverance in such a course must, sooner or later, lead to results most prejudicial to the welfare of the canton and of the Swiss Confederation.

You will also have seen by that despatch that the wish of Her Majesty's government not to interfere in the internal administration of an independent state was the only reason which prevented the expression of those sentiments officially, to the government of the canton. But now that the Vaudois Council of State, invested as it is with full powers touching the affairs of the Church, has itself invited Her Majesty's government to pronounce their judgment upon the proceedings which form the subject of the documents transmitted to you on the 14th inst., Her Majesty's government do not hesitate to authorise you to express, in direct terms, to the executive government of the Canton of Vaud in reply to that invitation, the sentiment of deep regret with which they have viewed the conduct of that government towards the clergy of the canton.

Her Majesty's government are unable to understand how any peculiarity of legislation or position can be considered as justifying an abandonment of the first principles of civil and religious liberty, the maintenance of which distinguishes civilised Christian states, and which has hitherto been the pride of the Canton of Vaud.

On the contrary Her Majesty's government had a right to expect that those cantons calling themselves liberal would jealously have sought to justify their claim to the appellation, by setting an example of scrupulous respect for the rights and liberties of their own citizens as well as those of their confederates.

The respect felt by Her Majesty's government for the independence of the Swiss cantons, as for that of all sovereign states, as before observed, hindered the expression of their opinion, in the present official form; but the Vaudois government having appealed to Her Majesty's government for their judgment, they feel that they cannot give a better proof of the sincere interest which they take in the welfare of the entire Confederation of which the Canton of Vaud constitutes so important a member, than by frankly expressing, but with deep regret, their conviction that perseverance in the course on which

the government of Lausanne has entered as regards religious questions, must involve the canton, and even the Swiss Confederation, in new troubles, and by hindering the settlement of previously existing differences, which Her Majesty's government has already had occasion to deplore, endanger, by the rupture of the federal compact, the national independence of the Swiss people.

You will communicate a copy of this instruction, as well as that of my despatch No. 1, of the 13th inst., to the government of the Canton of Vaud, and make known the sentiments therein expressed in whatever quarter the knowledge of them may appear to you useful.

I am, &c.,
(Signed) ABERDEEN.

ADVANCE OF THE REFORMATION IN FRANCE.

From a letter by the Rev. N. Roussel, dated 10th March, 1846.

Like a fond parent, I commence by speaking of my own offspring—Haute-Vienne. I must say that since last year it has much improved, if not in extent, at least in strength. You are about to examine it.

You are aware that the last post which I established was that; unhappily, or happily (for all things concur to the prosperity of God's work), a pastor was not sent to this place for several months. This delay so excited the wishes of the inhabitants, that the first meetings in this village of 400 souls consisted of 1,000 persons; they came from all parts, so that the bishop was alarmed, and began to pretend that the call of the inhabitants to the pastor had only forged signatures appended to it. The minister [of the Interior] instituted an inquiry, and the signatures were found quite authentic. The bishop then gave out that they who had signed were drunkards, and men of loose life. "So much the better," it was reported, "that is precisely the reason why they want the gospel, and it was for them that Jesus came." The bishop, however, little satisfied with this answer, urged the authorities to prosecute us, and either to please him or frighten us, proceedings were commenced. Our counsel requested a delay of eight days, alleging that we were about to open other places, and that we might as well have one action for the whole. Soon afterwards, orders arrived from Paris, and instead of a respite of eight days, a month was allowed us; then two months, which meant as of old, that we should be left undisturbed. This church has received a school-master besides the pastor, and goes on well.

I do not wish to revert to the opening of the church at Limoges, which you have without doubt read of in the journals, but I can give you a little anecdote which is related there. Whilst I was preaching, and 200 persons were outside the church unable to gain admittance, a zealous Catholic woman passed on her way to mass. She inquired, and learned what was going on, and notwithstanding the crowd, succeeded in getting inside the church. Curiosity had brought her, but the Almighty there met her, and she returned home seriously impressed. Tormented in her conscience, she confessed to having been among the Protestants, and her priest forbade her to go again; but the Spirit of God, stronger than the priest, continually urged her to attend the Protestant Church; at last, after a six months' struggle, on the New Year's day, (which in France is a day for feasting as Christmas in England) this woman accented the pastor as he came out of church, and putting her chaplet and medals into his hand said, "These are your new-year's gifts, I hope you may receive many such: I do not want them any longer." The pastor visited the woman's husband, who told him "You have done me great service. My wife when she was a Roman Catholic was always tormenting herself with fasts and pilgrimages; still she was not happy; the more she did, the more she wished to do, and she injured her body without obtaining peace of mind. But since she has frequented your church, the whole is changed, she is peaceable without fear, without alarming herself about fastings, and making herself ill."

Worship at Limoges continues to be well attended three times a week: on the Wednesday a discourse upon the history of the Reformation, always fills the church, which you know is capable of containing five or six hundred persons. On Sundays at two and seven o'clock, it is nearly the same. The committee of the Evangelical Society think about placing a school in this town.

A letter this week from Villefavard informs us that the inward work progresses, and that this commune, two years ago the most demoralized in France, is now peaceable, happy, and always ready to assemble itself to hear the gospel. The Bible is in every house; the children learn with pleasure, and the school counts about 110 scholars. I will finish what concerns Villefavard by an ingenious confession which one of the inhabitants made to me on my last visit. "There is but one thing which perplexes me" said he, "it is to observe properly the ten commandments; I cannot do it." You see that he was thinking of something else besides his rosary, and with this disposition there is but one step to Christ.

Worship has been commenced at Droux, and an evangelical schoolmaster has just been sent to that commune.

But the greatest and most recent event in the Haute-Vienne, is the commencement of worship at Chateau-Poussac. This commune is, perhaps, the largest in the district (*arrondissement*); it contains 6,000 souls, half of whom are more or less disposed to join us. A month ago the pastor of Limoges went thither to establish public worship. The mayor declared that he was opposed to it, but the pastor replied that he should not preach