

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 II.—No. 43.]

QUEBEC, THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 1846.

[WHOLE NUMBER 55.]

THINK OF THE POOR.

Cold blows the north-wind o'er the dreary waate.
O ye that shiver by your blazing fires,
Think of the inmates of you hut, half sunk
Beneath the drift: from it no smoke ascends;
The broken, straw-filled pane excludes the light,
But ill excludes the blast: the redbreast there
For shelter seeks, but short, ah! very short
His stay; no crumbs, strewn careless on the floor,
Attract his sidelong glance;—to warmer roofs
He flies; a welcome,—soon a fearless guest,
He cheers the winter day with summer songs.

GRAHAME.

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

ERRONEOUS VIEWS OF IT.

BY BISHOP WILSON OF CALCUTTA.

(From the columns of the Episcopal Recorder.)

The way is now prepared for considering the grossly erroneous system of our new divines with regard to baptism. They seem to cast off all care in the use of the sacred terms, regeneration and new birth. An ambiguity pervades their instructions. They entirely pass over the scriptural bearings of the subject, and the views of our reformers; and adopt exaggerated statements exactly where the greatest caution is required. In their hands it is part of the great apostasy itself. They describe all the blessings of a birth from above as invariably, and in all cases, conveyed to infants in baptism; and by a fearful wresting of the inspired Word and the language of our offices to their own purpose, they speak in a way which goes to discourage all self-examination, as to the spiritual evidences of the new creation in Christ Jesus. They overlook the immense importance of the condition of a right administration and right reception of the sacrament. Thus they cut up the whole work of our sanctification by the roots; substitute the opus operatum of a popish ceremony for the spiritual doctrine of holy baptism; harden the hearts of men against the proofs and evidences of a spiritual birth; deny by implication the fundamental doctrine of the total fall and corruption of man; lower the standard of holiness and the gracious operations of the blessed Spirit; lead men to mistake a dead state of heart before God for a living and spiritual state; a dead faith for a true and lively one; a dead trust in the merits of Christ for a penitent reliance on him; and dead works made up of human traditions and inventions, for the vital religion of Christ.

But this is not all. These divines go further still. They maintain the monstrous fable of the unconscious infant's being in every case justified and accounted righteous before the bar of God by baptism; they assert that there are only two moments when man can be declared innocent, in baptism and at the day of judgment; and that deadly sins after this sacrament cannot fully be pardoned, nor the penitent be entirely restored to God's favour in his life.

And all this and more they include in what they term baptismal regeneration—a defensible expression, indeed, in itself, like most others which they employ, if scripturally explained; but in their sense of it involving the most fatal errors.

And yet on this sandy foundation, defended by a confusion of words worthy only of Jesuitical casuists, they build their fabric of man-invented divinity, and buttress it up with obscure catenas of fables, doctrines, traditions, pretences of Catholic tenets and Church principles, as they term them, in the sense of the mass of errors held to be such in the corrupt and demonolatrous fourth and fifth centuries, to confound the minds of the unlearned. Thus the whole mediation of Christ which our apostle is so careful to maintain in this epistle is swamped, the sacraments and not faith erected into the chief means of salvation, justification explained in the sense of the Council of Trent, the reformers decried, popery whitewashed and extolled, saintworship and its concomitant idolatry palliated, and our Church, the glory of the reformation, "unprotestantized," so far as they are concerned.

It may lead us to turn away with the greater horror from all this superstition, if we refer to one more series of scriptural passages which I have reserved for this place.

At the close almost of the canon of Scripture, the aged and venerable St. John, the beloved disciple and sole survivor of the apostolic college, writing nearly sixty years after the publication of the Gospel of St. Matthew, and twenty or thirty after the Epistles of the several apostles, St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. James, is led by the inspiring Spirit to lay down certain conspicuous and broad marks of the being "born of God." In doing this, the last of the inspired writers, as if he feared the rise of the fatal abuse of the doctrine of baptism, which so soon began to work in the papacy, makes no allusion whatever to the sacrament now so much exaggerated, but declares without limitation or reserve, "That whosoever doeth righteousness is born of him"—"That whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God"—"That we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren"—"That every one that loveth is born of God, for God is love"—"That whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God"—"That whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world;" and that

"Whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."

These passages settle the question. There is nothing more to be said to him that admits the plevary inspiration of Holy Scripture. We are not only permitted, but required to declare, that every one that doeth not righteousness is not born of God; that whosoever committeth sin, habitually and wilfully, is not born of God; that they who love not the brethren, have not passed from death unto life; that he that loveth not is not born of God; that whosoever doth not believe that Jesus is the Christ, is not born of God; that he that overcometh not the world, is not born of God; that he that (habitually) sinneth and keepeth not himself from the wicked one, is not born of God, nor begotten of God.

Let us watch, then, brethren, against the remaining tendencies of these incalculable evils. Let us be assured that all "the fulness of the Godhead bodily" is in Christ, and that we are "complete in him." Let us pray to have the "circumcision not made with hands." Let us judge of the blessings we have derived from the covenant sealed in baptism, by our being buried with Christ, and rising with him through faith in the operation of God who raised him from the dead. Let us remember that in a lukewarm, declining, and dead state of the church, it is most perilous to argue from the language of offices designed for the sincere and earnest and spiritual followers of Christ, to the cold and heartless services of thoroughly worldly baptismal assemblies, when frequently not one condition of the promised blessings is fulfilled. For, in the nature of things, can it be expected that baptism, carelessly administered, and received as a mere matter of form and ceremony, without faith on the part of parents or sponsors; without one petition put up from the heart for the Holy Spirit; without the least thought or desire about spiritual blessings; with nothing attended to but a piquant, a carnal rejoicing, a customary insertion, for civil purposes, of a name in a register, can bring with it a divine influence for the highest ends of the sacrament? Is God to be so trifled with? Can we wonder that infants thus consecrated to Christ in mere pretence, and never instructed afterwards, never taught the elements of the Gospel, never accustomed to witness the prayers of their parents or their godly example, never taking a step "according to the beginning" made in baptism, should show, when the dawn of reason breaks, no one single sign of spiritual life in its most incipient and imperfect form? And can any poison be more deadly than to treat such persons as "born of God"? Such cases may be thought rare; but in a day of great decline, and of the almost total absence of church discipline, many instances approach but too nearly to this startling description.

Let us, then, stand by Christ. Let us not be "moved away from the hope of the Gospel." Let us honour sacraments and all means of grace in a reverent, enlightened, and scriptural manner. But let Christ, as our apostle teaches, be our "all and in all." Let us "distinguish things that differ." Let us use the language of Scripture in the various senses in which it is there employed, with all wisdom and spiritual understanding; and let us never confound the sacraments and ordinances of Christ with the mighty grace of which they are the signs and seals and means of conveyance only to the penitent and believing soul.

NOTE.—The judicious and learned Joseph Milner, in his excellent History of the Church, acutely observes, when upon the subject of Cyprian's conversion, that Cyprian "records a remarkable influence of divine grace which appeared to him to have accompanied his baptism. Nor is it unreasonable," Milner proceeds, "to suppose that this was commonly the case at that time. The inward and spiritual grace really attended the outward and visible sign. But it is to be lamented that the corruption and perversion of after ages availing itself of the ambiguous language of the fathers upon this subject—which then was natural enough—supposed a necessary connexion to take place where there had been a frequent one. In Cyprian's time, to call baptism itself the new birth was not very dangerous: in our age it is poisonous. Men are apt to content themselves with the outward and visible sign; and it has long been the fashion to suppose all persons who have been baptised when they were infants, to be of course, when they are grown up, in a state of regeneration by the Holy Spirit. And thus men have learnt to furnish themselves with a convenient evasion of all that is written in Scripture concerning the godly notions of the third person of the sacred Trinity."

LORD'S DAY OBSERVANCE.

Evidence given by John Richard Farre, M. D. of London, before a Committee of the House of Commons.

I have practised as a physician between thirty and forty years; and during the early part of my life, as the physician of a public medical institution, I had charge of the poor of one of the most populous districts of London. I have had occasion to observe the effect of the observance and non-observance of the seventh day of rest during this time. I have been in the habit, during a great many years, of considering the uses of the Sabbath, and of observing its abuses. The abuses are chiefly manifested in labour and dissipation. Its use, medically speaking, is that of a day of rest. As a day of rest, I view it as a day of compensation for the inadequate restorative

power of the body under continued labour and excitement. A physician always has respect to the preservation of the restorative power; because, if once this be lost, his healing office is at an end. A physician is anxious to preserve the balance of circulation, as necessary to the restorative power of the body. The ordinary exertions of man run down the circulation every day of his life; and the first general law of nature, by which God prevents man from destroying himself, is the alternating of day and night, that repose may succeed action. But, although the night apparently equalizes the circulation, yet it does not sufficiently restore its balance for the attainment of a long life. Hence, one day in seven, by the bounty of Providence, is thrown in as a day of compensation, to perfect, by its repose, the animal system.

You may easily determine this question, as a matter of fact, by trying it on beasts of burden. Take that fine animal, the horse, and work him to the full extent of his powers every day in the week, or give him rest one day in seven, and you will soon perceive, by the superior vigour with which he performs his functions on the other six days, that this rest is necessary to his well-being. Man possessing a superior nature, is borne along by the very vigour of his mind, so that the injury of continued diurnal exertion and excitement on his animal system is not so immediately apparent as it is in the brute; but, in the long run, he breaks down more suddenly; it abridges the length of his life, and that vigour of his old age which (as the more animal power) ought to be the object of his preservation. I consider, therefore, that in the bountiful provisions of Providence for the preservation of human life; the sabbatical appointment is not, as it has been sometimes theologially viewed, simply a precept partaking of the nature of a political institution, but that it is to be numbered amongst the natural duties, if the preservation of life be admitted to be a duty, and the premature destruction of it a suicidal act. This is said simply as a physician, and without reference at all to the theological question: but if you consider further the proper effects of real Christianity, namely, peace of mind, confiding trust in God, and good will to man, you will perceive in this source of renewed vigour to the mind, and through the mind to the body, an additional spring of life imparted from this higher use of the Sabbath as a holy rest.

Were I to pursue this part of the question, I should be touching on the duties committed to the clergy; but this I will say,—that researches in physiology, by the analogy of the working of Providence in nature, will show that the divine commandment is not to be considered as an arbitrary enactment, but as an appointment necessary to man. This is the position in which I would place it, as contradicting distinguished from precept and legislation; I would point out the sabbatical rest as necessary to man, and that the great enemies of the Sabbath, and consequently the enemies of man, are, all laborious exertions of the body or mind, and dissipation, which force the circulation on that day in which it should repose while relaxation from the ordinary cares of life, the enjoyment of this repose in the bosom of one's family, with the religious studies and duties which the day enjoins.—not one of which, if rightly exercised, tends to abridge life.—constitute the beneficial and appropriate service of the day.

I have found it essential to my own well-being, as a physician, to abridge my labour on the Sabbath to what is actually necessary. I have frequently observed the premature death of medical men from continued exertion. In warm climates, and in active service, this is painfully apparent. I have advised the clergyman also, in lieu of his Sabbath, to rest one day in the week; it forms a continual prescription of mine. I have seen many destroyed by their duties on that day; and to preserve others, I have frequently suspend them, for a season, from the discharge of those duties. I would say, farther, that, quitting the grosser evils of mere animal living from over-stimulation and undue exercise of body, the working of the mind in one continued strain of thought is destruction of life in the most distinguished class of society, and that senators themselves stand in need of reform in that particular. I have observed many of them destroyed by neglecting this economy of life. Therefore, to all men, of whatever class, who must necessarily be occupied six days in the week, I would recommend to abstain on the seventh; and, in the course of life, by giving to their bodies repose, and to their minds the change of ideas, suited to the day, they would assuredly gain by it. In fact, by the increased vigour imparted, more mental work would be accomplished in their lives. A human being is so constituted that he needs a day of rest both from mental and bodily labour.

John C. Warren, M. D., of Boston, professor in the Medical College of Harvard University, observes, "I concur entirely in the opinion expressed by Dr. Farre, whom I personally know as a physician of the highest respectability. The utility of observing the Sabbath as a day of rest, considered in a secular point of view, rests upon one of the most general of the laws of nature, the law of periodicity. So far as my observation has extended, those persons who are in the habit of avoiding worldly cares on the Sabbath, are those most remarkable for the perfect performance of their duties during the week. The influence of a change of thought, on the Sabbath, upon the minds of such persons resembles that of a change of food upon the body. It seems to give a fresh spring to the mental operations, as the latter does to the physical. I have a firm belief that such persons are able to do more work, and do it in a

better manner, in six days, than if they worked the whole seven. The breathing of the pure and sublime atmosphere of a religious Sabbath refreshes and invigorates the spirit. It forms an epoch in our existence from which we receive a new impulse, and thus constitutes the best preparation for the labours of the following week."

The experiment was tried in a large flouring establishment. For a number of years, they worked the mills seven days in a week. The superintendent was then changed. He ordered all the works to be stopped at eleven o'clock on Saturday night, and to start none of them till one o'clock on Monday morning, thus allowing a full Sabbath every week. And the same men, during the year, actually ground thousands of bushels more than had ever been ground, in a single year, in that establishment before. The men, having been permitted to cleanse themselves, put on their best apparel, rest from worldly business, go with their families to the house of God, and devote the Sabbath to its appropriate duties, were more healthy, moral, punctual, and diligent. They lost less time in drinking, dissipation, and quarrels. They were more clear-headed and whole-hearted, knew better how to do things, and were more disposed to do them in the right way.—Selected from "Permanent Sabbath Documents," published by Perkins, Boston.

THE CATHARI, DESCRIBED BY AN ADVERSARY AND PERSECUTOR.

I will read to you a curious description, given by the inquisitor Reinierius, of the manner in which the truth of the Gospel, in opposition to Popery, was privately spread by the Cathari, who thus were the means of converting many nobles, yea, princes of the house of Toulouse, and the King of Aragon himself. It is very marvellous to find such a record in the pages of a fierce persecutor, whose sole business and incessant study it was to prove them heretics and criminals of the deepest dye; here is the passage translated fresh from his Latin volume.

"The heretics cunningly devise, how they may insinuate themselves into the familiarity of the noble and the great: and this they do in manner following. They exhibit for sale, to the lords and the ladies, rings and robes and other wares which are likely to be acceptable. When they have sold them, if asked whether they have any more goods for sale, one of these travelling pedlars will answer: I have jewels far more precious than these, which I will readily give you, if you will secure me a saint being betrayed to the pit. The security being pledged, the heretic then proceeds to say: I possess a brilliant gem from God himself; for, through it, man comes to the knowledge of God; and I have another, which casts out so ruddy a heat, that it forthwith kindles the love of God in the heart of the owner. In like manner proceeds he to speak of all his other metaphorical gems. Then he recites a chapter from Scripture or some other part of our Lord's discourses. When he finds his auditor to be pleased he will proceed to rehearse the twenty-third chapter of Matthew and the parallel passages in the twelfth chapter of Mark wherein the scribes and pharisees are described as sitting in the seat of Moses; and wherein a woe is denounced against those who shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, neither entering themselves, nor suffering the persons who wish it to enter. After this, the heretic draws a comparison between the state of the Roman church and the state of the ancient pharisees; applying to the former all that is said by Christ to the latter. Among the priests, he will remark, you can scarcely find a single doctor, who is able to repeat by heart three chapters of the New Testament; but, among us, you can scarcely find either a man or a woman, who knows not how to recite the whole text in the vulgar tongue. Yet because we possess the true faith of Christ, and because we inculcate upon all our people holiness of life and soundness of doctrine: therefore do these modern scribes and pharisees gratuitously persecute us to the death, even as their Jewish predecessors persecuted Christ. Besides, they say and do not: but we practise all that we teach. Moreover, they enforce the traditions of men, rather than the commandments of God; but we persuade persons only to observe the doctrine of Christ and the apostles. They impose upon their penitents heavy punishments, which they will not alleviate with so much as a single finger; but we, after the example of Christ, say to the sinner: Go, and sin no more. Furthermore, we transmit souls, by death, to heaven: but they send almost all souls to the infernal region of hell. These matters being thus propounded, the heretic puts the question, judge ye, what state and what faith is the more perfect; that of our community, or that of Rome? And, when you have honestly judged, choose that which you deem the best. Thus through their errors is a person subverted from the Catholic faith; and thus, believing and harbouring and favouring and defending, and for many months hiding a vagabond of this description, he learns, in his own house, the several particulars respecting their sort."—The Church Visible in All Ages, by Charlotte Elizabeth.

THE LATE DR. ISAAC MILNER.

The following account of the dean's public ministrations is from a correspondent of the "Gentleman's Magazine" for Oct. 1811, and to its correctness many in Carlisle and elsewhere can now bear witness:—

"Among the eminent men who have possessed the dignity of dean of Carlisle may be reckoned Dr. Francis Atterbury, Dr. Percy, the late venerable bishop of Dromore, and the present Dr. Isaac Milner, who is beneath

name of his predecessors in profound or elegant knowledge, in piety, virtue, and the most amiable demeanour in private life. As the present dean of Carlisle is known in the southern part of this kingdom as an eminent natural philosopher, and the continuator of his brother's history of the Christian Church only, it may not be out of place to give your readers some idea of his great powers as a pulpit orator. He makes a point of preaching every Sunday at some of the Churches in this city, during his residence, which continues from the latter end of June to the latter end of September. But his principal attendance is at the cathedral. Above an hour before the service begins, the numerous congregation have taken their seats; and by the time he ascends the pulpit, there is scarcely standing room. His congregation, we may aver, consists of several thousands: such a numerous and steady attendance bespeaks the best disposition in the people of Carlisle; and we may hope he has been the means of turning many from the power of Satan unto God. The style of his eloquence is suited to the different classes which he addresses. It is at once elegant, nervous, clear, and simple; and the subjects of his discourses are generally of a nature to interest both the understandings and the feelings of his audience. It is not in my power to do justice to his transcendent merits; but I have some pleasure in paying this well-merited tribute to the abilities of one of the first divines of the age."

What brought the people thus to sit as learners at the feet of the dean, what filled the cathedral an hour before the service began, was neither the gigantic power of the dean's mind nor his high name and reputation as one of the first mathematicians of the day. Hundreds flocked there who had no notion of the high honour of a senior viceroyship, or the dignity of a vice-chancellorship. Neither was it because the dean preached; but because the dean preached Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God, because the dean set forth the freeness and the fullness of the gospel of salvation; and doubtless the preacher, as he addressed the listening audience, totally forgot all his dignities and all his science, counting all things but less for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord; and intent only on directing penitent sinners to the cross of the Redeemer. And it is for the humblest minister in Christ's vineyard to bear in mind that though he may lack high attainments, and be utterly unknown in the annals of literary fame or scientific acquirements, he may not the less be that account an instrument of turning many to righteousness. God often chooses now, as in the apostolic times, the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence. And that the man boasting of high rank in preferment or in fame, be in mind that no dignities nor honours will supply the lack of the preaching of a free and unfettered gospel. And let not the stickler for antiquated observances and the zealous for ritual pomp and ceremonial worship ever delude himself that any external worship will supply the devotion of the heart. It may have its idleness for a season; but it will be found at the last, what all experience has found, that nothing will permanently fill our aches and call forth spiritual praises and soften steady hearts and enlighten dark minds and save lost souls, but an unflinching declaration of the truth as it is in Jesus. And it is not too much to a firm of Isaac Milner that, if by the instrumentality of his preaching one poor sinner had been led to flee from the wrath to come, he would have received more solid satisfaction than if the acclamations of an admiring university had been rung in his ears, and his name had been carried to earth and blazoned abroad as that of the most astounding prodigy of immensity of intellect and most inextinguishable store of knowledge.—Church of England Magazine.

THE CHINESE QUEEN OF HEAVEN.

There appears, upon the whole, some ground for supposing that the legend of the Fokien province, concerning the Queen of Heaven, may have had its origin in the Romish accounts of the Virgin Mary, since the title by which the Chinese designate their goddess is *Tien-how Nwang*, "Our Lady, the Queen of Heaven." On the other hand, the Chinese at Canton, who are fond of finding parallels and resemblances of the kind, give the name of the Virgin (in conversing with Europeans) to their Buddhist idol *Kuan-yin*; and in the same way apply the name of *Kuan-yin* to the Romish idols of the Virgin. To every saint who has a church at Macao they continue to give a name, founded on some supposed analogy in their own idols. St. Anthony they call "the fire god." There is nothing in the Catholic worship at that place, or in the character of the priests, that is calculated to give the Chinese a very exalted idea of this corruption of Christianity. In the former, they witness gravon or molten images, processions, tinkling of bells, candles and incense, exactly resembling their own religious rites; in the latter, a number of ignorant and idle monks, professing celibacy, but with indifferent moral characters, shaving their heads and counting beads very much after the fashion of the Buddhist priests. A few Catholic missionaries still make converts of the lowest and poorest Chinese, who occasionally appear at the churches and receive each of them a small donation of rice, for which reason they are sometimes called in Portuguese, "rice Christians."—The Chinese, by Governor Davis.

* Even our Article xxvii. seems to use the words "regeneration and new birth" in their popular sense first, and then to connect them with baptism; i. e. to give them the extended meaning which they have in our offices.