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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WHOM HAVE I BUT THEE?

PSALM LXXIII. 25.

Lord of earth! thy forming hand
Well this beauteous frame hath plann'd.—
Woods that wave, and hills that tower,
Ocean rolling in his power,—
All that strikes the gaze unsought.—
All that charms the lonely thought,—
Friendship,—gem transcending price,—
Love, a flower from paradise,—
Yet, amidst this scene so fair,
Should I cease thy smile to share,
What were all its joys to me?
Whom have I on earth but Thee?

Lord of heaven! beyond our sight
Rolls a world of purer light;
There in love's unclouded reign
Parted hands shall clasp again;
Martyrs there, and prophets high,
Blaze, a glorious company;
While immortal music rings
From unnumber'd seraph strings;
O! that world is passing fair;
Yet if thou wert absent there,
What were all its joys to me?
Whom have I in heaven but Thee?

Lord of earth and heaven! my breast
Seeks in thee its only rest;
I was lost; thy accents mild
Homeward lur'd the wandering child;
I was blind! thy healing ray
Charm'd the long eclipse away;
Source of every joy I know,
So'ace of my every woe,
O it cannot thy smile divine
Cease to rest upon my soul to shine.
What were earth or heaven to me?
Whom have I in each but thee?

The Hon. Robert Grant.

CONFESSION OF SIN.

We find that the most holy and best men of antiquity, patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, were accustomed to pour out their hearts before God in the most humble and self-abasing language; we have the general tenor of Scripture instructing us that God will be approached by us in this manner; and we discover, upon examination, that the whole service of the Church of England, from its introductory addresses to the most solemn sacrament of the Lord's Supper, abounds with language which cannot be exceeded in energy and plainness, expressive of conscious guilt, alienation from God, and need of his free mercy and forgiveness. Suffer me, then, to ask, my brethren, whether they can be faithful dispensers of God's word, or good churchmen, who endeavour to soften down and qualify this humbling doctrine?—Who admit that man is sinful, but not wholly so; that he has a tendency to evil, but a tendency to good also; contrary to the positive declaration of God, that "the imaginations of man's heart are *only* evil, and that continually?" Can it be correct doctrine to exalt poor fallen human nature, and to endeavour to clear its character from that stain with which sin has darkened it, contrary to Scripture, fact, and the experience of our own hearts and consciences, if we let them speak? Is it not the true doctrine of our Church to describe the state of man by nature as at enmity with God, as totally alienated from him, as dead in trespasses and sins, without hope, without power to save himself, and then to exhibit that powerful and efficient remedy, the great salvation which is in Christ Jesus? In the one case, the depth of the malady is concealed, and the only remedy is slighted; in the other, the fatal and deadly effects of sin are admitted, and the only true and efficacious medicine is applied to the soul. And is it possible that any one can question this point? Have not you yourself, for years, been confessing its truth with your own lips? You have called yourself often a miserable sinner, a miserable offender;" you have confessed this day "that there is no health in you;" you have called for mercy repeatedly, and have prayed to God to spare you. Perhaps you have often acknowledged and bewailed the burthen of sin at the sacramental table, and when this has been the language of your lips, can you be surprised at being addressed as a sinner, and at being invited to fly to that Saviour who came to seek and to save the lost? It is impossible that you can be surprised or offended at this, unless you have uttered with your mouth that which your heart has never felt! and, indeed, it is to be feared that many have done so!

If we all felt deeply the importance of confession and absolution, the acknowledgment of our sins, and the promise of pardon offered in Christ, could so many of us attend the house of God so irregularly as very often to lose that most affecting and interesting part of the service? Let me affectionately exhort you, my brethren, not to think this a point of little importance; late attendance on the worship of God argues a culpable indifference and negligence, and proves a most serious hindrance to the devotions of those who are desirous to join in the service from its commencement. If we feel that we have sins to confess, and need the promised pardon in Christ, we shall not only be anxious to be present during this part of the public ordinances, but shall enter the house of God early enough to collect our thoughts beforehand, lest we increase the sum of our offences by approaching his mercy-seat hastily and unprepared!

Finally, I would endeavour to impress upon all, the vast importance of correct views and feelings on this truly fundamental doctrine of the Bible and of the Church; our ideas of all the other truths of Christianity will depend upon our view of this; if we take a limited and partial estimate of our guilt and sinfulness, innate and actual, we shall have limited and partial views of the salvation which is revealed in Christ. If we do not feel that we are lost, we shall never earnestly seek him, who came to save the lost; if we have not a full conviction of our spiritual poverty, we shall never labour for "the unsearchable riches of Christ." If we do not know that we are dead in sin, we shall never appreciate him who is the life of those who are dead. If we are ignorant that we are spiritually sick, we shall not regard the good Physician; and on the other hand, the more correct and scriptural are our views of our own fallen condition, the more we shall discover of the goodness and grace of Christ.

O that we may all enter into the spiritual import of that penitent language which we continually adopt! that we may see and bewail the height and depth, the length and breadth of our own sinful condition, and "thus may be able to comprehend with all saints, the height and depth, the length and breadth of the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—*Rev. Francis Close, Cheltenham.*

NECESSITY OF CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY.

From a Tract by the Hon. Geo. Rennod, M. A., late Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

It must be plain that no accuracy of doctrinal views, no orthodoxy of creed, no profession of faith, will ever be accepted of God in the place of that disposition of heart, which is ready to believe whatever God has revealed, because He has revealed it, and which searches for truth with humble docility, and unfeigned love of it as truth. This is true faith, and the most orthodox sentiments may exist with it. It is that, however, for the absence of which nothing can compensate. Yet it is to be feared that numbers make a saviour of their "Shibboleth," whose mouth has been "trained to pronounce it aright," not by the exercise of Christian Integrity, inducing the obedience of faith, but by the mere force of the understanding, or of some outward circumstances.

Again it is plain that no amount of outward service done to God, like that of Jesus, can compensate for that disposition of heart which in real self-surrender and devotedness desires to do God's will simply as such, and which, if it has less to show, has less also to conceal. "The Lord looketh at the heart." He sees what we aim at as well as what we actually accomplish, and pays especial regard to the former. If our hearts be not upright, if we allow reserves in our services, then what we do is manifestly self-service, not service to God. Yet how many wilfully shut their eyes to the truth, and make outward works, done from no regard to God's will, a slave to their conscience in the absence of that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord."†

It need scarcely be added, that Christian Integrity being the discriminating point of individual character, it must be a delusion as destructive as either of those we have mentioned, to suppose that any amount of church-privileges, any interest in supposed corporate immunities, or any priestly interposition can, in the least degree, make up for the want of it before God.

Let us further hear the Psalmist's answer to his own question, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in his holy place?" "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob."‡ or, O God of Jacob (margin). Would we translate this into New Testament language, "This is the message," saith St. John," "that we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Words cannot more clearly declare sincerity to be the basis of the Christian character, and that without it we can have neither part nor lot in the hopes and the privileges of the children of God. "The end of the commandment," says the apostle, "is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned"§—a triple expression much to be observed. As charity is here said to be the end of the commandment, as it can only arise out of Christian sincerity, (any other charity being of a spurious kind), it is obvious how indispensable Christian sincerity must be to true religion.

The same conclusion immediately follows from the consideration that the Lord will give ear unto the prayer alone, which "goeth not out of feigned lips."‖ No ritual observances, however correct in taste, imposing in effect, or elaborate in detail, can, in the least degree, compensate for the want of Integrity; on the contrary, they would be offensive in the Lord's sight. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight."§ While speaking on the necessity of Christian sincerity it is most important to bear in mind, that this sincerity must ever be sustained, and carried out into particulars; David could say of himself, long after he had been accustomed to worship God in spirit and in truth, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hearme."‖ And the apostle implies the necessity of it when we ask for the prayers of others, (see Heb. XIII. 18).

* Judges xii. 6. † 1 Sam. xvi. 7. ‡ Heb. xii. 14. § Ps. xxiv. 3—6. ‖ Ps. lxvi. 18. * 1 John i. 5—7. † 1 Tim. i. 5. ‡ Ps. xvii. 1. § Prov. xv. 8.

PROSPERITY AND EXTENSION OF THE CHURCH.

The real prosperity of a parish is chiefly the spiritual prosperity of its members; the actual conversion, sanctification, and salvation of souls. Many inferior things demand our attention and exertion; but one thing is needful, to that one thing let all else be subservient. The essential means which are appointed for these ends, are the word, the sacraments, and the Church of Christ; if we have these under the plainest, simplest circumstances, we have enough; we have a treasure which ought to be far dearer than our lives. Afterwards come the enjoyments, the refinements, the tastefulness, I had almost said the luxuries, of public worship. Let us always distinguish the one from the other; and by all means teach all to value the pure word of truth, whether the preacher be eloquent or uninteresting; the holy sacraments, duly administered, whether they be received by few or by many; the sacred praises of God, whether they be sung in rude strains or with all the accompaniments of musical skill: the fellowship of Christians, whether they assemble within a private dwelling, an humble house of worship, or a stately monument of architectural genius and magnificent liberality. Let all be accustomed to prize the institutions and customs of the Church, in their spiritual character; and for this end, I would exhort my brethren of the clergy to present the truths of the Gospel, as this Church has received them, clearly, urgently and constantly; to be diligent in the catechetical instruction of the young; to inculcate regular, orderly habits in public worship, and the practice of kneeling in prayer, as not to be confined to communicants, private prayer on entering and leaving the Church, as an universal and most reverential custom, the response as designed for every member of the congregation; to present the sacraments as objects, not of an ignorant and holy dread, but of earnest, pious desire, and yet not as matters merely of individual choice, but of general command; to resist with meekness but with earnestness, the erroneous and strange doctrines which, so much pervading the community, cannot but have their influence on our own congregations; and to strive that every Christian may be built up in his most holy faith, may be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in him, and may manifest that he has, what is surely most wanting around us, a strong, clear faith, a foundation of fixed principles in religion, an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast. * * *

We desire, under God's blessing, the extension of our Church in this commonwealth. It is not that we may be a stronger and more influential body. It is that, small as is our number, we are entrusted with the doctrine of the Gospel in its pureness, and with the primitive and complete order of the ministry. I trust that we shall have no heart eagerly to condemn those who may want any portion of that which we possess. A tone which every where would be presumptuous and arrogant, would here and in us be especially pitiable and preposterous. We have seven congregations amongst a population of nearly six hundred thousand. This population, with all the looseness of opinion, the error, and even the unbelief, which so mournfully prevail, is essentially Christian; and I suppose that none of us, in his conscience, entertains the slightest doubt that they have a place with ourselves in the merciful regard, and an interest in the wide promises of our one Redeemer. Most joyfully declaring this, we must still affirm that St. Paul makes truth, or *sincerity*, the girdle of the Christian warrior; and he mentions it first in his enumeration of the parts of the Christian panoply, probably to indicate that without it the rest could not exist, or even supposing it to be possible to have the other requisites without sincerity, they could not be held together for want of the girdle.—"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth,"* "and," he continues, "having on the breastplate of righteousness;" by which we are perhaps to understand the same quality viewed as a *habit*: because as present sincerity from hour to hour is absolutely necessary to the Christian combatant to prevent all his graces from falling off, so the *habit* of sincerity, the fact of being *accustomed* to look simply to what God reveals or commands as the rule of our faith and practice, is, so to speak, that which protects our very life in the conflict. To treat of habits may be thought by some to enter upon dangerous ground; and it is admitted that there have been many who being wedded to certain dogmas of moral philosophy, have endeavoured to incorporate these doctrines with Christian truth, to its serious detriment. But we would contend for it, that we are not to deny the importance of habits, because by some it has been overrated or mis-stated. It is most true that without the continual support of Divine grace the strongest habits will be unavailing, but on that account to disregard expressions in Holy Scripture which imply that *through habits* in a great measure the Divine Spirit carries on his work in the Christian's heart, would be like unwarrantable and dangerous. Many more, probably, have suffered from not giving due weight to this consideration, than have been aware of their loss. St. Paul's exhortation was "exercise thyself unto godliness"† and his practice, "Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men."‡

* Eph. vi. 14. † 1 Tim. iv. 7. ‡ Acts xxiv. 16.

ABERRATIONS FROM SOUND WISDOM.

As sound learning, combined with that humility which shews a due sense of the relation in which we stand to our Creator, naturally leads to a cordial reception of the Christian Revelation, so, on the other hand, a little learning engrafted on human pride and corruption, not less certainly tends to infidelity, or at least to the zero or minimum of Christian doctrine. They who absurdly and disingenuously call themselves Unitarians strike at the very root of sound Christianity, by either denying, or considering as doubtful the inspired character of the authors of the Bible. By thus laying the axe to the root, they are naturally led to reject every fact recorded in Scripture, which their reason is not fully able to comprehend, and every doctrine which appears to mortify human pride and corruption. They accordingly deny the triune nature of the Supreme Being, and man's true relation to that Being as revealed in the word of God. They deny that sin is an evil of infinite magnitude, and, consequently, requires an atonement of an infinite efficacy. They either altogether deny or overlook that fundamental fact, the fall of our first parents, or, at least, they underrate its effects, and consider human depravity to be far less in degree than the word of God declares it to be.

Professing to be men of science, they, of course, acknowledge that the Creator is the Divine Geometer, i. e. in his physical government of the Universe supremely accurate, "without variableness or shadow of turning;" that the laws discovered by Kepler and Newton are his laws. Yet, with singular inconsistency, they believe, or affect to believe, that, in his moral government of the universe, he is, in a high degree, lax and liberal. They readily acknowledge the infinite mercy of the Supreme Being, while they forget or overlook his not less infinite justice, purity, and holiness. Hence the question so important in the estimation of the real Christian, how can God be at once just and merciful? is in their estimation a chimera. While they do not hesitate to call themselves Christians, they nevertheless contradict the sacred words of Christ himself in denying the consciousnes of human souls between the death and the resurrection of the body, a point sufficiently proved by the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, delivered by our Saviour himself; and by the account which the Evangelists have given of the transfiguration of Christ, and of the words which he addressed on the cross to one of the penitent malefactors,—"This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." In contempt also of the tremendous sentence denounced by Christ against Judas Iscariot, "Woe to that man by whom the son of man is betrayed; good would it have been for that man had he never been born;" and of many other similar declarations, they maintain the opinion that all the individuals of our race will ultimately enjoy the most perfect happiness. One only of the miraculous facts detailed in the New Testament is fully recognised by this sect, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and consequently, the future resurrection of the whole human race as dependent on it. Is it not singular, that many learned heathens far excelled these nominal Christians in one very important article of religious faith,—the belief of the existence and consciousness of the soul immediately after the death of the body, as also through the countless ages of eternity? They who profess that they follow their reason as an infallible guide in religion, exhibit little consistency while they reject almost every other miraculous fact, or mysterious doctrine revealed in the Word of God, yet embrace what cannot be surpassed in mystery or difficulty; i. e. they believe, or profess to believe, in the extinction of the human soul, when the body dies, and in its renascence at the period of the resurrection.

Though as my members of this religious sect are in other respects enlightened and scientific, it is nevertheless evident, that, with regard to Theology, they have neglected or violated the rules laid down by the great Lord Bacon, which are to guide the human mind in the investigation of truth. In the first aphorism of the Novum Organum he informs us, that man is not the master, but the servant and interpreter of nature; and that he is, consequently, able to know and understand only those things which are clearly presented to his internal or external senses; he neither does nor can know more. This aphorism is applicable to every branch of knowledge, to religion, not less than to the other sciences, with this sole difference;—We learn the truths of the Christian Revelation, through the credit given by our internal senses to the contents of the Bible, as a message given from the all-wise and unerring Creator; we acquire the knowledge of all other subjects through the credit given by the external or internal senses to the objects presented to them, either by observation or experiment. True wisdom taught this great philosopher to subject his gigantic intellect to due restraint in the investigation of the truths of Christianity. "Holy mysteries," he observes, "should be studied with this caution, that the mind for its module be dilated to the amplitude of the mysteries, and not the mysteries be straightened and girt into the narrow compass of the mind." Elsewhere he observes that "we are to obey God's law, though we find a reluctance in our reason; for if we believe only what is agreeable to our reason, we give assent to the matter, not to the author, which is no more than we would do to a discredited witness." This great man esteemed the revelations of the Word of God as not less worthy of credit than those which we receive from the visible world through our external senses. In other words, as we obtain the knowledge of the objects of vision, by exerting our eyes; of the shape, roughness, or smoothness of bodies, by handling them; of the savour of articles of food, by tasting them; and of their odour, by smelling at them; so we arrive at the knowledge of revealed truths, by reading and believing the record which delares them.—*Dr. R. M. Hawley.*

THE TREE AND THE FRUIT.

You must be made a partaker of heavenly blessings before you can dispense them to others. If there be no tree, how can there be fruit? "Walk in love," saith St. Paul, "as Christ hath loved us," Eph. v. 2; and St. John, "We love him, because he first loved us," 1 John iv. 19. Our love is like a taper, which must be lighted by the fire of Divine love. The love of Christ must first penetrate our heart, and then can we communicate to our neighbour of that which we have already received from Him. Jesus hath fed us with the bread of life, and given us to drink of living water, and clothed us with the garments of salvation: then it is that we can feed and clothe his hungry and thirsty and naked people; and, inasmuch as we do it to one of the least of these, his brethren, we do it unto him.

There is no true faith without good works, as there is no living body without motion. As the love of Jesus is apprehended by faith, so doth it urge men to do their utmost for his glory. When the corn is sown in the field, it remains not long hidden from our sight, but springs forth, and manifests itself in the fruits which it produces.

And as there is no true faith without good works, so can there be no good works without faith; for the word of God implants it: and faith is the root of good works, which are the exhibition and manifestation of that very word, in the life and conduct of a believer.

These three things are united together, as with a golden chain,—the word, faith, and works. The word is the seed of faith; and to faith, in its turn, are good works to be attributed. But faith and works are different from each other, and have respect to different objects. By the former, we apprehend the righteousness of Christ, for our justification; by the latter, we manifest our union with Christ, and evidence the sincerity and depth of our love to him. The one has reference to God, the other to our neighbour.

Let your care extend to both. Seek faith, that you may obtain salvation; be diligent in good works, that you may evidence your faith both to yourself and others, and give glory to God.—*Muller's Hours of Spiritual Refreshment.*

IDOLATRY OF THE YORUBAS, IN WEST AFRICA.

From Mr. Maxwell's Journal; in the Church Missionary Record.

Oct. 1846: *Lord's day*—At the close of the Afternoon School, a Yoruba man, whose house is in the neighbourhood of the Grammar-school, spent a few minutes with me. Among other subjects, we conversed upon Idolatry as practised in his native country. So deeply, he observed, are his country people sunk in their superstition and idolatry, that were not the preaching of the Gospel the instrument of God's own appointment for the restoration of lost sinners, he should doubt the probability of any success the Messengers of the Cross may have achieved who have gone thither, and all attempts for the conversion of that people as ineffectual. He informed me that, when in his country, he had five images, which were representations of some deities that he believed to exist; that his family was notoriously idolatrous; and that the number of idols in the possession of any individual might be increased according to circumstances—the insufficiency of one idol to save in time of sickness or danger necessarily admitting the adoption of more. Hence the awful fact that *there be Gods many, and Lords many*, a fact demonstrative of the significant appellation assumed by the Devil in the Gospel—*My name is legion.*

My informant further observed, that if a man, woman, or child is sick, and the means used for the recovery of such an one be ineffectual, the conjuror must be consulted—but not without some sacrifice—to know whether the affliction is from God, or whether it is from man, and what measure should be adopted to procure deliverance. If the sickness be an affliction from either, an image of some shape must be erected, whose favour the sufferer entreats, and prays to it for interference on his behalf. If, after the erection of the image, the man, woman, or child still continue to suffer, the conjuror is again consulted at some more enormous sacrifice, and the sufferer, or his family, is directed to procure the representation of some supposed deity of a superior preserving power. If, on the other hand, the sufferer is in any wise benefitted when he is said to be under the protection of, and seeking deliverance from, the deity to whom he first applies, then his affliction is asserted to be from him. He is therefore propitiated, and some ceremony is performed, accompanied with presents of fowls and kola-nuts. The inability to save of any supposed deity, symbolised by an image of any description, leads to the adoption of another; although the worship of one image does not in the least affect the worship of another. Be they six gods, or more, the last adopted in no wise creates contempt or disregard in the possessor toward the rest. Due homage is alike rendered to all, and equal sacrifices offered to them continually.

There is another species of idolatry practised in the Yoruba Country, viz. iron worship. Few deities are more dreaded than the god of iron, whose province is, it is believed, to preside over metals, agricultural implements, and instruments of war. Previous to the undertaking of a military expedition, it is customary with the people to assemble in a house consecrated to this deity. There they bring their swords, hoes, and other materials of iron, which they place together in a great heap; this deity is represented by that heap; which is then named Oghung. The people then bow down to it, declare their dependence for assistance in the field upon the god of iron, and acknowledge and supplicate his preserving power. After this, each man takes from the heap what belongs to him, and returns home when he is considered prepared for the field. The god of iron is so peculiarly dreaded, that, except on some serious and important occasions, his name is not called upon in oaths.

When our conversation had ended, I observed how mysteriously God sometimes works in bringing good out of evil. I endeavoured to illustrate this by the fact of Africans being liberated, not only from the evil, the great incomparable evil, of fleshly bondage, which it had been their lot to experience; but also from the spiritual slavery of sin and the devil, in being brought to a Gospel Colony, where they are mercifully made to enjoy the liberty of *the sons of God.* The man confessed the goodness, and the gracious intentions of God in all His providential dealings toward him. He is a consistent man, of the first class in our Sunday-school, and has at heart the welfare of his countrymen. He often visits them, and seeks their conversion; and with him I frequently speak freely upon the things of God.

HOPE FOR MADAGASCAR.

Madagascar, as well as Ethiopia, will yet "stretch forth her hands unto God." Persecution still lingers there; but the eternal God is the Refuge of his people in that island. He will deliver them. There is strong ground of hope for them, as will be seen by the following extract from the report presented to the late annual meeting of the London Missionary Society:

"The only son of the Queen, and her successor to the throne, who has just attained to manhood, has continued to afford to the persecuted followers of Christ, the most conclusive evidence that he is a faithful brother in the Lord. In defiance of the laws, which pronounce slavery and death upon the Christian, the youthful convert assembles with them for worship in their places of retreat; and when their lives and liberties are threatened, he employs all means in his power to warn them of impending danger, and effect their rescue. He has been more than once reported to the Queen, by her chief officer, as a Christian; but the love of the mother has prevailed over the spirit of the Pagan persecutor, and the life of the Prince has been spared. The characteristic attachment of the Malagash, to their offspring and near