

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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OH, SOME OTHER TIME!

Oh, some other time, but not now, not now!
And he dashed off the tears from his sorrowful brow.
I am young, I am strong, and my hopes they are high,
There is plenty of time to repent ere I die!

Oh not yet; not yet! I have much to plan,
And religion is not for so active a man!
I will think, and reflect, and return, by-and-by—
There is plenty of time to repent ere I die!

Alas, there was time, but 'twas all in vain,
For Repentance had left, and she came not again!
As in glad days of youth, so in days of old age,
Other thoughts, fears, and hopes, his wrapt spirit engage.

His heart is cold, and his dreams are of earth,—
There is plenty without, but within there is dearth,
There was time, dear, indeed, but alas, it was vain,
For Repentance had left, and she came not again.

YORKER.

THE EMPLOYMENT AND OPERATION OF ANGELS.

Even while we see you not, oh ye blessed Spirits, we know what ye do. He that hath made you hath told us your task. As there are many millions of you, attending the all-glorious throne of your Creator, and singing perpetual hallelujahs to him in the highest heavens; so innumerable multitudes of you are employed in governing and ordering the world, in guarding the elect, and in executing the commands which ye receive from the Almighty. What variety is here of your assistance. One while ye lead us in our way, as ye did Israel; another while ye instruct us, as ye did Daniel; one while ye fight for us, as ye did Joshua; another while ye purvey for us, as for Elijah; one while ye fit us for our holy vocation, as ye did Isaiah; another while ye dispose of the opportunities of our calling for good, as ye did of Philip's to the Eunuch; one while ye foretell our danger, as to Lot, to Joseph and Mary; another while ye relieve our affliction, as ye did Hagar's; one while ye oppose evil projects against us, as to Balaam; another while ye will be striven with for a blessing, as with Jacob; one while ye resist our offensive courses, as to Moses; another while ye encourage us in our devotions, as ye did Paul and Silas and Cornelius. One while ye deliver us from duress, as Peter; another while ye preserve us from danger and death, as the Three Children; one while ye are ready to restrain our presumption, as the cherub before the gate of Paradise; another while to excite our courage, as to Elijah and Theodosius; one while to refresh us in our sufferings, as the apostles; another while to prevent our sufferings, as to Jacob; in the pursuit of Ezeu, to the sages in pursuit of Herod. One while ye cure our bodies, as at the pool of Bethesda; another while ye carry up our souls to glory, as ye did to Lazarus. It were endless to instance all the gracious offices which ye perform.

Certainly there are many thousand events in which common eyes see nothing but nature, which yet are affected by the ministrations of angels. When Abraham sent his servant to procure a wife for his son, from amongst his own relations, the messenger saw nothing but men like himself; but Abraham saw an angel beforehand contriving the work. God, saith he, shall send his angel before thee, that thou mayest take a wife from thence. Gen. xxiv. 7. When the Israelites forcibly expelled the Canaanites, the Amorites and the other branded nations, nothing appeared but their own arms; but the Lord of hosts could say, "I will send mine angel before thee, by whom I shall drive them thence." Balaam saw his ass starting disorderly in the path; he that had formerly seen visions, now sees nothing but a wall and a way; but in the mean time his ass, who for the present had more of the prophet than his master, could see an angel and a sword. The Samaritans went groping in the street for Lot's door, and missed it; they thought of nothing but some dizziness of brain that disappointed them; but we know that it was an angel that struck them with blindness. Nothing appeared when the Egyptians' first-born were struck dead in one night; the astrologers would perhaps say they were planet-struck; but we know it was done by the eye of an angel. Nothing was seen at the pool of Bethesda but agitated water, when the sudden cures were wrought, which perhaps might be attributed to some planetary influence; but we know that an angel descended, and made the water thus sanative. Gehazi saw his master strangely preserved from the Aramite troops; but had not his eyes been opened by the prophet's prayers, he had not seen whence that aid came.

It is the same in many instances of our life. Have we been raised up from deadly sickness, when all natural helps have given us up? God's angels have been our secret physicians. Have we had instinctive intimations of the death of some friends, which no human intelligence hath bidden us to suspect? Who but our angels has wrought it. Have we been preserved from mortal dangers, which we could not possibly tell how to evade? Our invisible guardians have done it. Whence is it that little children are preserved from so many perils during their infancy,—fire, water, falls, suffocation,—but by the agency of angels. Where we find a probability in second causes in nature, we are apt to confine our thoughts from looking higher; yet even there, many times, are unseen hands. Had we seen the house fall on the heads of Job's children, we should perhaps have attributed it to the natural force of a vehement blast; now we know it was the work of a spirit. Had we seen those thousands of Israel falling dead of

the plague, we should have complained of some infection in the air; but David saw the angel of God acting in that mortality. Human reason is apt to be injuriously saucy, in ascribing those things to an ordinary course of natural causes, which the God of nature does by supernatural agents.

When we observe things manifestly deviating from the road of nature, and working above the power of secondary causes, to what can we ascribe them but to causes that are supernatural? Murders are often discovered in a way that cannot be accounted for. And if a man by some strong instinct be warned to change his lodging, which he constantly held for some years before, and finds his wonted sleeping place that night crushed with some unexpected fall; or if another, without any physical observation, shall receive and give intelligence many days before, what hour shall be his last: to what cause can we attribute these, but to our attending angels? And since I am convinced that their unseen hands are in many occurrences of my life, I have learned to yield them too much rather than too little, in the ordering of all my concerns. Oh ye blessed spirits, many things I know ye do for me which I discern not till after they are done; and many things ye may do more, which I know not. I bless my God and yours, as the author of all ye do: I bless you, as the means of all that is done by you for me.—Bishop Hall.

DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH ON BAPTISM.

ELIZABETH, 1558—1603.—The forty-two Articles, settled in Edward's reign, having been repealed by Queen Mary, a Committee was appointed for their reconsideration, soon after the accession of Queen Elizabeth to the throne; and, after reducing their number from forty-two to thirty-nine, and making some inconsiderable alterations, their restoration was finally agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both Provinces, and the whole Clergy, in the Convocation holden at London in the year 1562. At this revision, the 25th of Edward's Articles, on the Sacraments, was changed in expression, though not in sentiment; and in the place of the last clause of Edward's 25th Article, on Baptism, which states that the custom of baptizing young children was to be commended and retained, the clause substituted in Elizabeth's Articles, declares: "The baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained as most agreeable with the institution of Christ." No alterations in Edward's Articles were made in 1562, affecting any doctrinal truth; and in 1571 these Articles were again revised, and with some verbal alterations were again ratified; and they remain, to the present day, the only authorized criteria of the faith of the English Church. The XXXIX Articles, in 1562, were published, as the title prefixed to them states, "for the avoiding of diversities of opinion, and for the establishing of consent concerning true religion;" and the Royal Declaration, added to these Articles in 1604, on the ratification of them by King James the First, shortly after his accession to the throne, enjoins "That no man hereafter shall either print or preach to draw the Articles aside any way, but shall submit to them in the plain and full meaning thereof, and shall not put his own sense or opinion to the meaning of the Article, but shall take it in the literal and grammatical sense."

The following observations are just and reasonable. "The Articles are the sheet-anchor of our churchmanship. That there is any real discrepancy between the Liturgy and Articles, I do not see, and do not believe; but the Liturgy is and must be somewhat indefinite, as a formal expression of a creed. . . . Of what use were the Articles meant to be, if not to act as the final summary of the theology of the Church of England? In the Liturgy undoubtedly some things had been taken from and some things had been derived through, the church of Rome; and why not? A pearl is a pearl still, though found in a rotten shell. But lest there should be supposed to be any papal sentiment retained in the Liturgy, the Articles were made definitive. We honestly give in our allegiance to the Church as understanding the Liturgy, yea and all her other formularies, in the sense of the Articles. Here is their peculiar property and office. It is the office of the Homilies to instruct in the details of doctrine and duty. It is the office of the Liturgy to aid us in doctrinal exercises. It is the office of the Articles to give a general and exponential face and title to the entire theology of the Church of England."

From the foregoing considerations, the present standing of the Reformed English Church, in reference to the much agitated question of Baptismal Regeneration, is apparent. In the earlier period of the Reformation, when Protestantism and Popery divided the matter between them, it is an admitted fact "That, under Henry's Articles, the Church did hold the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, though even then, in the case of adults, the inward and spiritual grace seems not to have been considered as invariably conferred by the outward and visible sign;" and, in the different revisions of the Liturgy, after that period, there was, no doubt, a studied endeavour, on the part of our reformers, to make as little alteration in any of her services, from the Roman missal, as was consistent with essential truth; but it is equally obvious, from the historical facts detailed, "That as the light of truth shone brighter and brighter upon our land, and as the reformers themselves became more and more advanced in the light and liberty of Gospel-truth, they were led wholly to abandon the popish notion of baptismal regenera-

* York's Letter to the Bishop of London.

tion, and finally, after many revisions, to draw up and settle the present XXXIX Articles, constituting the basis of ecclesiastical establishment, as decidedly opposed to such an error." Nothing can express this fact more clearly than the writings of our martyred reformers themselves. The works of Frith, Bradford, Tyndall, Latimer, Hooper, and others of the "noble army of martyrs," are decisive on this point. They all speak distinctly and boldly against the popish view of baptismal regeneration, and the testimony of enemies, in the Council of Trent, proves the same fact; though it must be confessed, that many great and godly men, after the settling of the Articles in 1562, have, from time to time, arisen in our Church, and have uttered sentiments on the Sacraments, especially on Baptism, at variance with the Articles; and in doing so, they have often furnished weapons in support of doctrines wholly unlike those substantially adopted by themselves. Such circumstances are indeed to be greatly lamented; but to any one acquainted with the tendency of the human heart, in all ages, and under all forms, to substitute the outward sign for the inward grace, as well as the desire often found even in the minds of good men to honour the seals of the Christian covenant above the ends for which they were ordained by Christ himself, it is no wonder that the strong language of faith and hope and charity pervading the services of our Church, should have been misunderstood and made subservient to sentiments wholly foreign to her principles. It should be born in mind, however, the Church of England is not what this or that man says of her: she is really what her XXXIX Articles express, and nothing else. These alone are her credentials, the essence and substance of the Church's theology.—A voice of Warning to the Church, by the Rev. John Spurgin, Vicar of Hockham.

DISCONTINUANCE OF RECOGNITION TO IDOLATRY BY GOVERNMENT.

From the Bombay Witness.

We have very much pleasure in placing in our columns a letter showing that Government has ordered the objectionable practice of issuing papers from Government offices with the above superscription [Share] to be discontinued. It is most gratifying to us, as conductors of a religious paper, to give publicity to all acts of our Government, which show a disposition to disconnect themselves from all appearance of countenancing idolatry among the natives. While we congratulate the Government for this act, we cannot but in faithfulness express our surprise that it should have allowed to continue so long a practice, which to us does not only appear objectionable but highly wrong. Our readers should understand that the superscription Shree or Shur, is a dedication to a Heathen god, and up till the 15th of Oct. 1844, every letter and paper in the native language that issued from a Government office had this dedication. There is, however, yet room for complaint, as the letter referred to only relates to papers and letters which issue from the Government offices.—Letters and papers are still received bearing the objectionable superscription. It is true, native chiefs and others might address Government or its officers, and in so doing they would doubtless write as they are accustomed to do, making use of this superscription, and it would be difficult perhaps to decline receiving such communications, yet this would form the exception to the rule. If we rightly understand the system of conducting public duties in this country, it would seem to be in the offices of the collectors of revenue, judges, and magistrates, that the great business is done in the native language with native subjects of the Government. It will not, we imagine, be disputed that Government have a perfect right to prescribe the form in which any application, &c., is to be preferred to any of its officers, and therefore, we say, that so long as they do not prescribe such form as shall exclude such superscription on any paper which at the time of its being written was intended for presentation to any such officer, the measure is far short of what they are called on to adopt, and they cannot be said to have washed their hands from the pollution of idolatry. Now, in all sincerity, we put it to our Government as a professedly Christian one, whether they can rightly allow the reception of papers or letters addressed to them, which are dedicated to a false god. If we know anything of their obligations as a Christian Government, we say, they cannot. We entreat them to clear themselves from this stain upon their character as Christians, from this partnership with the natives in idolatry. We take not up the language of censure, nor set ourselves up as public judges. Desiring only that our voice may be heard and our remarks felt so far as they are consistent with Divine truth, we speak by constraint, not willingly, and urge our arguments, not bitterly but earnestly and sincerely, and we ask our Government in the spirit of love, whether such things continued are not derogatory to him whom they profess to serve. We now give the letter:—

"BOMBAY SUDDER DEWANEE AND SUDDER FAUZDAREE ADAULT,

Oct. 15th, 1844.

"TO THE JUDGES AND SESSION JUDGES AND MAGISTRATES.

"Sir,—I having been brought to the notice of the Honourable the Governor in Council that a practice is allowed in offices under the authority of the British Government of issuing papers bearing, as a superscription, the word 'Shree' or 'Shur' or other significant emblem, and of permitting such to be placed at the head of books of accounts, and other public records, I am directed by

the Judges of the Sudder Adalat, under instructions from Government, to intimate that the said practice being objectionable is to be discontinued, and that all officers of Government in whatever department, are accordingly forbidden to allow any paper or document of whatever nature, bearing such superscription, to issue from the department, court, or office under their control.

"I have the honour to be, &c.
"C. J. ENSKINE,
Acting Deputy Register."

THE GERMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Perhaps for the desirable progress of the Catholic reform movement, the most hopeful occurrence which I have to relate is the decision of Dr. Theiner to separate from the Roman Catholic Church. This, for the latter, severe blow, was hastened, as so many others have been, by the indiscreet zeal of the diocesan Vicar Latussek, who towards the end of April, wrote, demanding a contradiction from Theiner, of "the reports in circulation respecting his intended junction with the German Catholics, failing which, their truth would be taken for granted, and his excommunication follow. Theiner, it is said, replied, he would not give the demanded declaration; that the chapter might do its pleasure as regarded him; but if it decided on hostile measures, he had five statements ready, which he likewise would lay before the public, and which might perchance be neither agreeable nor beneficial to the chapter! The threatened breach was apparently healed through the intervention of Dr. Ritter (canon of the cathedral), but on the renewal of similar reports in the newspapers, and when a reprint of some of Theiner's works, written assuredly in no ultramontane spirit, began to appear, Latussek again launched a threatening letter against the priest of Hundsfield, which occasioned his inviting his patron and churchwardens to meet him on the morning of the 17th of June; he declared to them his resolution to lay down his office in the Romish church, and to give immediate intimation to that effect to the diocesan vicar. This he accordingly did, and his immediate suspension, and conditional excommunication, (that is, if he do not within a given time return to the bosom of the church), followed, as matter of course.

The character of Theiner, whether as a general scholar, thoroughly trained theologian, eloquent writer, long experienced priest, and expert controversialist, joined to his blameless life and orthodox creed, makes him the very man needed by the Catholic reformers at the present crisis. Invitations from Berlin and Leipzig, with very considerable temporal offers, (which, however, may well be deemed influential with the man who has voluntarily laid down the richest cure in Silesia), have been declined for the present, though in the most friendly terms; and a gratifying testimony to his value, especially to their cause, is expressed in an address presented to him, in the name of the Breslaw Catholic reformers, on the 27th ultimo, by their most distinguished members, and in which they declare their willingness to follow him and Ronge under the Christian banner, trusting to the defence of "the sword of the Spirit." He has, without exactly accepting any pastoral charge among them, announced his determination to remain for the present in Breslaw, regarding Silesia as the cradle of the new reformation, (he himself, beyond all question, having been its first mover in years gone by), and it is perhaps a no less wise than natural resolve, since no where else can his influence and example be expected to work so powerfully as in his native province, and among his former clerical associates, many of whom are believed to be of kindred mind with him, as to the necessity of reforms in the Roman Catholic Church.

Another, and no less powerful motive, which may conspire to retain Theiner for a time in Breslaw is, probably, his avowed resolution not to submit so quietly to the sentence of excommunication, should it really be fulminated against him, as against others. The peculiarity of his position, and the terms which the Roman hierarchy may find necessary to keep with him, will be understood from the following statement which has appeared in the Bremer News, under the head of Breslaw, June 28. "It is a fact that our present prince bishop, Mons. de Diepenbrock, has long corresponded with the celebrated Dr. Theiner, on the possibility of effecting a separation from the papal rule, and that he himself would willingly see 'Peter's rock,' rolled out of Germany." This interesting correspondence is now in Theiner's possession. The rigidly papal part of our Chapter is aware of this, and Dean Ritter, with several other satellites of Rome, drove in all haste to Hundsfield, on the same day in which Theiner sent in his abdication, to try by all and any means to rescue these dangerous documents out of his hands; but he was far too much on his guard to be entrapped, and had, foreseeing the demand which might be made on him, previously deposited the important papers with a government bureau. It is easy, therefore, to conceive with what eyes the desertion of Theiner is regarded by the Romish party, especially as he has openly declared his intention of meeting every attack which may be made upon him, by an open and fearless discovery of ecclesiastical abuses, and an appeal to the constitutional rights of the Catholic Church. All eyes are fixed in eager expectation on Diepenbrock, anxious to see whether he will employ the first exercise of his official authority, in opposing the friend of his heart, perhaps also the sharer of his real sentiments, or resolve, too, to break with the papal party?"

The truth of the foregoing, I have no means

of ascertaining on the moment, but it is at least not yet contradicted.

But still greater service to the Reformed Catholic Church, has already rendered it a deep debtor to Dr. Theiner: I allude to a just published "Liturgy and form of public worship for their use," which justifies the expectations of the Berlin protestants, whose appointment at Theiner's declining their offered pastorate, led to the temporary division, (mentioned in the Echo for July), but whom this work will, it is hoped, tend to reunite. The solemnity of the mass, by which he understands the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and which he regards as properly the rallying point of the New Testament church service, is by him divested of all superstitious and papal additions. He professes to return to the model of the first Christian churches, and, therefore, "the German Catholic worship must be purged of all the pomp and glitter of outward ceremonial, and left to the noble simplicity of Apostolic Christianity in their room; and without excluding the aids of music, painting, and architecture, these must be only employed in so far as is compatible with a dignified simplicity and with elevating the spiritual above the material sense." On this ground, splendid garments, burning of incense, signing themselves with the cross, genuflexions, and other unmeaning ceremonies, unknown to the first Christians, as well as the worship of the host, which was introduced only in the thirteenth century, are to be discontinued; and while all mysterious and magical influences are denied to the mass, as the productions of ages of gross superstition, the ordinance of a preached gospel is to be restored to its place in public worship, after the reading of portions of scriptures in the German tongue. The communion in both kinds is given back to the laity, and the compulsory auricular confession abolished. The prayers which he has introduced into the liturgy are copied from those in the oldest Catholic prayer books, and he has, with admirable ability, contrived to embody in his "reformed mass" all those purer views which have in modern times emanated from such Roman Catholic theologians as V. A. Winter, of Landshut, and dean and professor J. B. Hirscher, in Freiburg, to whom he openly avows his obligations.

Thus the German Catholic movement has in Theiner, gained the first theologian, who, to all the warmth and freedom of a truly religious conviction, adds a thorough knowledge of the Roman Catholic Church, in all its phases, and a complete mastery of its scholastic divinity and traditional lore.—Continental Echo, August 1845.

QUESTIONS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.

On renouncing the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of the world, and all sinful desires of the flesh.

Question 1.—Am I at this time truly resolved to make the service of God, and the salvation of my soul, the great concern of my life?

2.—Am I also resolved, that as sin is displeasing to God, and must render me miserable hereafter, I will, through his grace, constantly endeavour to overcome its influence in my heart?

3.—Am I determined, through the same grace, to resist the temptations presented to me by the author of sin, the devil, to conquer and renounce his works, by daily endeavouring to subdue my pride, my vanity, my anger, and other evil affections?

4.—Am I willing, for the sake of God and the happiness of heaven, to give up the world, not placing my heart on any of its unlawful pursuits, and not following after riches, or power, or pleasure, so as to divert my affections from a religious and holy life?

5.—Am I disposed to consider my body as the temple of the Holy Ghost, to avoid, for the sake of preserving myself pure, all evil company, profane conversation, intemperance, and idleness?

6.—Am I thoroughly determined to call myself to account, to repent of my past sins, and to break off from them, by the help of God, before they gain the dominion over me?

7.—Is it my unfeigned intention to cast off the present sin which peculiarly besets me, and to shun all occasions and opportunities which may lead me into it?

8.—Do I also intend, as God shall give me grace, for the sake of Jesus Christ, to persevere in my Christian profession, and strive for the kingdom of heaven, notwithstanding the difficulties which may rise up to prevent me?

9.—Do I purpose to use all the ordinary means of grace, which God has provided in his Church, to enable me to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil? and do I resolve to be diligent in reading the Holy Scriptures, and in all the duties of devotion, especially when I rise in the morning and retire at night to rest, that so my good resolutions may be strengthened and confirmed?

Of faith in God and Jesus Christ.

Question 1.—Do I truly believe that God is the fountain of all good?

2.—Am I resolved to pray to him, to give him thanks, and always to speak of him with reverence?

3.—Do I desire to think of him, and to put my whole trust in him, both in temporal and spiritual troubles?

4.—Am I convinced, that by nature my heart is evil and deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked?

5.—Am I thoroughly persuaded that, liable to the wrath of God, and unable to restore myself, Christ Jesus, the Son of God, made an atonement in my behalf, by his sacrifice and sufferings on the cross?

6.—Do I believe, that those who do not