

# 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. 26.]

QUEBEC, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1846.

[WHOLE NUMBER 130]

## "HOW OLD ART THOU?"

Count not thy days that have thy flow,  
The years that were vainly spent;  
Nor speak of the hours thou must blush to own,  
When thy spirit stands before the throne,  
To account for the talents lent.

But number the hours redeemed from sin,  
The moments employed for heaven—  
Oh, few and evil thy days have been,  
Thy life a toilsome and worthless scene,  
For a nobler purpose given.

Will the shade go back on thy dial-plate?  
Will thy sun stand still on his way?  
Both hasten on, and thy spirit's fate,  
Rests on the point of life's little date—  
Then live while 'tis called to day.

Life's waning hours, like the sybil's page,  
As they lessen, in value rise;  
Oh, raise thee and live! nor deem that man's age  
Stands in the length of his pilgrimage,  
But in days that are truly wise.

Friendly Visitor.

## PERSONAL APPLICATION OF THE GOSPEL.

Christianity, it will be acknowledged, in order to be individually available to salvation, must become a personal concern. As Tertullian justly observes, "fiunt, non nascuntur Christiani." In the first ages, the open assumption of the Christian faith was, for the most part, a matter of long and serious consideration. It commonly took place at a time of life when the converts could both understand and ratify the covenant which reconciled them to God, and engaged them for the future to obey a new law, and "put off the old man with its deeds." They underwent, as catechumens, a long and strict probation. When they were convinced of the truth of the Christian doctrine, and had pledged themselves to the utmost of their power to live accordingly, they were directed to perform a solemn exercise of prayer and fasting for the forgiveness of past sins; and then, and not till then, they received baptism, and were pronounced regenerate. Even in the third century, Origen acquaints us that the Christians were accustomed carefully to examine into the morals and dispositions of those who offered themselves; and admitted none, till they had given some evidences of a progress in virtue.\* So serious was the obligation considered, and so strict the discipline preserved, that many who were persuaded of the truth of the Gospel, delayed the profession of it by baptism, as in this age men procrastinate repentance, because they could not prevail on themselves to resign those sinful habits, which they were well aware must be resigned by Christians.

In the case of infant baptism, there are evidently no similar means of ascertaining the actual disposition. The benefit received is strictly gratuitous, or "of free grace." It is promised, however, to faith and obedience, presupposed in the recipient, and pledged in his name by the sponsors; whence it follows that the blessings attached to the sacrament must fail, if the conditions fail in those who are capable of performing them: and that the faith and obedience must become actual and personal, in those who arrive at a mature age. It has not altered the nature of Christianity, that its external privileges are become national. Whoever, therefore, professes the hope of the Gospel, must individually embrace the doctrine of the Gospel; must consent, as sincerely as the earliest converts, to refer whatever he does in word or deed to the glory of God: with the primitive humility of the Apostles, must renounce all confidence in his own strength, and must look for salvation through Christ's death with as much personal gratitude as if Christ had suffered for him alone. Though in many cases it may be impossible, as was formerly acknowledged, for those who have been placed in covenant with God by baptism, to state at what time and by what process the truths of the Gospel became an active principle in the mind, still it is undeniable that in all who attain the age of reason they must become so, or the covenant is made void: and it is a definite and intelligible question whether they have actually taken this hold or no. How the tree was nourished and invigorated, and enabled to sustain the inclement seasons which opposed its early growth and strength, we may in vain inquire; but whether it bears fruit or not, and whether that fruit gives evidence of a sound stock, any one may examine either as to himself or others. Is the heart possessed of a sincere conviction of its own sinfulness and need of a Saviour: does it manifest its dependence on the Holy Spirit by an habitual intercourse with God through prayer: does it feel a practical sense of the great business of this life as probation and preparation for eternity? These are infallible characters of faith: and though they will be found in different degrees in different individuals, no one should be satisfied with himself, and no one should suffer his congregation to be satisfied, till he can trace these characters in the heart.

But if such a frame of mind is indispensable to a Christian's reasonable hope, it is evident that a preacher can in no wise take it for granted that it exists in his hearers as the necessary and gratuitous consequence of baptism; but must require of all who have had the privilege of baptism that they strive to attain it; that, being regenerate in condition, they be also renewed in nature, and constantly examine themselves whether they have this proof within them, that they are born of the Spirit as well as of water, and can make the "answer of a good conscience towards God."

In a state of society like that in which our lot has fallen, it is peculiarly necessary to be instant and urgent in enforcing at all seasons this individual appropriation of the truths of the Gospel. In proportion as a community advances in opulence, the more numerous are the temptations to evil of every kind with which it abounds: pride and luxury spread a thousand snares; and as the labour becomes gradually heavier which is required to retain each individual in his own sphere, or to lift him above it; worldly cares coincide with the natural disinclination

to spiritual things, and alienate the mind from all interests beyond those of the present time. Very many, therefore, even of those who do not throw off all external professions of religious obligation, content themselves with certain undefined ideas of a Mediator and a mitigated law, and with the performance of those stated ordinances which one age hands down, not without gradual abridgment and relaxation, to another.

I am aware it is too common to throw out disparaging insinuations against the forms of religion. If there is any weight in precept, or any authority in experience, they are absolutely essential. But let it ever be remembered that they are the means, and not the end. Public prayer and public services are not religion, but the cultivation of religion; the outward aids by which it has been appointed that piety should be cherished, recruited, and confirmed; and the Christian be enabled to approve himself to God in that habitual subjection of his affections to the divine command which is the sure evidence and genuine fruit of faith.

While nature is corrupt, and this world a scene of probation, there will always be a tendency to substitute the external profession for the actual obligations of Christianity. It is much easier to comply with certain ordinances, than to purify the heart, to control a passion, or conquer a guilty habit. In the judgment of charity, attention to the outward duties of religion is a presumptive evidence of real faith; just as the common acquaintance takes the soundness of constitutional health for granted, where no positive symptoms of disease appear. But it is the physician's business to inquire farther: not to be easily satisfied; and to assure himself not only in a negative way that all is apparently right, but positively that nothing is wrong.—From "Apostolical Preaching Considered," by the Right Rev. J. B. Sumner, D.D., Lord Bishop of Chester.

## INTEREST IN THE CAUSE OF THE JEWS.

Letter from the Right Reverend Philander Chase, D.D., Bishop of Illinois.

JUBILEE COLLEGE, April 14th, 1846.

My dear Sir,—I send to the Treasurer of our Domestic Missions, by this day's mail, the amount of our collection for the Jews, made in the churches and missionary stations in this county of Peoria, Illinois, connected by the missionaries and Sunday-school teachers with Jubilee College. The sum (\$22 50) is a small one, but when it is known from whence it came, there is a train of thought introduced into the mind of no little importance. This train begins with the year of our Lord 1837,—at that period there were but few, say a half-dozen, friends of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the circle above mentioned; now there are many pious communicants. At that period there was no church nor chapel, but all worshipped in the Bishop's humble dwelling—and now, besides the college chapel, there are three others—two of stone, finished and ready for worship, and one of brick, nearly completed for worship. Besides these, there is a station whose worshippers meet in a log school-house, wherein the number of Sunday-school scholars are both numerous and well-behaved. Very few of either of these incipient parishes have been regularly bred in the Episcopal Church. They have been induced seeing the pious, orderly conduct of the dear scholars on Jubilee Hill to "fall in," as they term it, "with the Church way of worship," and prayer-books having been furnished them, they have laid aside their prejudices, and begun to learn the good old way of using the Psalms of David inspired by the Holy Ghost, for the worship of God in all ages, according to the example set by the Saviour and his Apostles in the Temple at Jerusalem. They have, moreover, been led to hear the Scriptures duly read, as rightly divided into lessons from the Old and New Testaments,—the one exhibiting the type, the other the anti-type; the one the prophecy, and the other the fulfilment: and it is curious to observe, how many things they have been made to understand, which they never understood before. The Jews in this way have borne a conspicuous part in this exhibition; and for them a feeling has always been excited in their bosom of a peculiar interest. Although they once crucified their Messiah, yet they have been the instruments of fulfilling so many prophecies, that the heart of every true Christian, now they see this, begins to soften, and pity takes the place of hatred, when thinking on the Sons of Jacob. Ever since we heard of the good plan adopted by our Church, and matured by our excellent Missionary Society, of building a Temple in America, as they have done in England, in which these unhappy people may come together, and worship and adore the great Elohim, and truly repent of the cruelty of their forefathers, in crucifying their chief and spiritual brother, the Incarnate Saviour, the story of Joseph has been considered with double attention, and the truths brought to light by that means, have given much satisfaction. In the history of Joseph, they see and recognize the great truths that are now apparently coming to pass. He, Joseph, a son hated of his brethren, yet loved of his Father—cast into "the pit" by them, while the Father is satisfied with his death—sold for money—goeth down into prison—by his own merits is raised thence,—placed on a throne, endowed with power, giving his precious gifts to the Gentiles. And where now are his brethren, the Jews? Alas! they are suffering the famine of the bread of life, in waiting for a blessing in their fancied Canaan. They begin to "look, one upon the other, saying, 'Is there not corn in Egypt?'" There is evidently distress among them, and they are preparing to come into Egypt, even amongst us Gentiles, where our "Prince Zaphnath Paneah," but their brother Joseph, reigneth. As yet, they know him not: they approach him as the King of Terrors: "he speaketh roughly unto them." This is the first time; oh! may the second time (Acts vii. 13) soon come, when Joseph shall be made known to the sons of Israel! It is to bring to pass the will of God in hastening this second time—this kingdom of the true Joseph—this reconciliation of the Crucified and the crucifiers,—that our humble offering of Jubilee is made. May the Lord accept it at our hands, not for our own worthiness, but for His sake, whose bowels yearned over his repenting brethren,—even Jesus Christ our Lord.—Spirit of Missions.

## NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

From a Sermon on the death of the Rev. Mr. Dwy, by the Rev. B. C. Cutler, D. D., Brooklyn.

I have another particular to notice in his professional labours. It is their strictly Scriptural character. By this I mean, that he viewed the religion of Christ simply as affording immediate relief to a fallen race. He looked upon men as guilty, condemned, and exposed to the wrath of God; and he considered Christ as bringing in a perfect, finished, and practical salvation.

Now, I am greatly mistaken, if any man makes this discovery, but one who is, in a special sense, taught of God, and if any Minister adheres to this instruction, unless he has been "called of God as was Aaron" and St. Paul. This is that Gospel which St. Paul says is "unto the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness." (1 Cor. i. 23.) It is that Gospel which, if constantly and faithfully preached, in season and out of season, will deprive any one of the consideration and eulogy of men of the world, and of the Ministers of a corrupt religion. I know not a man who is strictly evangelical in his preaching, who is not lightly esteemed by men of letters, and by his own unconverted brethren. No matter how great his talents, nor how profound his learning, his name is always uttered with an affectation of contempt, and by the very men who, in an intellectual arena, would be cautious how they openly opposed him,—and who had, perhaps, been his acknowledged inferiors throughout an academic and collegiate course. Men are the same now, as they were in the days of the apostles; the Gospel is the same now as it was when proclaimed by St. Paul: men are as prone to superstition on the one hand, and to idolatry on the other, as they were in the days when Pharisees and Sadducees abounded within the Church, and Stoics and Epicureans without it. A man might, with just as much propriety, commence his ministry in the metropolis of our mother country, or of our own, with the confession, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ," (Rom. i. 16,) as St. Paul commenced his in ancient Rome. Other men are ashamed of the Gospel of Christ as much now as many were then. And by ashamed I mean afraid,—afraid to make that the alone remedy for the great moral evil,—afraid to hold up a belief in Christ as the Great Physician,—afraid to set forth a simple and entire reliance upon him as the only and the sufficient means of man's restoration to the Divine favour, and his renewal in God's moral image.

Now, whether this point was clearly seen by my Assistant, and deliberately decided upon, I need scarcely undertake to say. But sure I am, that come what might,—come weal come woe,—he had determined not to "know any thing among men but Jesus Christ and him crucified." No man who heard him doubted to what class of preachers he belonged. His hearers might have differed respecting the particular structure which was given to some of his discourses, and that they would do, according to their different tastes and habits of thought. But whenever he rose in this place to preach, the doctrines of the Cross of Christ were alone expected as his theme.

Now, it cannot be difficult to see that no small temptation besets every young preacher, with regard to this exclusiveness of purpose. The world, especially the literary world, and the native pride of his own heart, are bad advisers in the ministry, and together with Satan, the father of lies, combine to draw him away from the simplicity of Christ,—to entice him into various bye-paths,—to engage him in controversies,—or, as in the present day, to entrap him by a pretended love of the Church. But "blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive a crown of life." (Jam. i. 12.) All Christians are tempted. This is the peculiar temptation of youthful and pious Ministers.

## THE PRETENDED CONSENT IN MATTERS OF FAITH INVESTIGATED.

And where is this so much boasted consent in the members amongst themselves, in all matters of faith?

"I believe the holy catholic church," is an article of faith. I would know of those gentlemen who are at such perfect agreement amongst themselves, what this church is? Bellarmine answers one thing, Casinius another, so contrary, that if one speaks true, the other must needs have told me that which is false. And while the definition of the former is followed by some, and that of the latter, which is worse, is more generally received, Launoy, and many more of the learned sort, stick to the ancients, who are as different from both, as both are from one another. And yet after all we must be told, that they are perfectly agreed in all matters of faith; and that this invisible unintelligible union shows plainly, that the Roman is the true church! One would hardly think that they are in earnest; unless by union they mean an equal resolution to carry on the dispute as long as they can contend, and no longer; which kind of union is to be met with almost every term in Westminster-hall; where one may see two parties prosecuting one another with all imaginable vigour, who yet resolve to be quiet when the bench has made them so. Not that the party who is cast in the suit must needs change his opinion of his own cause, because the last verdict was against him, but that if a new trial will not be granted, he is bound to acquiesce in the judgment of the court, because it has a sheriff, with the posse comitatus, to put it into execution. Thus they that make the sentence of the pope, and they that make the sentence of a council, the sentence of the church, are united in a resolution to stand by the arbitrament of the church; there being a certain sensible obligation upon them to profess, that they will acquiesce in its determination: but in the mean time they may undoubtedly quarrel amongst themselves about questions of such mighty importance as that we mentioned even now, and this without breach of union amongst themselves, till the sentence of the pope, or the sentence of a plenary council, or the sentence of both, comes to part them; which yet will be long enough first, if each side of the question be abetted with numerous and able parties, that are at present both of them resolved to submit absolutely to the church, lest one of them, upon an unreasonable sentence, should be provoked to change its resolution. And thus, as we observed before, the question about the immaculate conception has been left undecided so long, lest by determining

that, a more dangerous question should be raised by the disobliged party. But if it should so happen that the church cannot well avoid declaring herself in such a case, this new-fashioned union goes forward still, though she speaks so ambiguously, that each party fancies the sentence to be on its own side; which was done often at Trent with great application and art, particularly in the decrees concerning grace, and assurance of being justified, &c. Which being finished, Soto and Vega differed not only as much, but something more than they did at first; for now they had a new question to debate, viz. "on which side the council had decreed;" and so they fell to writing great books upon it, against one another: but for all this they were admirably agreed because they agreed in submission to the council!—From Dr. Clagell's Tract on Cardinal Bellarmine's 7th note of the Church: "The Union of the members."—Published A. D. 1687.

## SEARCH FOR CERTAINTY IN MATTERS OF FAITH.

Dialogue between a Protestant and a Papist.

Prot. You tell me I can never be certain, as to matters of faith, unless I believe upon the authority of the true church.

Pap. I do; and upon the truth of this proposition all my religion is founded.

Prot. But may I be certain as to matters of faith, if I believe upon the authority of any church, though I am not certain whether it be the true church or not?

Pap. To what purpose do you ask this question? Prot. Because, if I may, then in believing upon the authority of the Church of England, which you say is a false church, I shall be as certain as to matters of faith, as you who believe on the authority of the Church of Rome, which you say is the only true church.

Pap. Why then I will tell you, you can never be certain as to matters of faith, in believing upon the authority of any church, unless you are certain it is the true church upon whose authority you believe them.

Prot. Why so? Pap. Because it is not the authority of a church merely, that is the true ground of certainty, but the authority of the true church; otherwise the authority of all churches, true or false, would be equally a true ground of certainty: and, therefore, you can never be certain that the authority of that church, upon which you may believe, is a true ground of certainty, unless you are first certain that it is the true church.

Prot. I do allow your reason. But then, pray, how shall I be certain that it is the true church?

Pap. Why, this you must examine by certain notes of the true church, whereof one (and that a principal one) is sanctity of doctrine, or an unerring profession of the true religion.

Prot. But, good sir, I cannot be certain that it is the true church, till I am first certain that it doth not err in its profession?

Pap. No. Prot. Why then I must be certain of the truth of all these matters of faith, whereof its profession consists, before I can be certain that it is the true church.

Pap. You must so. Prot. But, pray, how shall I, if that be true which you told me just now, viz. "That there is no true ground of certainty, but the authority of the true church?" for how is it possible I should ever be truly certain, when as yet I know no true ground of certainty?

Pap. Why, have you not the authority of the true church?

Prot. But as yet I am not certain that the church, upon whose authority you would have me believe, is the true church; and till I am certain of this, with what certainty can I depend upon her authority? Would you have me be certain that whatsoever she professes is true upon her bare word and authority, before I am certain that she is the true church? If so, why may I not as well believe any other church to be the true church, seeing there is no other church but will pass its word for the truth of its own profession, as well as yours? If not, you must allow me to have some other ground of certainty as to matters of faith, besides the authority of the true church. For before I can securely rely upon the authority of any church, as the true ground of certainty, I must be certain that she is the true church, and my certainty that she is the true church must depend upon my certainty of the truth of all those matters of faith comprised in her profession. So that before I am certain of the truth of her profession, it is too soon for me to rely upon her authority, as the only ground of certainty; and when I am certain of it, it is too late, because I am certain already.—From Dr. Scott's Tract to Examine Cardinal Bellarmine's 8th note of the Sanctity of Doctrine.—Published A. D. 1687.

## THE UN-PROTESTANTIZING OF ENGLAND: WHAT IT WOULD IMPLY.

The Church of France has, compassionating our benighted state, ordered prayers at many of her altars for the conversion of England to the Roman Catholic faith, and this, no doubt, was sincerely meant for our good. Even in higher quarters indulgences have been granted for the same end. We repeat that, so far as intended for our good, we are grateful at least for the spirit of these prayers. But let us dispassionately look to the possibility of their accomplishment; and if there were this possibility, to their inevitable consequences. We address this to some few amiable, but young minds among ourselves, who are smitten with a hopeless scheme of mediævalizing England. Let us translate the prayer for the conversion of England out of its theologic language, into that of plain practical common sense. It is this, that Divine Providence will be pleased to withdraw at once, or permit to be read only under close or jealous superintendence, that English Bible, which is the family treasure and record in every household, from the palace to the cottage,—which has been disseminated throughout the land with such zealous ability, and received with such devout thankfulness,—which is daily, or at least weekly, read in millions of families, and is on the pillows of myriads of dying men; that the service of the Church may be no longer in the intelligible vernacular English, but in a foreign tongue,

absolutely strange and meaningless to the ear;—that the communicants at the Lord's Supper may not merely be compelled to embrace new doctrines, although at variance with all their habits of thought and reason, but be deprived of one half of the precious spiritual sustenance, from whence their faith has hitherto derived such unappreciable strength; that in all the public services the priesthood shall withdraw into a kind of unapproachable sanctity—they alone admitted to direct intercourse with God—the people only through them, and at their good pleasure;—that from every parsonage in England shall be expelled the devout wife, the pure and exemplary daughter; that our wisest daughters throughout the land shall be compelled to utter their most secret, their most holy, their most unutterable thoughts to some, as it may happen, severe and venerable, or young and comely priest; that England may be un-Anglicised, not merely in her Church and in her religion, but in her whole national character, which has grown out of, and is throughout interpenetrated by her reformed faith; that we surrender the hard-won freedom of our thoughts, the boldness of our judgments, the independence of our mental being, for without that absolute surrender, there can be no true, full and unquestioning conversion to the creed of Rome—no submission to mediæval christianity.—Quarterly Review.

## OUR LORD'S TEACHING.

The discourses of Jesus have a spirit and tendency which distinguishes them from all others, and especially from the method of instruction prevalent in his own age. We discover in them none of the trifling glosses upon Scripture, nor the 'old wives' fables' in which the Scribes delighted: none of the affected obscurity or the sophistical distinctions common in the Grecian schools of philosophy. No particular stress is laid upon the explanation of doctrinal points, or the interpretation of difficult passages of the Old Testament. We remark every where a tranquil familiarity with the highest subjects; a disposition rather to assume and authoritatively to enforce, than to demonstrate the truths he taught. Yet is his manner in the highest degree affectionate. A 'spirit of love' no less than a sound mind animates his exhortations as well as his actions; a love which, while directed towards his heavenly Father as its supreme object, embraced all his creatures within its bands. If his first object was to glorify God by 'bearing witness to the truth,' his second was to render that truth acceptable to his hearers, to convince them that it came from one who perfectly loved them, and was willing and able to do more for their present and eternal welfare than man had ever undertaken. His whole soul appears so possessed with these high purposes as to become insensible to his own glory; prepared in this cause to endure, even to court every extremity of shame and indignity. Our Lord's teaching is also represented as practical; not so much calculated to win admiration, to gratify the intellect and excite the fancy, but directly effectual to supply the actual necessities of man; of man as he exists in every age and in every clime; to make a way for the doctrines he enforced to the hearts as well as to the understandings of his hearers; to represent them vividly to their eyes and ears; to connect them with their domestic usages and daily duties. May the ministers and stewards of his mysteries be enabled more and more to approximate towards that spirit and method of teaching of which their Lord was a perfect example; may their hearers remember that it is possible, mechanically to acknowledge the truths presented to them in these Gospels, without any serious endeavour to view them in their genuine force and bearings; nay, that they may become intellectually masters of the whole subject without allowing it to have a vital influence upon their consciences, their hearts, and their lives. Unless that view of Scripture be sought from above, which sanctifies the will while it enlightens the understanding, the philosophical examination of its evidences, or the critical survey of its literary character, will rather be of disservice to our real welfare. Without that safeguard, such inquiries, by multiplying facts and notions of slight and secondary moment, will distract and deter us from the simple reception of the word of God, as the direct communication between our souls and that Power who implanted, and will again require them.—Light Shining out of darkness.

## UNITARIAN TEACHING.

He who is wont to expatiate in the wide field of Revelation, surrounded by all that can gratify the sight, or regale the senses, reposing in its green pastures and beside the still, transparent waters, reflecting the azure of the heavens, the lily of the valley, and the cedar of Lebanon,—no sooner approaches the confines of Socinianism than he enters on a dreary and a melancholy waste. Whatever is most sweet and attractive in religion,—whatever of the grandeur that elevates, or the solemnity that awes the mind, is inseparably connected with those truths, it is the avowed object of that system to subvert. And since it is not what we deny, but what we believe, that nourishes piety, no wonder it languishes under so meagre and scanty a diet. The littleness and poverty of the Socinian system ultimately ensures its neglect; because it makes no provision for that appetite for the immense and magnificent, which the contemplation of nature inspires and gratifies, and which even nature itself prompts us to anticipate in a revelation from the Eternal Mind. By stripping religion of its mysteries, it deprives it of more than half its power. It is an exhausting process, by which it is reduced to its lowest terms. It consists in affirming that the writers of the New Testament were not, properly speaking, inspired, nor infallible guides in Divine matters; that Jesus Christ did not die for our sins, nor is the proper object of worship, nor even impeccable; that there is not any provision made in the sanctification of the Spirit for the aid of spiritual weakness, or the cure of spiritual maladies; that we have not an intercessor at the right hand of God; that Christ is not present with his saints, nor his saints, when they quit the body, present with the Lord; that man is not composed of a material and immaterial principle, but consists merely of organized matter, which is totally dissolved at death. To look for elevation of moral sentiment from such a series of pure negations,

\* Origen, cont. Cels. l. iii. 50.

† See Wall on Infant Baptism, ch. x., and Gibbon's Decline and Fall, chap. xx. Tertullian says, in his Apologeticus, "Nemo in carceribus Christianus, nisi hoc tantum: aut si ot aliud, non jam Christianus."