

The BEREAN.

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

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[Vol. I.]

THE WAY.

Narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Matt. vii. 14.

There is a path pursued by few,
A way, not pleasing to the view,
A narrow, lonely road;
Through hidden snares and open foes,
That path the Christian pilgrim goes,
It leads to his abode.

Isaiah xxxv. 8.

But many a river flows between,
And rocks and mountains intervene,
And countries yet unknown;
And many a desert wild and rude,
With thorns and briars thickly strewn,
He travels through alone.

Isaiah, xliii. 2, xliii. 16, xliiii. 21.

At times, the distant landscape bright
In varied beauty, meets the sight,
And glimmers in the beam;
But soon involved in deeper shades,
The scene, so fair in prospect, fades;
Gone—like the morning dream.

Isaiah, xl. 6.

Yet, here and there a spot appears,
A little verdant spot that cheers
And animates the mind:
Shadow of better things to come,
Faint type of that eternal home,
He journeys on to find.

Exodus, xv. 27.
SONGS BY THE WAY.

JUSTIFYING RIGHTEOUSNESS.

There are but two conceivable classes of justifying righteousness, viz: *Our own righteousness and the righteousness of Christ.* These are continually distinguished in the Scriptures and set in direct and irreconcilable opposition to each other. Is one called "the righteousness of law?" the other is "the righteousness of faith;" the one called by St. Paul, our "own righteousness?" the other, he calls "the righteousness of God." Is one described as "by the law?" the other is "without the law." Is one "reckoned to him that worketh?" the other is "to him that worketh not." Is one "of works?" the other is "of grace." Does the one give man "whereof to glory?" because it is "of works?" the other "excludes boasting," because it is "of faith." Does St. Paul "count all things but loss that he may win Christ and be found in him?" He has no hope of succeeding till he has first laid aside his own righteousness as worthless, and put on, in its stead, "the righteousness which is by the faith of Christ." In his view, these two cannot co-exist; cannot unite into one vesture; they are essentially inconsistent in the office of justification; so that if we trust in the one, we cannot have the other; if we "go about to establish our own righteousness," it implies that we have not submitted to, but rejected, the righteousness of God. Our justification must be either of grace exclusively, or of works exclusively. It cannot be of both, "Not of works lest any man should boast." "If by grace, (says St. Paul) then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." "It is not grace" any way, (says Augustine) if it be not free every way.

Now between one or the other of these rival hopes must every sinner choose. His choice of one is necessarily the rejection of the other. I cannot suppose, my Brethren, that in a discourse addressed to such auditors, there is any need of maintaining that the righteousness of Christ, in his obedience and death, embraced by faith, excluding our own works and deservings entirely, is the only ground of a sinner's hope of justification before God. But for a minister to know this, fully to believe it, and truly to preach it, is one thing; it is another thing to preach it so earnestly, so clearly, so frequently, with such discrimination, as that, in spite of the continually opposing ministry of self-righteousness, by all that is corrupt and deceitful in the human heart, his people shall be thoroughly furnished in the knowledge, and, as far as man can make them, in the heart-felt impression, of the utter worthlessness of their own "works and deservings," and thus armed against "the wiles of the devil," by whatever path he would allure their trust away from an exclusive reliance upon the accounted righteousness of Christ. Plain is the doctrine; but like the letters of the alphabet, it must run through all your preaching. It is one of those first principles of the doctrine of Christ, which we can never leave, till Satan is cast down and death swallowed up in victory. ||

I cannot refer you to any better human example as to how to set forth this humbling doctrine than the standards of our own

Church. For an example of the spirit of self-abasement and renunciation before God to which you should strive to bring all committed to your charge, study the language of our Liturgy, especially the deeply penitential language of the communion-office. What confessions are there! what renunciations of all trust in our own righteousness! what exclusive looking unto Jesus! But apply to the Articles. Read the eleventh—"we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings."

Now although our own works were the best that man ever performed, and our deservings greater than ever a sinner possessed, since the world began; though our inherent righteousness have been growing these hundred years, and be now laden beyond all example with holy fruits; or, to use the words of Bishop Hooper, "though a man burst his heart with contrition, believe that God is good a thousand times and burn in charity," nevertheless these are "our own works and deservings," and so are pronounced, in the Article, to have no part or lot in our justification.

But for greater plainness, the works of man are divided, in our Articles, into two classes:—those done before, those done after, receiving the grace of God, i. e. Justification. Of the first, the twelfth Article declares that since "they proceed not of a lively faith in Jesus Christ, they are not pleasant to God;" but "rather for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded—they have the nature of sin;" so far therefore from deserving God's justification, they can only increase our condemnation. Of works done after we have received the grace of Christ; after the work of sanctification has been begun and advanced in us, so that we have an inherent righteousness, wrought in us by the spirit of God, the Church, so far from allowing these the least share in that for which we are accounted righteous before God, declares in her twelfth Article that such works cannot be the cause of our justification, because "they follow after it;" cannot be co-workers with faith, in our justification, because they are "the fruits of faith," and though "pleasing and acceptable to God," in Christ, "cannot put away our sins and endure the severity of God's Judgment." But these declarations are greatly enlarged in the Homily to which the eleventh Article refers us for a more extended declaration of our faith. There, the impossibility of our own works and deservings having any share in our justification is rested, as in St. Paul's Epistle, not so much upon the fact that all have sinned in unnumerable instances, as upon the simple truth that they have sinned; that the Scriptures "include all under sin;" the extent or number of their sins not being treated as material to the argument. "Because (says the Homily) all men be sinners and offenders against God, and breakers of His Law and Commandments, therefore can no man, by his own acts, works, and deeds, seem they never so good, be justified and made righteous before God."

"Although we hear God's word and believe it; although we have faith, hope, charity, repentance, dread and fear of God therein us, and do never so many good works therunto, yet we must renounce the merits of all our said virtues of faith, hope, charity and our other virtues and good deeds, which we either have done, shall do, or can do, as things that be far too weak and insufficient and imperfect to deserve remission of our sins and our justification." The same Homily is full of passages of equal force and plainness to the same effect. I cannot refer you to a better human study. Let us see, Brethren, that we come not short of these high examples of simplicity and godly sincerity, in our ministry, labouring with all earnestness and constancy to abate the pride of the human heart, to strip the sinner of all his secret pleas of works and merit—to bring him in guilty, only guilty and condemned, at the bar, as well of his own conscience, as of God his Judge. The way of the Lord, to the sinner's heart, is not prepared till every thought of any thing to make him meet to be received of Christ, or to receive grace through Christ, but perfect beggary and worthlessness, is cast out; till every imagination of any thing to make him acceptable to the Father, even after centuries of holy living, but the righteousness of Christ alone, is utterly cast down. Here then, my Brethren, is one of the chief and one of the longest and hardest works of our Ministry—to convince men of sin, to lead them to feel that they are shut up, as prisoners in bondage to the curse of a broken law, till they "win Christ and be found in him." "Why (says Usher) do so many find no savour in the gospel? Is it because there is no sweetness in it? No; it is because such have had no taste of the law, and of the spirit of bondage; they have not smarted, nor found a sense of the bitterness of sin, nor of that just punishment which is due unto the same." "Thus a king many times casts men in prison, suffers the sentence of condemnation to pass on them and perhaps orders them to be brought to the place of execution before he pardons them, and then mercy is mercy indeed. And so; God deals with us. Many times he puts his children in fear; shows them how much they owe him, how unable they are to pay, casts them into prison, and threatens condemnation in hell forever; and then when mercy comes to the soul, then it appears to be wonderful mercy indeed, even the riches of exceeding mercy." So does God expect us, the ministers of his saving health, to deal with sinners. Our preaching must show

them their ruin, their condemnation, their just exposure to the instant and eternal wrath of God; it must smite down their refuges of lies, silence their vain excuses, reduce them to the one confession of guilty, undone, lost; or it will fail of its first work, that of leading lost souls to Christ.—The Right Rev. Bishop McTavane's Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Ohio, 1839.

LAY-REPRESENTATION IN CHURCH-COUNCILS.

Circular dated Philadelphia, 31st March, 1784:—

Gentlemen,
The Episcopal clergy in this city, together with committees appointed by the vestry of Christ Church and St. Peter's, and another committee appointed by the vestry of St. Paul's Church, in the same city, for the purpose of proposing a plan of ecclesiastical government, being now assembled, are of opinion, that a subject of such importance ought to be taken up, if possible, with the concurrence of the Episcopates of the United States in general. They have therefore resolved, as preparatory to a general consultation, to request the church-wardens and vestrymen of each Episcopal congregation in the state, to delegate one or more of their body to assist at a meeting to be held in this city on Monday, the 24th day of May next; and such clergymen as have parochial cure in the said congregations to attend the meeting, which they hope will contain a full representation of the Episcopal Church in this state. The above resolve, gentlemen, the first step in their proceedings, they now respectfully and affectionately communicate to you.

Signed, in behalf of the body now assembled,
WM. WHITE, Chairman.

In consequence of the above circular, the contemplated meeting was held in Christ Church, on the 24th of May, 1784. The minutes of the meeting are in the printed journals of the Church in Pennsylvania. The principal result was communicated, a few days after, to the meeting in New-Brunswick.

As this was the first ecclesiastical assembly in any of the states, consisting partly of lay members, and as the author was considered at the time to be the proposer of the measure, the principle of it having been advocated, about a year before, in a pamphlet known to be his, he thinks it proper to give, in this place, a short statement of his reasons, in its favour.

From what he has read of primitive usage, he thinks it evident, that in very early times, when every church, that is, the Christian people in every city and convenient district round it, was an ecclesiastical commonwealth, with all the necessary powers of self government, the body of the people had a considerable share in its determinations. He is not setting up Lord King's plea, of the people's having been a constituent part of the ancient ecclesiastical synods, for which there does not seem to be any ground; the passages quoted to the effect by his lordship proving no more than that some of the laity were occasionally present at the deliberations. But there is here spoken of the practice which was prevalent before the introduction of ecclesiastical synods, of the holding of which there is little or no evidence, until the middle of the second century. The same sanction which the people gave originally in a body, they might lawfully give by representation. In reference to very ancient practice, it would be an omission not to take notice of the council of Jerusalem, mentioned in the 15th chapter of the Acts. That the people were concerned in the transactions of that body, is granted generally by Episcopalians divines. Something has been said, indeed, to distinguish between the authoritative act of the apostles and the concurring act of the lay brethren; and Archbishop Potter, in support of this distinction, corrects the common translation, on the authority of some ancient manuscripts, reading (Acts xv. 23,) "elders brethren;" a similar expression, he thinks, to "men brethren," in chapter ii. 29; where the *aul* is evidently an interpolation, to suit the idiom of the English language. It does not appear, that our best commentators, either before or since the time of Archbishop Potter, have followed his reading. Mills prefers, and Griesbach rejects it. The passage, even with the corrections, amounts to what is pleaded for—the obtaining of the consent of the laity; which must have accompanied the decree of Jerusalem; nothing less being included in the term "multitude," who are said to have "kept silence," and in that of "the whole church," of whom, as well as of the apostles and elders, it is said, that "it pleased" them to institute the recorded mission. On no other principle than that here affirmed, can there be accounted for many particulars introduced in the apostolic epistles. The matters referred to are subjects which, on the contrary supposition, were exclusively within the province of the clergy, and not to be acted on by the churches, to whom the epistles are respectively addressed.

If then the matter pleaded for be lawful, the question of the propriety of adopting it ought to be determined by expediency. That it was expedient, is judged, 1st, From its being a natural consequence of the principle of following the Church of England in all the leading points of her doctrine, discipline, and worship. We could not, in any other way, have had a substitute for the parliamentary sanction to legislative acts of power. Such a sanction is pleaded for by Mr. Hooker and others, as rendered proper by the reason of the thing, and the principles of the British constitution. On this very ground, the courts of law of that country have always refused to recognise the canons of 1603, as binding over the laity. So far as they are a declaration of the ancient canon law of the realm, they are held to be binding, like the common law, on the ground of immemorial custom; but such matters as rest only on the determinations of the convocation, have been continually declared, by solemn judgments of the courts, to be not-binding on the laity, for the express

reason, that they were not represented in the convocation—2dly, From a doubt of our being able to carry Episcopacy in any other way. The prejudices of even some of the members of our own Church against the name, and much more against the office, of bishop; and, added to this, the outcry which had been made on former occasions, by persons of other denominations, that not spiritual powers only, but civil also, were intended, rendered it very uncertain whether we could accomplish the design, without engaging in the measure such a description of gentlemen as might give it weight, and show to the world that nothing inimical either to civil or to religious rights was in contemplation.—3dly, Without the order of laity permanently making a part of our assemblies, it were much to be apprehended, that the laymen would never be brought to submit to any of our ecclesiastical laws, in such points as might affect the interests or the convenience of any of them, which, it is evident, might happen in very many cases: for instance, to mention two of the most important—admission to the communion, and exclusion from it. And they would have the principles and the practice of England to plead in their favour, as already stated.

In order to show that the preceding sentiments are not uncommon in the Church of England, it will be to the purpose to give the following extract from Bishop Warburton's "Alliance of Church and State," p. 197:— "There was no absurdity in that custom, which continued during the Saxon government, and some time after, which admitted the laity into ecclesiastical synods; there appearing to be much the same reasons for laymen's sitting in convocation, as for churchmen sitting in parliament." On the question to which this relates, it will be pertinent to remark, that since, according to what is held by all Protestants, neither clergy nor laity can add to the truths of Scripture, whatever either or both of them may ordain, must fall under the head of discipline.

To what extent lay-interference was carried in the English reformation, may be learned from the following accounts of the historian Fuller. Speaking of the convocation of 1552, under Edward VI. he says— "The true reason, why the king would not intrust the diffusive body of the convocation with a power to meddle with matters of religion, was a just jealousy which he had of the ill affection of the major part thereof; who, under the fair rinde of Protestant profession, had the rotten core of Romish superstition. It was therefore conceived safer for the king, to rely on the ability and fidelity of some select confidants, cordially to the cause of religion, than to adventure the same to be discussed and decided by a suspicious convocation. However, this convocation is entitled the parent of those articles of religion (42 in number) which are printed with the preface 'Articuli de quibus' in Synodo Londinensi Anno Domini 1552, inter Episcopos et alios eruditos viros convenerunt."

Afterward, speaking of Poinet's Catechism, Fuller says—"Very few in the convocation ever saw it. But these had formerly (it seems) passed over their power (I should be thankful to him who would produce the original instrument thereof) to the select divines appointed by the king, in which sense, they may be said to have done it themselves by their delegates, to whom they have deputed their authority. A case not so clear, but that it occasioned a cavill at the next convocation, in the first of Queen Mary, when the papists, therein assembled, renounced the legality of any such former transactions."

However cautiously Fuller speaks, it is evident he had no faith in the transmission of the power of the convocation to the delegates appointed by the king. If the fact could be established, there would remain the question of the right to communicate, without a check, a power exclusively vested in the whole clerical order, as this is said to be. In the controversy between the Romanists and the Protestants, concerning the sanction to the principle of persecution by the fourth Lateran Council, in 1225, the defence made is, that the pope read the decrees as prepared by himself, and that they were adopted by the council: without discussion. It is an insufficient plea, but more specious than that of an authority claimed for points not only not discussed, but not heard, and resting on a retrospect to the alleged delegation of power, if there should exist the proof of it unknown to Fuller. It is right to contend for the due weight of the clergy in ecclesiastical proceedings, but when the matter is carried so far, as that without their permission, there shall not be the rejection of corruptions in consistency to the records on which their commission rests, the claim is extravagant, and tends to the counteracting evil, of a denial of the real rights of their order.—From *Memoirs of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, by the Right Rev. Wm. White, D. D. Bishop of Pennsylvania.*

STRUGGLE FOR DELIVERANCE.

From "My farewell Words to Rome" by Edward Brulle, late a Roman catholic Priest, addressed to the grand vicar of the bishop of Montauban in France.

From all that you have now read, you may conclude that I have engaged in a deep and conscientious study of philosophy and Romish divinity; and that, excepting in the first days of my faith, I have abstained from pouring error into the ears of the vulgar. And you may also conclude that, saving the fundamental principles which establish that there is a God, a soul, and an immortality of existence, I had not a thought free from that scepticism which floats in the undulations—well laid down in Descartes' "Doute Methodique"—

between faith and incredulity, and incredulity and faith.

In this agonizing state, I besought God to give me the faith of Rome. I strove to draw down his mercy upon me, by praying at night; I prayed, too, by day: at times, in the earnestness of desire that my prayer should be realized, I exclaimed—"I practise deceit on my own heart! yes, I deceive my own self!" But no answer came to me. The waves of error rolled back nothing to me but the image of lying vanities.

I intermingled fastings and austerities with my prayers, and shut myself up in utter solitude, praying, weeping, and meditating, without ceasing. In the wilderness of a distracted soul, I remembered the direction given me by my confessor, and cried aloud, "In Rome only is there truth! in Rome only!" And a voice answered me, "Nay, nay, in Rome is falsehood only!"

My feelings towards the virgin-mother were of a most loving piety: I decorated her shrines with flowers: I erected an altar to her with my own hands. "Queen of heaven," I sighed, "come thou to my aid, my faith gives way!" I was answered, "The virgin is not queen of heaven; she was a mother, full of love and grace. None but the idolater worships her. Let your prayer ascend to Christ, not to the virgin Mary."

I could not support this rack of doubt. A wasting stupor was slowly consuming me; I was drooping step by step, into the tomb; bearing with me, to the footstool of eternal Justice, a heart laden with the weight of its own infliction. Let me ask, what is repentance without a Saviour? what is innocence without Jesus? I loved the blessed Redeemer, but my love was the burst of a philosopher's admiration: there was nothing in it of that perfect faith of a Christian heart which dies to its own feelings, so that Jesus may live and dwell in it.

Jesus was the last plank on which I could find safety from the frightful wreck against which I was contending: I grasped and clung to it; rather should I say, the free grace and tender mercy of my Saviour drew and clenched me firmly to it; and from that joyful day I know not the human being on whom a sweeter state of peace has rested.

I was without "daily bread," for I was under an unjust interdiction; but Christ spake to me by his gospel—"Consider the birds of the air, they neither sow nor reap: behold the lily of the fields." I was dishonoured among men; but Christ spake to me by his gospel—"My grace is sufficient for thee. Happy are ye when ye suffer persecution for righteousness' sake." My hands were empty, and my sister and her orphan children were famishing before me: Christ spake to me by his word, "The Lord provides for the widow and the orphan." The tear rolled down my cheek as I beheld my mother on her death-bed: Christ spake to me by his apostle, "To die is gain." Thus did that adorable Saviour, who had converted me to the truth that alone saves us, always compensate me for the burden of my afflictions with the richness of his consolations.

Here is my reason, sir, for not seeking forgiveness of my sins at your hands: Christ teaches me, in his gospel, that it is for God alone to forgive sin. Here is my reason for not seeking the bread from heaven in your consecrated elements: Christ teaches me, in his gospel, that it is by his own hand, and from the heaven of heavens where he dwells, that he feeds the soul with the true manna from heaven. This is my reason for refusing to look up to the pope as the visible head of the church: it is Christ himself who teaches, by his gospel, that he, and he only, is the head of the Church. And now you will know why I have turned my back upon the altar of your corruptions, and am for ever become free and a Christian. Glory be to Christ, for he hath loosed me from my chains.

OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

1. What piety without truth? What truth, what saving truth without the word of God? what word of God whereof we may be sure, without the Scriptures?—The Scriptures we are commanded to search, John v. 39—Is. viii. 20. They are commended who searched and studied them, Acts xvii. 11, and viii. 28, 29. They are reproved who were unskillful in them, or slow to believe them, Mat. xxii. 29—Luke xxiv. 25. They can make us wise unto salvation, 2 Tim. iii. 15. If we be ignorant, they will instruct us; if out of order they will bring us home; if out of order they will reform us; if in heaviness, comfort us; if dull, quicken us; if cold, inflame us. "Whatsoever is in the scriptures" saith St. Augustine, "believe me, is high and divine: there is verily truth, and a doctrine most fit for the refreshing and renewing of men's minds, and truly so tempered, that every one may draw from thence that which is sufficient for him, if he come to draw with a devout and pious mind, as true religion requireth."

2. The Scriptures being then so full and so perfect, how can we excuse ourselves of negligence, if we do not study them? of curiosity, if we be not content with them? Men talk of the Philosopher's stone, that it turneth copper into gold; of cornucopia; that it had all things necessary for food in it; of panacea the herb, that it was good for all diseases; of catholicon the drug, that it is instead of all purges; of vulcan's armour, that it was proof against all thrusts and blows, &c. Well, that which they falsely or vainly attributed to these things for bodily good, we may justly, and with full measure, ascribe unto the Scripture for spiritual. It is not only an armour, but also a whole armoury of weapons, both offensive and defensive; whereby we may save ourselves, and put the enemy to flight. It is not an herb, but a tree; or rather a whole paradise of trees of life, which bring forth fruit every month, and the fruit thereof is for

* Rom. x. 5, 6. † Rom. x. 3.
Gal. ii. 21; and Rom. iii. 21.
Rom. iv. 4 and 5. † Rom. iv. 4 and 16.
Rom. iv. 2; and iii. 27.
Phil. iii. 9. † Rom. x. 3.
Eph. ii. 9. † Rom. xi. 6.
|| The notion of human righteousness, (says Luther) of that of works, is so deeply rooted in men's hearts that they find it impossible to detach it from the righteousness of faith or grace. And no wonder; for I myself have found by numberless severe conflicts how arduous a thing it is, how purely it is a matter of divine gift to have the knowledge of the doctrine—that we are justified by grace, without works, that faith in Christ alone is the only righteousness of the saints—to have this knowledge rooted and turned into a principle in the soul. "I have myself taught this doctrine, for twenty years, and yet the old and detestable mire clings to me, so that I find myself wanting to come to God, bringing something in my hand for which he should bestow his grace upon me." Letter to Justus Jonas, and Sermon on 1 Tim. i. 5-7.