

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 HUSSITES.

He is dead! but his spirit lives on,
In the quenchless devotion we feel;
And think not, ye despots, we'll turn at your
frown,
Or quail at your fagot and steel.
Ye thought to extinguish his name,
When ye doomed him to death and despair,
When ye laughed as he writt'd in the conquer-
ing flame.
And ye drown'd with your curses his prayer.
But he's gone, as a glorious conqueror, home,
And his name shall be hallow'd through ages to
come.

Oh! shame on you, worst of your race!
Though you glitter in purple and gold;
Though you hide, by a smiling and sanctified face,
The hearts that are wicked and cold—
Though you serve at the altar of God—
Though loudly your thunders are hurl'd,
And long in your pride have ye scornfully trod
On the neck of a prostrated world,—
Yet millions are learning their rights to discuss,
And heroes shall rise from the ashes of Huss.
BAPTIST NORT.

JUDGE NOT.

Extract from the last Sermon preached by the
Rev. Dr. MILTON, Rector of St. George's,
New York, on Sunday the 6th of last April,
being two days before his unexpected death.

Whether the happiness of society, the extension of Christ's kingdom, the dismay of infidels, or the prosperity of our own communion, be an object of desire, I am persuaded each will be best promoted by that mild and conciliatory temper, to the cultivation of which the minds of Christians have, of late years, so much more than formerly, been directed. It is not by a stately and proud reserve in our demeanour towards others, nor by advancing high sounding and exclusive claims to the favour of God, nor by casting contemptuous sneers at the principles or systems of such as in outward things walk not with us, if they profess allegiance to the same Master, and faith in His blessed Gospel, that true religion will be promoted, or our venerable Church obtain from other denominations that respect to which her character and institutions entitle her; and which, when presented with the moderation and meekness that characterized our adorable Exemplar, it is believed she will not fail to receive. It is one thing to be attached to our own peculiarities, because we believe them to be right, and another, to denounce in the language of asperity and unkindness, the opinions and doings of others as positively wrong; or, to attach to their disunion from us in ministry, discipline, and worship, consequences that involve in doubt their everlasting prospects. It is one thing to look with feelings of deep regard on the external order and symmetry of our own dwelling, and another to despise, because somewhat less beautifully constructed, that of our neighbour. In plain terms, it better becomes us, and it will be in all respects more profitable, instead of spending our time in judging others, to judge our own selves; and to be more anxious to exhibit an unshaken faith in the grand doctrines of our religion, and a course of conduct evincing the sincerity of our professions, than to expend our zeal, and excite our passions, and court opposition, by constantly dwelling on inferior discrepancies, which neither vitally affect a Christian's standing with God, nor materially influence his conduct in life. If heated controversies on all sides were avoided, and a spirit of Christian charity fervently cherished, the Church universal, "which is the blessed company of all faithful people," would rise in all her majesty and strength, her enemies would sink into merited insignificance, and we should realize with a more undoubting confidence, the promise of her great Head, that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against her. There is, it is true, some plausibility in the grounds on which violent party disputants defend a stern and unbending attachment to their own views, and a right to judge with severity the views of their opponents. There are certain axioms to which they readily resort; but it happens, that however opposite in their opinions, each claims the same right of summoning these to his aid. In this state it is not probable either will be convinced by his adversary; but each, if he has imbibed the spirit of his Master, should, as far as possible, forbear from any harsh judgment of his motives, or the results of an honest difference of views. For instance, one alleges he must be right, because truth is an unit; as "there is one faith, one Lord, one baptism," so no two opposing propositions can be true. A God of truth cannot contradict himself. As the same fountain sends not forth bitter water and sweet, so truth and falsehood cannot issue from the same source. They, perhaps, each tell us too, that they have placed their minds under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and that he cannot be wrong, because the promised office of that heavenly agent is to "lead" the disciples of Christ "into all truth." Each will also allege that the standard to which his creed is conformed is the Word of God. The law and the testimony constitute the touchstone to which they are alike willing that every proposition they advance should be brought. Now where candour obliges us to award to these disputants both a competent measure of intellect, and also honesty of purpose and intention, would we not recommend to them—if we are the party on one side or the other of these supposed controverted points, would we not ourselves exercise—much forbearance in their enforcement, much reciprocal charity and indulgence? In all such cases it will contribute to this feeling, if we reflect why it probably is that good people have such different apprehensions of the truth of God;

how it is, that, in the religious world, (by which term I would be understood now to refer to such as agree in certain great points deemed essential to salvation,) such numerous diversities of sentiment should obtain. It is no matter of surprise that wicked men should be opposed to the truth, or have a thousand incongruous and conflicting views respecting it; for their creed is commonly dictated by their evil propensities and passions. They have, in no sense, "received the truth in the love of it," and God often "gives them over to strong delusion to believe a lie." But why on many points does so great variety of opinion obtain among those who truly love and fear God?

Now we are free to express our persuasion, that God does not suffer one of his real children to embrace, and die in the belief of any dogma, by which his salvation is endangered. The Apostle tells us of those who "bring in damnable heresies." But though every deviation from the truth is error, every such deviation is not damnable error. Some things are fundamentally important—others are not. I am aware that there may seem to be difficulty in determining what are of the one, or the other, description. I know of no better rule of distinction than this. All truths are fundamental, the belief of which is necessary to produce such exercises of faith and holiness as are essential to salvation: and all errors are fundamental errors, which a man cannot hold, and yet receive that faith and holiness, without which, according to the Scriptures, he cannot be saved. For instance, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely essential to the salvation of those to whom he has been revealed. For "without faith it is impossible to please God." Repentance for sin is essential: for God "commands all men everywhere to repent." Spiritual regeneration is essential: for Christ declares "except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven." Sanctification is essential: for "without holiness no man can see the Lord." We might extend the examination; but these examples, plainly derived from the book of God, are sufficient for illustration. Many matters of secondary importance, however, may be believed or disbelieved by persons who profess all the doctrines that have been stated, and others equally mighty; which neither leading into immoral practice, nor putting in jeopardy the salvation of the soul, do not require that the bond of Christian brotherhood should be severed; but, on the contrary, call for such a liberal construction and treatment as may conform to the spirit of our Lord's injunction in the text: "Judge not." But the man who believes his own mind to be under the spiritual influence of the Holy Spirit, may find it hard to believe his neighbour, who differs from him on these subordinate points, a real disciple of Christ's; because, as intimated above, of the impossibility of the gracious Comforter, who was to lead into all truth, bearing on the same subject a different testimony to different minds. Now may we not remove this difficulty—must we not do so unless we are prepared to violate every principle of Christian charity—by supposing that the passage referred to as descriptive of the office of the Holy Spirit, and others of a similar nature, apply only to the essential truths of salvation? Is it not a harsh judgment to pronounce an individual wholly destitute of grace, because in theory or practice he appears to us to err on some inferior points? On any other principle we must involve numbers in peril of perdition on account of their ignorance or unbelief of propositions, which, though true, are such as the Divine Word no way connects with the hope of future blessedness. If we are disposed to the exercise of a charitable judgment, may we not, in some measure, account for the subsisting differences of opinion on a variety of minor topics connected with religion? Many propositions of this less important nature are not so clearly taught in Scripture, as are those immediately connected with the salvation of the soul. It has been the great mercy of its adorable author, that those propositions, a cordial assent to which is necessary to the exercise of faith and the practice of holiness, are so plainly taught and so frequently repeated, that if a man will not shut his eyes, and suffer his passions to give law to his understanding, he must believe them; while others less important (this very circumstance showing that they are so) are not delivered with such indubitable clearness, but that they may, when brought under the consideration of differently constituted minds, or under varying circumstances of education or association, become subjects of dispute. Many of the points on which Christians differ, are, in fact, rather deductions and inferences, than positive scriptural prescriptions, which each man assumes the right to make for himself; and therefore it is not by any means surprising, that one should draw, on such questions, a conclusion which another would not. Every one has not the same quickness of apprehension, the same extent of information, the same reasoning powers, and talents for logical deduction. Though he may have the spirit of truth dwelling in him, and the outward Word to direct him, he may not be placed in as favourable circumstances; he may not have the same collateral assistance, or the same capacity of distinguishing truth from error, as others; or if he has, yet in measuring and weighing a variety of propositions, he may err on some. As undoubted Christians are often observed not to be free from every error in practice, so neither are they from every error of understanding. If they have not the same faculty for the apprehension of divine truth, nor the same means and advantages for knowing the mind and will of God, it is not more to be wondered at that they should differ in the fashion

of their opinions, than of their faces. To what different conclusions have even well-informed minds arrived, after an attentive examination of Scripture, in relation to the external polity of the visible Church? We allege the imparity of the ministry, and the gradation of three orders; others contend for an entire equality, and a single order. Supposing they are mistaken, shall we judge our brethren, who honestly dissent from our conclusions, as out of the pale of the Christian Covenant, and either consign them to eternal ruin, or leave them to a bare peradventure as to their eternal hopes? So we entertain no doubts that infants are to be baptized, though we cannot support our position by any positive command expressly mentioning them, any more than such an authority can be produced for the administration of the Lord's Supper to females. But as the latter is a matter of fair inference from the generality of the command for the observance of the Lord's Supper, so the former is inferred from the same generality, as well as from identity of the covenant of grace under the Old and New Testaments, from the law of circumcision, from early usage, from the Saviour's declaration of the right of infants to the kingdom of God, &c. Yet others, no doubt as sincere as ourselves, do not see the force of our conclusions, and conscientiously abstain from the practice. Should we harshly judge each other on these and similar topics? or may we not severally hold our opinions, and pursue our convictions of duty, with the charitable hope that our doings being designed to be conformed to the Divine Will, may be accepted of God?

Allow me another suggestion in respect to the existing differences of opinion among Christians. May they not be permitted by Divine Providence for wise purposes? The will of man is left free to choose, or reject, such propositions as are laid before him. His exercise of this liberty, even when some error supervenes, may tend to the confirmation of others, and perhaps eventually of himself, in the truth. It is no uncommon thing for us, after satisfaction resulting from inquiry, to hold with more tenacity than others, those truths of which our minds once doubted; and it cannot be questioned, that even polemical controversy, a thing, in itself, presenting so few attractions, when conducted in a meek and candid spirit, has often led to the more perfect proof and establishment of sound doctrine. It may induce many, who would otherwise be indifferent to the duty, to search the Scriptures, excite to more vigorous exercise of the understanding, and eventually in the extension of the correct principles of the Gospel. Such were the results of those eminent displays of talent and piety, which distinguished the writings of the Reformers; and other instances might be adduced in verification of this statement. Even where men have contended for victory, rather than for truth, and have had more in view their own exaltation than the glory of God, he has not infrequently made the infirmities, as well as the wrath, of man to praise him. When important truths have been assailed, and every effort of ingenuity exerted for their overthrow, the result has been, that instead of blindly assenting to them, as unexamined traditions, their professors have been made thoroughly acquainted with the evidences on which they rest, and become, as the Apostle expresses it, "rooted and grounded in the faith," as well from the force of positive argument in their favour, as the weakness of those by which they have been assailed.

THE HOLY COAT AT TRÈVES, AND JOHN RONGE.

The exhibition at Trèves, in Prussia, of the Holy Coat, or seamless garment worn by the Saviour previous to his crucifixion, is one of the most remarkable attempts of modern times to impose upon the credulity of the superstitious, and to fill the coffers of the Romish Church; particularly as it is a well-known fact that no less than *seventeen* (or, as some reckon, 21) other pretended coats of our Lord are exhibited at as many other different places. The whole affair, however, is looked at with growing disgust by enlightened Romanists as well as Protestants. The late Bishop Hommer, of Trèves, always refused to exhibit the coat, to prevent the spread of superstition and idolatry. And now that the present Bishop, Arnould, has acted differently, the enquiry is widely made—if such healing virtue and saving power be in the coat, as to warrant the awing mandate "WHOMSOEVER IS ABLE TO WALK, AND DOES NOT GO TO WORSHIP THE HOLY COAT, CANNOT SEE GOD AND SHALL NOT INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE!?" why did not the Bishop's love and sympathy for the souls and bodies of his flock offer it sooner for their advantageous adoration? and, why is not gratuitous access to the benefits it confers allowed to the poor, who have meritoriously encumbered their little property, sold their household furniture, anticipated the produce of their fields, and made themselves poor, in order to bear the expenses of a pilgrimage to Trèves, in search of a title to Heaven by the worship of a piece of cloth? "Holy garment, pray for us!" is actually a part of the litany recited by the votaries of the Holy Coat! The imposture, however, is outwitting its projectors, and causing a reaction which threatens to shake the Romish Church in Germany as by a second Reformation. Discretion has already dictated the envelopment of the Holy Coat in its triple chest sealed with sixteen seals. The Roman Catholic Bishop of Mayence, addressing the grand ducal minister, says "we have neither ordered nor forbidden the faithful of our diocese to perform the pilgrimage to Trèves. We have not called their attention to the subject; although requested." And the King of Saxony,

Frederic Augustus, himself a Roman Catholic, when urged to use his influence against the new movement, replied—"as King of a constitutional state, I have sworn to afford full freedom of conscience to every creed; I, therefore, will not lay any hindrance whatever in the way of the present movement." The electric spark seems to be running along a connected though unsuspected chain, so that not only have the Roman Catholics in Berlin, Dresden, Leipsic, Brunswick, Bremen, and various small places in Saxony, caught the flame, and formed congregations of Dissenters from Rome on the basis of those in Breslau and Schneidemühl, but even the South of Germany has been roused, and in Frankfurt, Offenbach, Elberfeld, Wiesbaden, Stockach in Baden, &c., demonstrations of sympathetic conviction have been made. The King of Prussia is highly favourable to this Protestant movement, leaving even the military at full liberty to join the new Catholic Church. And even where the spirit of reform does not extend to the abandonment of Rome altogether, it has excited the hope of deliverance from some of her shackles,—several R. C. congregations having urged their bishops to take the initiative *ex-officio* in throwing off the late exactions of Rome, whilst more than one Romish Priest has, through the press, exhorted the German bishops, to get rid at once of the Roman errors and of the Roman yoke, by forming a free Catholic Church.

The two individuals hitherto most prominent in this movement are the priest Czarski, who ministers at Schneidemühl in Prussia; and the priest Ronce (pronounced Rong-ay) of Laurahutte in the diocese of Breslau, in Upper Silesia, kingdom of Prussia. The former is reported to be the more advanced in knowledge, but to be prudently leading his flock by degrees to higher attainments, renouncing auricular confession, administering the sacrament in two kinds, and reading the Mass (omitting parts) in the vulgar tongue. [See Berean 20th Feby. 1845.] Besides these priests who have joined his standard together with their congregations, about twenty other priests have given in their adherence to him, and declared their readiness to take the oversight of the new churches every where starting up. The latter, with his followers, though actually more Protestant than the Schneidemühlers, seems to be chiefly actuated by a spirit of indignant resistance to the enslaving superstitions and degrading tyranny with which Rome tramples upon the reason, the conscience, and the liberty of man.

This fearless reformer, born at Bischofswalde in Prussian Silesia, and now only 32 years of age, is the son of a worthy peasant; and passed his childhood keeping his father's flocks. Having received elementary instruction, at his village school, and passed through the classes of the gymnasium of Neisse, young Ronce repaired to the university, where he commenced his theological studies. In 1839 he entered the Seminary, and it was there, from what he tells us, that his eyes were opened to the religious and moral state of the Roman clergy.

He describes the time he passed in this suffocating atmosphere, as a sort of hell, where he felt day by day his moral liberty wither away with all the faculties of his mind, his heart, and even his physical strength. "The confidence I had in the spiritual guides of the people was torn from me when I saw closer how they acted. I was horror struck to see how religion was abused to enslave the people. The most bitter indignation possessed me when I saw with my eyes that tissue of hypocrisy with which Rome girdles us in from the cradle to the tomb. I then myself felt the burning impression of these chains of bondage I had never known, and I soon perceived the moral sufferings of my companions in misery; sufferings the more bitter as they dared not avow the cause of them; for it is the policy of the Roman hierarchy to enclose within her bonds even thought itself, and its art is to make them weigh heaviest on the lower clergy. It is towards this end that their whole education is directed, and when the mind is curbed beneath the yoke of this slavery, it becomes impossible, to most of them, ever to free themselves from it. The true arsenal of the shackles is the Seminary; it is there that the indelible seal of slavery is impressed on the young man.

"From the first day of my entrance into the Seminary, I could read on the countenances of my comrades, according to the difference of their characters, consternation, anguish, sadness, or a hopeless resignation. The first night five students, who slept in the same room with me, did not utter a syllable; shut up in himself, each silently sought rest. Forty young men in the flower of youth glided along in the gloom like mummies; and, without speaking, we gathered from each other's countenances what was passing in the heart. The most submissive endeavoured to rise to that species of heroism that sacrifices at once the azure sky of youth, its desires, its hopes, its liberty; under this oppression, the heart of the young man of twenty-four that beats so joyously, with such confidence and warmth, was quenched, and egotism poured through his arteries the poison of distrust and envy. The despotism of the Roman hierarchy appeared to me like a spectre that thrilled me with horror—a spectre that I saw busy in hollowing out tombs to bury youth alive in; tombs that were afterwards to swallow up the liberty and the happiness of nations. Obedience, and absurd, blind obedience, such is the first law of Rome."

Mr. Ronce became *Chaplain*, that is Curate, in the little town of Grottkau, where he courageously set himself to work, and acquired the

confidence of his parish, finding his delight in the instruction of the young there, free and happy. His sacerdotal bark sailed on prosperously, passing lightly by certain ceremonies of the Roman worship repugnant to the pilot. Suddenly it split against a rock; that rock was—an article in a newspaper.

The following was the cause of the deprivation of Mr. Ronce.—A deprivation about which the Roman Catholics have made a great noise, to weaken the terrible blow he has given to Romanism by his letter to the Bishop of Trèves. The diocesan chapter of Breslau had elected to the bishopric of that city an aged man, respected and loved for his moderation, gentleness of disposition, and comprehensive views. But it was precisely because of this that, for *two years*, the act of his confirmation to the see had in vain been looked for from Rome. What the whole diocese thought and whispered, Ronce had the courage to say aloud. He asked the public, in a letter signed *A Chaplain*, what reason could the court of Rome have for withholding from the diocese, for two years, the appointment of its first pastor. He asked, why this insult was inflicted on a venerable old man; he asked, why the chapter, that had elected him, was silent; he asked, finally, "If they expected the return of the time when, to be made a bishop, it was requisite to send a mule laden with gold to Rome?" *Inde ira!* Hence the outpourings of wrath upon him! Ronce was deprived of his office, without being either heard or tried, notwithstanding a remonstrance signed by forty members of his parish, and headed by the authorities of the town. No doubt, if Ronce had been willing to immure himself again in the Seminary, there to do penance in their so called "spiritual exercises," and to retract the truths he had written, as the chancellor of the diocese formally intimated to him, he might perhaps have reinstated himself in the good graces of this haughty superior. But Ronce had had enough of it; he took up his pilgrim's staff, gently bade farewell to his parish, and thenceforward enjoyed the privileges of a free man, honestly gaining his bread as tutor in the family of a magistrate.

After his letter to the Bishop of Trèves, Ronce was degraded and excommunicated by a decree of the Chapter of Breslau. What is most honourable to him is, that, besides the hearty testimony of his whole parish to his zeal and his irreproachable conduct, his superiors have not been able to assign any other motive for their very severe acts than his two letters; no other reproach was found against him. Yes, another delinquency is specified in the decree of deprivation,—it is that Ronce wore a coat too short, and a beard too long!

Mr. Ronce published at the same time with his *Justification*, an energetic appeal to the *Lower Clergy*. To what does he invite his former colleagues? "To break the unworthy, the shameful bonds that connect them with Rome. You have been deprived," he says to them "of the liberty of the understanding; your mind is bound down by the tyrannical chains of edicts and bulls; the elastic spring of thought is paralysed by maledictions; your reason is a slave to fear and egotism. The despotism of Rome has compressed your faith within such narrow bounds, that for every new thought of your mind you must ask tremblingly, *Is it orthodox?*"

"You have been deprived of the freedom of the will. Blind obedience is the first commandment of the church of Rome; without this blind obedience, all your virtues are valueless, and you are criminals. But do you know that in trembling before the Church you tremble before yourselves? for do not you belong to the Church as well as your colleagues who sit in the chapter or on an episcopal throne; as well also as that Italian bishop whom they call the pope? Have you forgotten that in the first centuries, these colleagues whom you honour as idols were not, and pretended not, to be other than what you are? Have you forgotten that these priests and these bishops were then chosen by the parishes, by the people who sat with them in the synods? And now you tremble at every word of a compeer! Each of you has been made a passive piece of an immense machine. Claim your rights!"

Ronge then proceeds to refute the objections of fear. "We shall lose our places, our bread! Gain your livelihood honestly and without hypocrisy,—become the instructors of the people. We must separate from the pope! What have you to do with that foreigner, that Italian priest whose yoke crushes our country? Become German priests, true ministers of religion. But the power of Rome is in progress, it will not fall! Vain semblance! The nation ought to know, that these conversions so loudly spoken of, are for the most part, purchased by the Jesuits; they are paid for with the money that they have themselves extorted from the people by selling to them rosaries, indulgences, and prayers."

The author concludes by calling for a Christian, German-Catholic worship, conformable to the Gospel, to be celebrated in the mother tongue of the people, and freed from the inquisitorial yoke of auricular confession.

Such is the spirit of the new reformer, and such the limit he assigns to his work, and such the end he proposes to himself.

It is true that in this sketch of the biography of this intrepid and disinterested man, the enlightened Christian would find trace more clearly the lineaments of a character and conduct influenced not merely by discoveries of the corruptions of the Church of Rome, but also the deep convictions of his conscience concerning his own depraved and lost condition as a miserable sinner in the sight of a holy God;—would anxiously look for evidences of such an internal work of grace in the