

# The BEREAN.

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

VOLUME III.—No. 23.]

QUEBEC, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1846.

[WHOLE NUMBER 127.]

## THE COMPASS.

The storm was loud—before the blast  
Our gallant bark was driven;  
Their foaming crests the billows reared,  
And not one friendly star appeared,  
Through all the vault of heaven.

Yet dauntless still the steersman stood,  
And gazed without a sigh,  
Who poised on needle bright and slim,  
And lighted by a lantern dim,  
The compass met his eye.

Thence taught his darksome course to steer,  
He breathed no wish for day;  
But heaved the wildwind's headlong might,  
Nor once throughout that dismal night,  
To fear or doubt gave way.

And what is oft the Christian's life,  
But storms as dark and drear,  
Through which without one blithesome ray  
Of worldly bliss to cheer his way,  
He must his vessel steer!

Yet let him never to sorrow yield,  
For in the sacred page,  
A compass shines divinely true,  
And self-illumined greets his view,  
Amid the tempest's rage.

Then firmly let him grasp the helm,  
Though loud the billows roar,  
And soon his toils and troubles past,  
His anchor he shall safely cast  
On Canaan's happy shore.

Evangelical Magazine.

## OUR ONLY MEDIATOR.

From the Homily on Prayer.

O that all men would studiously read and search the Scriptures! then should they not be drowned in ignorance, but should easily perceive the truth, as well of this point of doctrine, as of all the rest. For there doth the Holy Ghost plainly teach us, that Christ is our only Mediator and Intercessor with God, and that we must seek and run to no other. If any man sinneth, saith St. John, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins. St. Paul also saith, There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, even the man Jesus Christ. Whereunto agreeth the testimony of our Saviour himself, witnessing that no man cometh to the Father, but only by him, who is the way, the truth, the life, yes, and the only door, whereby we must enter into the kingdom of heaven, because God is pleased in no other but in him. For which cause also he crieth, and calleth unto us, that we should come unto him, saying, Come unto me, all ye that labour, and be heavy laden, and I shall refresh you. Would Christ have us so necessarily come unto him? and shall we most unthankfully leave him, and run unto another? This is even that which God so greatly complaineth of by his Prophet Jeremy, saying, My people have committed two great offences: they have forsaken me, the fountain of the waters of life, and have digged to themselves broken pits, that can hold no water. Is not that man, think you, unwise, that will run for water to a little brook, when he may as well go to the head spring? Even so may his wisdom be justly suspected, that will flee unto the saints in time of necessity, when he may boldly and without fear declare his grief, and direct his prayer unto the Lord himself.

If God were strange, or dangerous to be talked withal, then might we justly draw back and seek to some other. But the Lord is high unto all them that call upon him in faith and truth; and the prayer of the humble and meek hath always pleased him. What if we be sinners, shall we not therefore pray unto God? Why did Christ then teach us to ask forgiveness of our sins, saying, And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us? Shall we think that the saints are more merciful in hearing sinners, than God? David saith that the Lord is full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger, and of great kindness. St. Paul saith, that he is rich in mercy towards all them that call upon him. And he himself by the mouth of his Prophet Isaiah saith, For a little while have I forsaken thee, but with great compassion will I gather thee: for a moment in mine anger I have hid my face from thee, but with everlasting mercy have I had compassion upon thee. Therefore the sins of any man ought not to withhold him from praying unto the Lord his God. But, if he be truly penitent and steadfast in faith, let him assure himself that the Lord will be merciful unto him, and hear his prayers.

## OUR SUFFICIENT HIGH PRIEST.

In all our relations with God, Christ, our High Priest, should ever be present with our minds, as alone giving us access to God, and alone purifying our hearts by his Spirit. In him we have all that we need; and as he is our Priest, without whom we have no boldness to come before the throne of grace, so he is our ONLY Priest, and all others who in any way pretend to be priests like him, are thieves and robbers, from hearing whom, may he, by his Spirit of truth, save his true sheep for evermore! But I may be asked, why I dwell upon this? Are these times which require to be warned against priestcraft and superstition? We may be careless, profane, proud, it may be, and rebellions; but surely we are in no danger of falling into the errors of a past time.

In one sense this is certainly true. There is no danger of our again witnessing those political usurpations, or that extreme degree of spiritual tyranny, which the ministers of the Gospel once ventured to exercise. But superstition and profaneness almost always go hand in hand; in the doctrines of superstition, there is, if I may so speak, a superstitious tendency, and a profane one; and those who feel little of the effects of the first, may yet be in great danger from the last. And thus the superstition which made Christ's ministers priests, may be, in the superstitious part of it, harmless enough now. But the profane part of the doctrine is showing its effects very generally among us, and very fatally, in the notion that we are not ourselves brought near to God; that there are some of our brethren screening us as it were from his eye, employed by him in his service, and bound to hear and do all he commands;

but that we, who are not his peculiar ministers, who stand as it were in the back ground, and who hope that he does not see us, may escape with a less punctual observance, and may be forgiven, if our distance hinders us, from hearing all his words, or from thinking that we are bound to learn them and to obey them.

Is this no evil now? Is not this common everywhere? How gladly do very young boys persuade themselves that their age keeps them in the background; that they cannot be expected to hear and to obey all the words of God. How gladly do older persons fancy that they, not being ministers of Christ, may be permitted to live less strictly; that religious matters are not their business; that they are not active members of the church, whose good and evil are necessarily mixed up with the good or ill state of the body to which they belong; but according to the favourite phrase "Friends to the Church," disposed to befriend it, though it is not properly their own concern, and therefore naturally claiming praise, as if for a disinterested support of a useful society. They seem, if I may be allowed the expression, to look on themselves, at most, as honorary members of it, lending it the sanction of their name, and wishing well to its objects; but by no means considering that it is their own concern, and their own business, that they are engaged for life or death in its welfare. This gross profaneness, this abandonment of our Christian privileges and duties, has flowed directly from the superstitious error of making a broad and perpetual distinction between one part of Christ's church and another; of making Christian ministers priests; of putting them between God and the people; as if they were to be in some sort mediators between God and their brethren, so that he could not be approached but through their ministry. The profaneness has followed from the superstition, according to a well known fact in our moral nature; that if the notion be spread, that out of a given number of men some are required to be holier than the rest, you do not, by so doing, raise the standard of holiness for the few, but you lower it for the many.

[The above is from a sermon of Dr. Arnold's, preached in the Chapel at Rugby School, and published in 1834. Throughout the passage, the word Priest is taken in the Old Testament sense of Cohen, "Administrator alieni negotii." In the literal meaning of Presbyter, Christian ministers are most properly called Priests.—EDITOR.]

## PRIVATE JUDGMENT.

From Review of a Charge by the Right Rev. Alfred Lee, D. D., Bishop of Delaware, in the Boston Episcopal Observer.

We have risen from the perusal of this Charge with feelings of unmingled gratification. A more timely topic could not have been selected; a more vigorous, clear, and concise argument upon the subject we know not where to find. Wise to distinguish things that differ, the Rt. Rev. author has clearly shown what the right he claims really is, as distinguished from what it is misrepresented to be. We could wish that every person whose mind has been led to distrust the truth of a necessary principle, by having had the evils of its manifold abuse ascribed to its mere use, might read and ponder every page of this valuable production. The following are the author's remarks upon the constant misrepresentations of the principle of private judgment, which no disavowals terminate.

"Before proceeding to an examination of this proposition, which is evidently one of exceeding moment, if it be true, and one which comes home to every breast, let me protest at the outset against certain misrepresentations of the opinion opposite to this, which have had currency, and which have doubtless had much influence in recommending to acceptance the principle above stated.

"One of these is the confounding the right and the abuse of private judgment. Its maintainers are often charged with countenancing unbridled license in the treatment of the divine oracles. But such representations are wide of the mark, and very frequently appear not only illogical but disingenuous. Respecting the abuse of this privilege there can be scarcely a dispute. No one of sober mind will maintain that the judgment of the individual must be correct; or, if it be formed in a hasty, arrogant, or presumptuous manner, that it is likely to be correct. What faculty, or privilege, or endowment does not man abuse? His liberty as a citizen, his authority as a magistrate, his domestic and social influence, his free agency and capacity of choice between good and evil, his own body and soul, all these he is constantly abusing and perverting. Says Bishop Burnet, 'since there is an assistance of the divine grace given to fortify the understanding as well as to enable the will, it follows that our understanding is to be employed by us in order to the finding out of the truth, as well as our will in order to the obeying of it. And though this may have very ill consequences, it does not follow that it is not true. No consequences can be worse than the corruption that is in the world, and the damnation that follows upon sin; and yet God permits it, because he has made us free creatures. Nor can any reason be given, why we should be less free in the use of our understanding, than we are in the use of our will; or why God should make it less possible for us to fall into errors, than to commit sins.' There would be just as much fairness in confounding rational liberty with ungovernable licentiousness, and placing the patriots of the American Revolution in the same class with the incendiaries and anarchists of the French.

"And the charge brought against those who do not subscribe to the opinion above quoted, of an undutiful spirit towards the church, is equally groundless. If they are convinced that their own church, instead of enjoying any such principle, repudiates and condemns it, then deference and respect for her teaching prompt them to reject it. Such, I am fully persuaded, and shall hope to show, is really the stand that hath been taken by our branch of the church catholic. And since this allegation is frequently urged, it may not be amiss here to ask, from what quarter has been heard of late the most disrespectful and unfeeling language touching our reformed church? Who have been most ready to stigmatize her doctrines as unchristian, and her worship as heathen and unsatisfying? Who have manifested most insubordination and contempt toward their ecclesiastical superiors? And who have pro-

ceeded, in the exercise of their private opinions, in utter disregard of the authoritative language of their spiritual mother; until, at length, in cases not a few, they utterly adjured her rule and cast away her cords from them? The very men, it must be replied, who have been at the same time denouncing and declaiming against the right of individual judgment, upon the very pretext which we are now considering.

"Neither is less injustice done by imputing to the advocates of individual responsibility, in matters of faith and practice, a contemptuous disregard of ancient piety and learning. To pay great regard to the ancient church, especially to its testimony concerning matters of fact, to its practice and usage, as well as to its witness for doctrinal truth, is quite consistent with the denial of any binding authority upon conscience of aught beside the holy scriptures. We are pleased that the author dwells rather on the responsibility than the right of private judgment. "I cannot repress my conviction," he declares, "that much of the professed submissiveness to church teaching that is current, is in reality an effort to get rid of the responsibility which our Creator has laid upon us. It is doubtless a pleasant and tranquillizing idea, that we have no pains to take or accountability to discharge in the search for truth. There is a proneness in the human mind to rest upon the opinions and practices of others, instead of applying its own powers to the ascertainment of its bounden duty. Just as the common maxims and usages of society pass current with the multitude, and are adopted as correct without thought or anxiety, so it may be with religious doctrines. Men are so reluctant to inquire patiently and humbly their particular obligations, that they will never be averse to any plan that proposes to relieve them from the burden. Promise a dispensation from pains-taking, diligence, self-denial and accountability, and you gain strong foothold for your doctrine in many hearts. The liberty, to which we were called as Christians, will be readily parted with, for the sake of being rid of the exertion and responsibility. And all the commendations of such slothful and timid shrinking from what God hath laid upon us, as if it were humility, submission, and obedience to the church, will be drunk in with willing ears."

## LONG RECEIVED MAXIMS OF PROPHECY, AND RECENT OPPOSITION TO THEM.

Ever since the time of the Reformation, the following maxims in the interpretation of the sacred prophecies have been generally received by the Protestant Churches:

1. That the visions of Daniel commence with the times of the prophet.
  2. That the events predicted in the Apocalypse begin from the time of prophecy, or within the first century.
  3. That the fourth beast denotes the Roman empire.
  4. That Babylon in the Apocalypse denotes Rome.
  5. That the little horn in Dan. vii. denotes the Papacy.
  6. That the man of sin relates to the same power.
  7. That the prophecy in 1 Tim. iv. is fulfilled in past events.
  8. That Babylon denotes, at least inclusively, Rome Papal.
- The three following have also been received by the most learned and able commentators of our own country, from the time of Mede down to the present day.
9. That the two woes relate to the Saracens and the Turks.
  10. That the two beasts in Rev. xiii. denote the civil and ecclesiastical Latin empire.
  11. That a prophetic day denotes a natural year, and a prophetic time three hundred and sixty natural years.

Of these leading maxims, the four first are held by the fathers of the early Church and most of the Roman commentators, as well as by the Reformed Churches. On the other hand, the three last, though generally received by interpreters of the English Church, are rejected by many foreign Protestants, especially among the Lutheran divines.

All of these maxims, however, without distinction, have been rejected by several late writers. Mr. Burgh, Mr. Maitland, Dr. Todd, Mr. Dodsworth, Mr. Tyso, and Mr. MacCausland, and more recently Mr. Govett, are the chief of them whose names have appeared; and of these, the three first are doubtless the leaders. To these, several anonymous writers may be added. They agree in few points, except in rejecting the conclusions of all previous expositors; and maintain that nearly the whole of Daniel's prophecies and of the Apocalypse are unfulfilled.

Now, if the theories of these writers are entirely groundless, the responsibility which they have incurred is very great, and the effects of their error may prove extremely fatal to the Church. The strongest bulwark against the revived zeal of the Romish Church will have been taken away when it is most needed; and the danger of a renewed apostasy will have been fearfully increased, at the time when its guilt would be most aggravated, and its punishment most speedy and sure. A spirit of feverish and sceptical doubt, the most fatal to real progress in divine truth, will have been injected, without warrant, into the minds of thousands; the light which the word of God has thrown, for the benefit of the Church, on half the whole period of her history, will have been quenched in darkness; and her hopes for the future, by a perplexed and fallacious application of irrelevant prophecies, be involved in a chaos of fanciful conjectures and inextricable confusion.

It is not, then, from a light estimate of the mischiefs which these theories are calculated to produce, that I shall endeavour carefully to guard against all controversial asperity; but because truth, however important, is best maintained and most commended to others by a calm and dispassionate inquiry. One subject, indeed, will occur, where the monstrous nature of the paradox which is maintained, and the tone in which it is defended, would justify severe language, and seem almost to require an indignant protest to be joined with its refutation.

For distinctness, I shall call the rival systems the Protestant and the Futurist interpretations. The three last of the maxims given above are rejected, it is true, by many Protestant divines. Yet since those propositions embody, to use Mr. Maitland's own words,

"the sentiments which have been maintained by most Protestant divines, and which are held by most (Protestant) writers on Prophecy in the present day," while the opposite view denies all warrant in the prophecies for any protest against the Church of Rome, the propriety of the title, in the former case, cannot with justice be denied.

[The above is the commencement of the first chapter in a work, published three years ago by an esteemed divine in the mother-country, the Rev. T. R. Birks, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, under the title of "First Elements of Sacred Prophecy, including an examination of several recent expositions, and of the Year-day Theory." We have extracted it for the purpose of introducing to our readers the subject of the book; and as we do not know now whether we can find any portions in the body of it, forming sufficiently complete and distinct articles of moderate dimensions for insertion, we subjoin, from the final chapter, the conclusions at which the inquiry carried on throughout the work has led the author.—Ed.]

The leading maxims on which the Protestant interpretations of the prophecies are based have now been examined, and are shown to rest on firm and solid proofs. The objections urged against them of late, with so much assiduity and zeal, are found, on a closer search, to be without any real warrant either in Scripture or sound reason, and would lead, by a natural consequence, to universal scepticism and unbelief. The application of the great image, and of the four beasts, to the empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome; and the fulfilment, in past events, of the opening part of Daniel's other visions, has been clearly established. The true reference of our Lord's own prophecy, and the Catholic scope of the Apocalypse, as a history of the whole Gentile dispensation, have also been confirmed by a multitude of concurrent proofs. And, finally, the year-day theory, which some recent authors have thought fit to reject contemptuously, as an antiquated error, is shown to rest on full and copious evidence, when the direction of St. Paul is observed; and, instead of resting in a superficial view, we learn to compare spiritual things with spiritual, and to search deeply and carefully the whole testimony of the word of God. The way is thus cleared for the practical superstructure, by which the remaining part of these prophecies may be explained on sure grounds, and applied to the actual instruction and guidance of the Church of Christ.

## THE DANGER OF MAKING MATERIAL SYMBOLS OF IMMATERIAL THINGS.

Mrs. Hamilton Gray, in her work on Etruria (Sepulchres of Etruria), observes: "As scarabæi existed long before we had any account of idols, I do not doubt that they were originally the invention of some really devout mind; and they speak to us in strong language as to the danger of making material symbols of immaterial things. First, the symbol came to be trusted in, instead of the Being of whom it was the sign; then came the bodily conception and manifestation of that Being, or his attributes, in the form of idols; then the representation of all that belongs to spirits; good and bad; then the deification of every imagination of the heart of man; a written and accredited system of polytheism, and a monstrous and hydra-headed idolatry."

This was the history of the scarabæus; an insect which so early attracted the notice of man by its wonderful and industrious habits, and for which habits he selected it to be the image of the Creator; and cutting stones to imitate it, he first wore them in acknowledgment of the divine presence, probably having no idea of attaching any further importance to them. I shall not here go into the history of this wonderful symbol, which there is reason to believe existed anterior to Abraham. But we cannot trace it through the subsequent period of man's history, buried in the bodies of the early Egyptians, deposited in the tombs of the ancient Etruscans, and even burnt with the bodies of those around which it was suspended during life; we cannot see it, as it was first formed, rude and unadorned, of simple basalt or porphyry, and trace it afterwards through different ages, up to that time when it was regarded as a mere ornament or charm, however beautiful to behold or valuable to possess, its ancient meaning having become obliterated; we cannot contemplate all the direful consequences which this apparently insignificant object was the primary means of bringing upon so many of the human race, without calling to mind that memorable command given to Moses on Mount Sinai: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them." What need have we then to avoid even the first approaches to idolatry, and to be jealous of ourselves, lest we should obscure the pure worship of our God by fixing our mind on any earthly object. For idolatry is not confined to the scarabæus, nor was it buried with the ancient Egyptians; but it is as much alive in the hearts of many at the present day, as ever it was in the days of old.—Church of England Magazine.

## CAIN AND ABEL.

Grace alone made them differ; and their different characters and history are a perfect illustration of the operation of the grace of the Gospel in every age. How exactly do they exemplify the Saviour's declarations: "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you nay, but rather division: for from henceforth, there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three." "A man's foes shall be they of his own household!" Such is the division still made among men, by the redemption of Jesus. It divides the whole of mankind into the two classes, of children of God, and children of the evil one; men carnally minded, which is death, and men spiritually minded, which is life and peace. Yet there is no distinction among them by nature. They are all of one blood. The most holy must say, "we were by nature the children of wrath even as others; but God who is rich in mercy loved us when we were dead in sins, and hath quickened us together with Christ." The whole difference is created by the operation of the Gospel, "plucking some as

brands out of the fire," and saving those who believe.

This separation among men which shall continue down to the day of judgment, and then for ever, we see first displayed in Cain and Abel. They stand before us as representatives of the two great classes of men, which the Gospel makes. And in their case, the Lord revealed to Adam, what should be the practical operation both of his own transgression, and of the divine plan of redemption, to the end of the world. Here was an immediate illustration of the fact which was intimated in the first great promise which the Lord had given to man. There was displayed the seed of the serpent, and the seed of the woman; a family of sin, and a family of grace; and these were found to be entirely contrary the one to the other. He that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the spirit. Yet in the result of their history, the promise too was fulfilled, as we shall subsequently see; the Saviour was a conqueror in his servant; the head of the serpent was bruised in his seed. And while the theory of redemption had been revealed to Adam, and the great offices and works of the Redeemer had been made known to him, there was displayed in his sons, in addition to these, the practical effect which this redemption should produce. Man saw what was "his own image," transmitted, in the character of the first born; and what was "the image of God" restored, in the character of the second. Righteous Abel leads off a glorious line of redeemed sinners, through the grace of God, called to be saints; washed in a Saviour's blood, clothed with a Saviour's righteousness, and crowned with his salvation for evermore. Wicked Cain goes before a long train of condemned sinners, who sow to the flesh, and of the flesh reap corruption; who follow down to eternal death, that carnal mind which is enmity against God. The characters of these leaders among men have been similarly impressed upon all who have severally come after them; and down to our day, there remains the very same division among the children of men. We have not room to consider more of their history now, than this separation, which the redemption of Abel made. But in this separation in the world, where do we severally stand? Are we following in the footsteps of the people of God, in the straight and narrow way which leadeth through grace to glory? or are we hurrying down with the multitudes of the unconverted and ungodly, the broad and beaten road which leads to destruction? On one or the other side of this line, which the conversion of the heart and the justifying of the soul draws among men, are we all standing this day. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

S. H. T.

In the Episcopal Observer, 1838.

## PRIMITIVE DEACONS.

To the Editors of the Christian Witness. Messrs. Editors,—Please to publish the following extracts on this subject:

"That such an order of deacons is wanted in the Church, no one can doubt, who realizes the amount of labor required of a single minister in each parish, and the backwardness of laymen, in general, to help them in their arduous duties.

As it is now, our Church has actually but two orders in the ministry—Bishops and Presbyters—the diaconate being merely a stepping-stone to a higher order; the peculiar duties which the Church expects of them, according to her ritual, and which she enjoins upon them in the ordination service, never being demanded of them. A deacon is placed over a Church in the full exercise of the ministry, only excepting the monthly administration of the communion, and pronouncing the absolution, and the benediction in Morning and Evening Prayer.

There is good reason for believing, that in the primitive church, priests and deacons were chosen from each congregation, and ordained by the apostles to serve in that very church from which they were chosen, to exercise their ministry exclusively among them.

Every minister of a large parish in our cities, at least once a month, absolutely needs, and must have such help as these deacons would afford him, and to supply the deficiency, he is obliged to have recourse to the service of some superannuated brother, residing in the vicinity, or to some one who has no parish of his own; a stranger, or a casual visitor. Now, had he one or more deacons in his own Church to assist him in this and other duties, a just division and a greater amount of labor would be the result, and both ministers and people would exert a reciprocal influence upon each other, to the "edifying the body of Christ," and "building them up in their most holy faith."

J. T. S.

[The extracts referred to, contain an account of some proceedings taken in the Maryland Convention, for the creation of an order of Deacons in accordance with the suggestion contained in the letter, and with a Canon passed at the last meeting of the General Convention.—Ed. BEREAN.]

## DUTY OF OLD AGE.

A material part of the duty of the aged consists in studying to be useful to the race who succeeds them. There opens to them an extensive field in which they may so employ themselves as considerably to advance the happiness of mankind. To them it belongs to impart to the young, not only the blossom, but also the richest fruit of a life of solid experience; to instruct them in the road of discretion and prudence, and to set before them a warning voice of the various dangers of life; and by wise conceit to temper their precipitate ardour, and both by precept and example to form them in the mould of piety and virtue. Aged wisdom, when joined with acknowledged virtue, exerts an authority over the human mind, greater even than that which arises from power and station. It can check the most forward, abash the most profligate, and strike with awe the most giddy and unthinking.—A Wanderer's Gleanings.

## TRUE END OF KNOWLEDGE.

The greatest error is the mistaking of the true end of knowledge; for men have entered into a desire of learning and knowledge, sometimes, to