

The Berran.

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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[VOL. I.

Poetry.

THE REFINER AND PURIFIER OF SILVER.

Malachi iii. 3.
Ho that from dross would win the precious ore,
Bends o'er the crucible an earnest eye,
The subtle, searching process to explore;
Lest the one brilliant moment should pass by,
When in the molten silver's virgin mass
He meets his pictured face as in a glass.

Thus in God's furnace are his people tried.
Thrice happy they who to the end endure!
But who the fiery trial may abide,
Who from the crucible come forth so pure
That He whose eyes of flame look through the whole
May see his image perfect in the soul?

Nor with an evanescent glimpse alone,
As in that mirror the refiner's face,
But stamp'd with Heaven's broad signet there be shown
Immanuel's features, full of truth and grace:
And round that seal of love this motto be:
Not for a moment, but Eternity!

MONTGOMERY.

CHRIST, THE GOOD PHYSICIAN.

A SERMON

BY THE REV. JOHN HABLETON, A. M.
MINISTER OF THE CHAPEL OF EASE,
ISLINGTON.

"Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." MATTH. VIII. 17.

Concluded.

But not only are bodily infirmities and sicknesses permitted and commissioned by our God and Saviour, but further, Jesus still sympathizes with his afflicted servants. He is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." He is as full of compassion now as when he personally healed all manner of diseases. And how does he now express his sympathy?

By alleviating outward or bodily suffering with inward consolations. How does he enable the almost fainting soul to hang upon his promise, to plead it in prayer, to derive from it new support and refreshing encouragement! The endearing view of himself in all his gracious offices which Jesus often gives to his people in the near prospect of eternity, the out-pouring of his Spirit on their thirsting souls, the holy confidence in looking up to his Father as their Father, to his God as their God; the willingness, yea, the earnest desire, if such be the Divine will, to depart and be with him, the heart-cheering anticipations of heaven which he imparts, and the bright visions of glory with which he irradiates the dark chambers of the opening grave; these things, brethren, make it good to be afflicted, and are a rich compensation for all the outward suffering, all the faintness, all the tediousness of a protracted illness.

Jesus further sympathizes by the personal ministrations of his servants. "I was sick, and ye visited me." A volume of animating motives is there provided in a single sentence, to encourage his servants in health to visit their brethren in sickness. And then how refreshing in the chamber of sickness are the visits of a servant of Christ! The whisper which announces his approach raises the weary head from the pillow, makes the dim eye glisten with joy, and revives the languid spirits with expectation. The nearer sound of his footsteps is, amid the stillness of a sick chamber, as the approaching sound of heavenly music. He comes with love in his heart, the gospel of mercy on his lips, and sympathizing in his countenance. He recalls to the sufferer's mind one precious promise or another of the Divine word; he recounts the uses and benefits of affliction; he points to the example of all the suffering people of God; he exhibits the cross of Christ, as the only, yet sufficient, dependence for a sinner's justification; he sets forth Christ as an intercessor and advocate, as well as the propitiator for sin; he urges to self-examination, to penitence, to faith, to prayer; yea, he unites in fervent prayer himself for the presence and sanctifying grace of Him, who is emphatically named the Comforter.

Yet again, Jesus sympathizes by the affectionate sympathy which he excites in absent friends. Is it no consolation in sickness to know, that if one member of Christ's mystical body suffer, all the members suffer with it? Is it nothing, when Sabbath after Sabbath comes round, and the heart begins to sadden with the thought, "I am shut up; I cannot go into the house of the Lord;" is it nothing then to know, that all the faithful members of our church then pray "for all sick persons," "for all those who are any ways afflicted or distressed in mind, body or estate;" or that at the hallowed communion they beseech God of his goodness "to comfort and succour all them who in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity?" And, oh! is it nothing to know that Christians, more specially connected with us, are urgent in special supplications for our having Divine support, consolation, sanctifying grace, and, if it please God, a merciful restoration to health. As one lately brought from the chamber of sickness, I can testify, that few things affected me more while there, than the information conveyed to me, in several ways, of the intense interest felt in my behalf in this parish, and in my native town, and among my affectionate relatives, and also among the poor villagers, who form the interesting congregation in the parish where sickness overtook me. As I am conscious of nothing in myself to excite so general sympathy, I place it all to the account of the

Master, whose unprofitable servant I have been. And in this sympathy, let me further testify, there is a reciprocity of feeling. Did I hear that any wept on my account? I could not restrain tears at the intelligence; not tears of sorrow for my sufferings, but tears of gratitude to God for exciting so many hearts to feel an interest in so unworthy a minister of Christ. Did they pray for me? I did, and do, and trust I ever shall pray, that they may have all the consolations of the gospel to animate them in health, to cheer them in sickness, to support them in death. Do they express joy at my recovery? I can truly say, that it is the wish of my heart to devote the health and strength restored in answer to their prayers, to the furtherance of the eternal joy and happiness of those with whom I am ministerially connected.

Once more, Jesus sympathizes in his people's sicknesses, when he is pleased to restore them to health. We attach too much credit to secondary causes, as if the physician's skill, the medicine, the air, restored health; as though we feared to give unto God the glory due unto his name. But physicians, medicines, means, are only instruments which God is pleased to employ. If he withhold the blessing, all prove ineffectual. The most skilful physician, after employing every means, then retires baffled, and silently, if not in words, confesses, There is One far greater than I. But if the Divine blessing be vouchsafed in answer to the prayer of faith, then the most simple remedy, a lump of figs, as in the case of Hezekiah, or clay moistened with spittle, as in that of the blind man, proves effectual.

Lastly, Jesus yet further expresses sympathy in his people's sicknesses, by the sanctifying benefit which he accompanies their restoration to health. "Himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years."—"The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day." Thus spake Hezekiah, evidently benefited by the visitation of sickness, and his restoration to health. Then hear the inspired Psalmist's words, probably penned on a similar occasion, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies." Can the shipwrecked mariner forget his deliverance? Can the man escaped out of a house in flames forget his escape? Can the criminal, condemned and expecting death, forget the arrival of a free pardon, and the opening of his prison doors? Then, and not till then, may the Christian, brought back from the very margin of the grave and the threshold of eternity, forget the mighty hand which arrested death's uplifted arm, rescued the prisoner of sickness, mitigated disease, gradually restored strength, and sent back the sufferer to finish the work which may yet be given him to do. When a sickness has been sanctified, there commonly remains long after on the soul a softening influence, a tender impress of Divine love, an affecting recollection of Divine consolation, which often in the privacy of meditation, fills the eye almost unconsciously with tears of gratitude. Then, also, a more chastened sobriety of feeling pervades the whole man, accompanied with a deeper and more influential sense of the nearness of eternity, the uncertainty of health and life, the misery of an unconverted or undecided state, the value of the soul, the sufficiency of Christ, and the constraining influence of his love. With all this there follows—nor is this a light benefit—a greater and more tender sympathy of spirit with all the afflicted, sick, infirm, and dying, in this vale of tears.

I pass over, as an inferior benefit flowing from the religion of Jesus Christ, though one not undeserving of mention, the tendency of religious truth, cordially believed, to produce resignation, patience, serenity, cheerfulness, which states of mind wonderfully tend to forward recovery of health,—a secret this, not always known to physicians, nurses, and parents.

Thus, brethren, have we seen, in several ways, that Jesus is still the good Physician, even in our bodily infirmities and sicknesses. He sends them in mercy, he sympathizes in them by alleviating outward suffering with inward consolations, by the personal ministrations of his servants, by exciting sympathy in absent friends, by frequently restoring the sick to health, and by the sanctifying benefit wherewith he follows their restoration.

But there is a higher and more important sense in which Jesus is the good Physician, even in the spiritual fulfilment of the text, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Yes, brethren, Jesus himself took our spiritual infirmities, and bare the moral sicknesses of our nature. The other were a light benefit without this. It is good to have him to sympathize with us in sickness; it is pleasant to be raised by him from the bed of weakness, to feel strength return, to taste again the invigorating air, to behold nature renewing the earth in vernal loveliness, and to enjoy the intercourse of friends. But all this were not enough for a man of an awakened mind. I have yet to die; sickness will soon again come. I want a physician for my soul; one who can quicken with spiritual life, heal all infirmities, deliver from the second death. Jesus is all this: in this sense, quite as much as in the other, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Wherefore came he into the world? Not, surely, merely to heal the sick in Judaea at that time. For that he could have employed agents, and sent down gifts of healing on his ministers. But himself took our nature

upon him; himself was made flesh, and dwelt among us; himself endured pain, and weariness, and fainting, and death, and that the death of the cross, that our moral sicknesses might not end in death, that our spiritual infirmities might be removed, that he might purchase for us the true balm in Gilead, and lead us to the tree of life, the leaves whereof are for the healing of the nations. The expression, he took our infirmities, he bare our sicknesses, suggests to us the idea of a person's taking up and bearing away a great and oppressive load. And such were our sins. When we are ingenious enough to allow consent to do its work, and the Bible to show ourselves to ourselves; when, fully admitting our own sins, we are aroused to understand the immense evil of all sin, then we see our sins to be a burden,—we are weighed down under them,—we have no hope of deliverance in ourselves. Such was the confession of the Psalmist: "Mine iniquities are gone over my head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me." Thus Hezekiah: "O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me." Such, also, is our own confession as often as we approach the Lord's Table; "We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us; the burden of them is intolerable." And oh, brethren, what a view of that burden do the sufferings of Jesus give! Behold him on the road to Calvary, with his body bruised and wounded with recent scourings, and bowed down under the weight of his cross. Yet that was not his heaviest burden. Simon, the Cyrenian, could also bear his cross. Behold him, then, hanged on the tree,—his hands and feet pierced,—his whole frame dislocated! Yet that was not his heaviest suffering. The two thieves by his side were also crucified. But there was an inward suffering, a weight bowing down his soul, a load of agony and sorrow which none but himself could bear, and which forced him to cry, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Couple this inward load with all his outward sufferings, if you would grasp a faint idea of Jesus himself bearing our spiritual sicknesses, himself suffering for our sins, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." But himself bare and suffered all this. He sent no angel; he commissioned no inferior agent; but himself bare our sins. No other was equal to the heavy task. Men, angels, and archangels, would have sunk under the oppressive load. Infinite must be the atonement, or infinite will be the punishment. "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him." "Himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree." And thus he bare our moral sicknesses.

If, then, for this is the practical issue of the whole, we put our whole confidence for salvation in his meritorious cross and righteousness, if this confidence be not the cold assent of our lips, but the reliance of the heart, implanted by the Holy Spirit blessing the testimony of Jesus in his word and doctrine; if it be a living principle, continually growing; even amid the storms and tempests of life, in strength, and simplicity, and holy fruits of love, obedience, and spirituality of heart; then, take courage, him that thus cometh unto Jesus he will in no wise cast out. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." The chief of sinners may take comfort from the faithful assurance that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Remember, here again, that the good Physician is omnipotent and full of sympathy. Your spiritual case is not beyond his power to heal. Man may tell you that you are too far gone. Philosophers and moralists may refuse to attempt to restore one so dead in sin. The Priest and the Levite of the Law may see you lying bruised and wounded, and yet pass by on the other side. But Christ, the good Samaritan, as he still journeys through a suffering world in the Gospel of his grace, is come where you are; he has compassion on you; he offers to bind up your wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and to help you forward on the way to heaven.

But, one may say, Though I humbly trust in Jesus as my Saviour from the burden of unpardoned sin, I yet feel sin, as a moral sickness, working in my members, and often despoiling my heart, and causing me to cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Let the Apostle's reply to his own question be yours to your own heart:—"I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Jesus is here also the good Physician. By his grace and Spirit, sanctifying the means and instruments which he is pleased to employ, he enables his believing people to mortify sin, to subdue the flesh, to withstand temptation, to resist the devil, to overcome the world. He can thus make bodily infirmities tend to the strengthening of the soul, bodily sicknesses to spiritual health, the purishing decays of the outward man to the reviving and renewing of the inner man. Does he send sickness? He can make that sickness an era in your history, a golden speck in the may of life. He can make the chamber of sickness a school of instruction, a Bethel, a Bethesda, a place for erecting the stone of help, Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." He can enable you to leave that chamber more humble than you entered it, more dead to the world and alive unto God, more devoted than

ever to your Redeemer's service. Apply to him, then, in temptation. "He is able to succour them that are tempted." Have recourse to him for a remedy against every moral evil, for an effectual antidote against the poison of a corrupt and corrupting world. Keep but near to him in faith and love, walk under the teaching of his Spirit, following his footsteps, and depending on his grace, and "sin shall not have dominion over you;" your moral sicknesses shall not be unto death: Jesus shall heal your brokenness of heart, and bind up your wounds; he shall give you a precious cordial in tribulation, and uphold your spirit amid the faintings of death.

Brethren, what encouragement have we to love, and praise, and trust, and delight in so suitable, so sufficient a Saviour! Shall his religion any more be thought a gloomy, melancholy doctrine? Away with such a notion. The religion of Jesus, rightly apprehended, is the spring of all peace, and hope, and consolation, and joy. It is food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, medicine to the sick, and a staff to the weary soul. It gilds with a hallowed and benignant light the lowly cottage of the poor, the solitary cell of the prisoner, the chamber of sickness, the bed of death, the darkened house of mourning, and the gloomy receptacles of the dead.

Make this religion, I affectionately entreat you, a matter of personal experience. My experience, or any one's experience of its blessedness, is nothing to you, if you are not induced yourselves to "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Have you been sick, and yet found no comfort under sickness from your religion? Suspect, in the faithfulness of love I implore you, again and again suspect, search, examine, and compare, in an humble, earnest, prayerful spirit, whether the religion, which then gave you no comfort, were indeed the religion of the Bible, the gospel of Jesus Christ applied to your own heart, wrought into your principles of conduct, and influencing your whole spirit and conversation. Or, have you forgotten the good impression which sickness once appeared to make in you? Have you forgotten the alarm which you then felt, the vows you made, the prayers you offered? Has the world regained the dominion over your hearts? Are you still undecided? Is the concern of the soul postponed till sickness shall again come, and force you to remember that this world is not your home? Consider, ere it be too late, that death does not always send sickness to announce his coming; he may come suddenly, at a day, an hour, a moment when he is least expected. Then, how solemn to awake from the delusions of time and sense into the awful realities of eternity! Consider also whether the views of sin, and death, and eternity, with which you were then impressed, were not more like the true and correct views, the views which God himself takes, than your present notions. Consider yet again, that eternity is certainly nearer now than it was then—that contempt of former warnings, if still persisted in, must lamentably harden the heart—that it is a poor thing to put God off with the very dregs of life; and that, although in sickness it is easy and delightful to exercise religious principles already formed, it is a difficult and dangerous experiment to have the great work to begin amid delirium, and pain, and feebleness, and fainting. You will begin then now. Do I read aright the resolution of your hearts? May I report that answer to my Divine Master? Nay, report it yourselves. Go to him in faith and prayer: apply to the good Physician: make known to him your spiritual state: lay open to him the wounds of your heart, follow his prescriptions: and from his own word—and he is the Truth—I can assure you, and thousands now in heaven could confirm the assurance, that you will find him faithful to his word; in him you will have pardon, peace, strength; in him you will have "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption;" in him you will have forgiveness of sins past, a pattern of all holiness, and a living source of animating grace.

Christian brethren, "THE TIME IS SHORT." We are but strangers and pilgrims here. Our warfare will soon be ended. And then, what joy to have done with infirmities and sicknesses both of body and soul; to behold him that took them and bare them away; to see him as he is; to observe the scars in his glorified body; to trace in them the only remaining memorials of our sins; and at every gaze to find matter for a new burst of adoring gratitude. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!"

THE CASE STATED.

To show Dr. Pusey's real view of what has been the state of things in our Church in consequence of the Reformation, I need but quote one passage:—

"The period of restoration in body or mind in individuals, or states, or churches, is always the most critical. The struggle is the sharpest, and the peril and suffering the greatest, when the Evil Power is about to yield to the Divine command, and quit the body it has possessed. The evil spirit cried and rent him sore, and came out of him; and he was as one dead; inasmuch that many said, he is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and he arose. If we then are sore rent, so that to some it seems as if our church must be rent asunder, we may be cheered by our very sufferings, and hope the more that Satan 'hath' the greater 'wrath' with us 'because he knoweth that he hath but a short time'; we may the more hope that He is about to 'take'

us 'by the hand, lift' us 'up, and' we shall 'arise.'"—(Letter, page 152; or 126, 3d edition.)

The change, therefore, which took place in our Church at the Reformation, was caused by Satan taking possession of it; and the object of the efforts of Dr. Pusey and his party is, that they may be instruments in God's hands for making Satan "quit the body he has possessed" by the re-introduction of "catholic" truth. This, I suppose, is a set-off to the remarks (so much complained of) of the Bishop of Chester, in which he has attributed the revival of popish errors in our Church to the agency of Satan. This, Dr. Pusey thinks "shocking to write," but he is not at all shocked at representing our Church itself as having long been possessed of an evil spirit, which he hopes is now about to be cast out.

His opponents, he says, "cannot understand persons confessing with holy Daniel 'for our sins and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us,' and yet that they 'yearned over her stones, and it pilted them to see her in the dust.'" No, indeed, they "cannot understand," how those who have given their hearty assent and consent to the doctrines and services of our Church as settled by our Reformers, should maintain that for these very things we are "a reproach to all that are about us," and "in the dust." But there is one thing they can understand, how "for our sins and the iniquities of our fathers," we may become "a reproach to all that are about us," if, instead of ministering to men the pure gospel of Christ, the blessed tidings of salvation, as revealed in the word of God, we apply the dog returning to his vomit, and "reappropriate" the foul and soul-destroying errors from which, by the blessing of God, we were delivered at the Reformation, again becoming part and parcel of that mystery of iniquity, of which the warning voice of prophecy, as interpreted by a cloud of witnesses among our most able divines, has said, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins."

And ground indeed there is for her humiliation at the present state of our Church. Which of her faithful sons will not mourn over her present trials and distractions, and lament that, instead of having all her energies engaged in the work of her high calling, she is occupied with disputes upon the very first elements of the doctrine of Christ, her ministers pointing to different sources for the very waters of life. Well may it excite her, carefully to examine the account she can give of her stewardship, when that gospel with which she has been entrusted seems about to be exchanged for "another gospel, which is not another," but the mere fiction of those who, relying upon the vain imaginations of man, "trouble" the Church, and "pervert the gospel of Christ."

As it respects the future condition of our Church, much, as Dr. Pusey says, depends, under God, upon the course taken by our ecclesiastical authorities; and it would be difficult to overrate the responsibility which rests upon them at the present moment.

Whatever studied indistinctness there may be in some of Dr. Pusey's statements, one thing at least is clear, that his party have armed themselves for a contest never to be discontinued in our Church, until it has "a decisive issue;" and so deeply does that contest affect the very foundations on which our Reformed Church is built, that "on the issue" of the struggle, Dr. Pusey himself tells us, "hangs the destiny of our Church." The warning given is distinct and decisive. One or the other party, we are told, must give way. The struggle will be carried on till then. We are fairly admonished, that there will be no peace in the Church as long as the two parties co-exist within her. Such is the language in which our ecclesiastical rulers are addressed by one who appears to study to clothe his thoughts in the mildest words.

In what way the dangers of "the present crisis" are to be met, is a question, into the discussion of which I will not presume to enter. That the difficulty is one which cannot be avoided, that sooner or later a decisive step must be taken, that the danger is daily increasing from the number of young and inexperienced individuals who are being misled by the plausible sophisms of the Tractators, must, I suppose, be evident from the Letter under consideration.

The very fact that there is now a body of teaching, a doctrinal system, put forth in our Church by certain of her clergy, as to the least, consistent with her standard of doctrine, which is unblushingly confessed to be in almost all points agreeable to the decrees of the Council of Trent, is one which in itself involves the most serious consequences. As long as this system remains uncondemned by our ecclesiastical authorities, so long may its existence among us be taken as a proof that Romish doctrine may be preached by an Anglo-Catholic consistently with his subscription to our Thirty-nine Articles; so long will it remain to be appealed to by future generations in vindication of any approximation to Romanism to which the bias of the age may incline, so long will it remain as an effectual bar to any warm feeling of affection and confidence on the part of the Foreign Protestant Churches towards the English Church.

Rejoice, therefore, that Dr. Pusey has himself appealed to our ecclesiastical authorities on the subject. And the case submitted to their decision may be summed up in two brief questions: Are individuals among us to be allowed to "reappropriate" apostate, and inculcate upon the people as "catholic" truths, doctrines which our Reformers rejected, and drew up the Thirty-nine Articles to eradicate from among us? Is a party which has armed itself for a struggle never to be terminated but in "a decisive issue" in its favour, whose subtle teaching is continually drawing over numbers

* Heb. xiii. 8. † Matt. xxv. 36.
† Jer. xxxvi. 5.

* Isa. xxxviii. 15. † Ibid. ver. 19.
† Psa. ciii. 2-4.

* Psa. xxxviii. 4. † Isa. xxxviii. 14.
† Matt. xxvi. 30. † Ibid. xxvii. 46.
† 1 Pet. iii. 18. † Isa. lix. 16.
* 1 Pet. ii. 24. † 1 Isaiah i. 18.
† 1 Tim. i. 15. † Rom. vii. 24.
† Rom. vii. 25.

* Heb. ii. 18. † Rom. vi. 14.
† Psa. xxxiv. 8. † 1 Cor. i. 30.
† 1 Cor. vii. 29. † Rev. v. 12.