

[FROM THE N. Y. FREEMAN'S JOURNAL.]

BROWNSON'S QUARTERLY REVIEW.

[The following passage is selected from the second article of the January number of the above work. The article is headed "The British Reformation," and contains a review of sixteen lectures on the causes, principles, and results of the British Reformation, by Bishop Hopkins.]

Sixteen Lectures on the Causes, Principles, and Results of the British Reformation. By J. H. Hopkins, D. D., Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the diocese of Vermont.—Philadelphia: J. M. Campbell & Co., 1844. 12mo. pp. 387.

We agree entirely with Bishop Hopkins, that "the aspect of the religious world, at this moment, presents the same elements of controversy, only under varied forms of practical application, which agitated all Europe three hundred years ago."—A little over three hundred years ago, under pretence of religious reform, and of reviving the faith and worship of the primitive Christians, a portion of the nominally Christian world seceded from the Catholic Church, and set up new establishments for themselves, with such forms of worship, such symbols of faith, and under such systems of government, as they judged most advisable. The Church then existing,—and which had been regarded by the whole Christian world, condemned heretics and schismatics excepted, for fifteen hundred years, as the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church,—as was to be expected, condemned them as heretics and schismatics, declared them out of the pale of the Church and severed from the communion of Christ.

For three hundred years, the seceders and their successors have been laboring to effect a reversal of the sentence then solemnly pronounced against them, and to convince the world that they were wrongfully condemned; that their private establishments are really living members of the Church of Christ, and that they, in founding them, acted by the authority of Christ himself, and did not break the unity either of the orthodox faith or of the Lord's body. They have been zealous and diligent, have had learning, talents, genius, and power on their side, but they have labored without success. The sentence has not been reversed; their claims have not been admitted; and never has the necessity of their undertaking to defend themselves been greater than now. The religious world at this moment seems farther than ever from reversing the sentence recorded against them. The Church from which they seceded is now, if possible, more vigorous than ever, and counts a larger number of members than at any former period of its existence. Its missionaries have penetrated to almost every nook and corner of the

globe. It is rapidly regaining the ground it had lost in France, England, and Germany, and has obtained a new empire in America; while, on the other hand, the Protestant churches, cut up into innumerable sects, are everywhere languishing and disappearing. Nowhere do they gain on Catholicism; nowhere have they gained on Catholicism for the last two hundred years. In fact, they everywhere lose ground. They have lost it in Ireland, in France, in Germany, and are losing it in our own country and even in England. And, what is perhaps more discouraging still to their cause, in the bosom of each and all of their communions there is a wide and deep feeling that the separation from the Catholic Church, if not absolutely unauthorized, was unnecessary and ill-advised; that what was substituted for the Church does not and cannot supply its place; that Protestantism has proved a failure; and that nothing remains for us but either to return to Catholicism, or to lapse into complete infidelity.

The seceders, through their successors, are, therefore, unquestionably under the necessity either of abandoning their cause or of renewing the controversy. It is no time for them to be idle, no time for them to sleep, and to dream that the controversy is over. The Church has abandoned none of its claims, and never will abandon any of them; for its authority it has inherited from the Apostles, and its faith it holds as a sacred deposit from Christ the Head. It has made, and will make, no compromise with error and schism. It must be all or nothing. It has not ceased, and it will not cease, to exert itself with all fidelity, zeal, and diligence, to recover every revolted province, and to secure the heathen and the ends of the earth to God's dear Son for his inheritance. The Church does not sleep: she does not cease from her mission. Everywhere does she bear witness for her Lord; everywhere is she ready to combat for the truth, and shed the blood of her martyrs for the salvation of souls. She will give no rest to heretics and schismatics. If, then, they mean to defend themselves, to maintain the ground they have acquired, they must be vigilant and active. Nay, they must do more; they must meet the question fairly, in open and rational debate. They can no longer call on the civil power to secure them the advantage; they can no longer rely on penal enactments to stifle the voice of truth.—They can no longer maintain their cause by false charges and misrepresentation. They must now debate the question, and debate it fairly; and yield, if they cannot sustain themselves by good and sufficient reasons.

We regard it as a happy day for the Church, that she has, at length, secured in most Protestant countries the liberty to speak and write in her own