

**THE REVIEWER REVIEWED: OR DOCTOR  
BROWNLEE, VERSUS THE BIBLE; VERSUS  
THE CATHOLIC  
CHURCH; VERSUS FATHERS, ANCIENT  
AND MODERN; VERSUS HIS OWN CREED;  
VERSUS HIMSELF**

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The Reviewer Reviewed: Or Doctor Brownlee, Versus the Bible; Versus the catholic church; Versus fathers, ancient and modern; Versus his own creed; Versus himself by Reuben Sherwood

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**REUBEN SHERWOOD**

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OR

**DOCTOR BROWNLEE,**

VERSUS

**THE BIBLE;**

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**HIMSELF.**

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**BY PHILALETHES.**

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"His hands against every man."

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## THE REVIEWER REVIEWED.

I am persuaded you do the Pope great good service, and he would not miss you for any thing.

ARCH. Bp. WHITCOMB.

There is, to every right minded man, something extremely unpleasant in feeling obliged even to think unfavorably of any one, and especially of one who claims the office, and exercises, in an extended sphere, the functions of the christian ministry. The character of a gentleman occupying a station so high and so responsible, is, by general consent, held sacred, and the world, corrupt as it may be, is inclined to respect it. For no trifling cause, therefore, should the conduct of such a man be arraigned before the bar of the public; nor for any thing short of stern necessity should his motives be called in question. And even when driven, by an abuse of misplaced confidence, to an examination and exposure of injustice and wrong done in high and holy places, and compelled to admit the existence of something more than the ordinary frailties of human nature, it is but the discharge of an obvious duty to give to such delinquencies the most favorable construction, and to attribute them to the least offensive cause.

With these sentiments we sat down to the perusal of the work now before us. We had been informed that Doctor Brownlee had delivered a course of lectures on the state of the departed, and that they were to be published. With this information we were much gratified; anticipating, as we did, from the Doctor's station and celebrity, an able, manly and christian-like exposition of this always interesting subject. But alas! we soon discovered that, in all these respects, we were doomed to be sadly disappointed. The Doctor, we are sorry to say, has fallen far below even our lowest expectations; and in this specimen of his theological erudition, power of reasoning and respect for the truth, has given, if we are not egregiously mistaken, another and decisive proof, that quackery is sometimes successful in the attainment of high stations, even in the church; as, a more striking exhibition of boasting pretension and pitiful failure, we have never seen.

Thus disappointed, yet entertaining towards the Doctor the kindest feelings, we cast around us for some adequate cause of the strange obliquity and melancholy waywardness here dis-

closed; and we could not but ask for the motives which could prompt so extraordinary a production. Some intimated to us that this was the Doctor's usual manner; that, being of a belligerent nature, his propensities were all pugnacious, and that his glory was in the field of strife and contention. Others hinted that the Doctor was ambitious of power; that he had even dreamed of the "Tiara," and that notwithstanding his many and fierce collisions with the Romanists, he was yet fond of playing the Papa, and could exercise as lordly a tyranny over a christian community, as ever the Pope did over the Church of Rome. But others, more charitably, and as we think, more correctly, suppose that the Doctor, in some of his mighty conflicts, has experienced a slight mental shock, and is a little shattered in his intellect; or, that in the violence of insatiable cravings for distinction, he has

———"eaten of the issane root  
That takes the reason prisoner."

That there is something wrong about the head of this singular man—and rash, as he is singular, there can be no doubt. We had heard that, in religious matters, the Doctor was thought to be somewhat brainish; and we are now convinced that he is really laboring under some craniological malformation. We are fully persuaded that an examination by the hands of a skilful phrenologist would discover some enormous bumps, and show the organs *pravitiv*, *combative* and *blusterative* to have a most extraordinary developement. And to this "*Kakog Φρονειν*" we are to look, it is supposed, for the cause of the many and abundant out-pourings of rabid polemicks, by which the Doctor has so frequently astounded the christian world, and rendered his name famous.

For what, short of absolute dementation, could have induced the Doctor, in the first place, to preach; then nearly a year after, to print in a *Theological Review*,\* and again still later, to reprint in a weekly religious newspaper,† that strikingly characteristic compound of personal invective, wilful misrepresentation and crazy theology which he has dignified with the name of a *Review of the Rev. Mr. Sherwood's sermon on the intermediate state*? Pray, what has Mr. S. said or done? Of what unpardonable offence has he been guilty, thus to excite the tremendous roarings of this Protestant Bull? We have read his sermon with some degree of attention; and although written many years ago, and with the freedom of a catechetical lecture for the benefit of the youthful members of his parish, and never designed for the public eye, it is yet, in our judgment, a fair sermon, and one, in every way, proper for the occasion on

\**Princeton Review*.

†*Christian Intelligencer*, Dec. 1839.

which it was recently preached. It sets forth, as it seems to us, in plain terms, and in an unobjectionable manner, the true doctrine of Scripture, of the Church, and of common sense, in relation to the state of departed souls.

But admitting the sermon to be heterodox in sentiment, and faulty in style, why should it have so disturbed the amiable Doctor's placid serenity? For what reason has he been so especially troubled with it? And for the gratification of what kind and catholic spirit, has this great man been induced thus to pour out the vials of his wrath? Yea, admitting, in all its plenitude, the Doctor's pontifical prerogative, that it is his peculiar province to take cognizance of all erroneous doctrines, and punish all offenders against orthodoxy; and further, that he has been sought on bended knee, and even in more humble acts of homage, to avenge some unfortunate suppliant for mercy, yet, could not the anathema have been pronounced in somewhat more gracious terms? Is it not enough to condemn the heresy, and burn the heretic, but must the cruel punishment be aggravated by the harsh language of a vindictive spirit? Alas, alas! how true, after all, "the little finger of presbytery is thicker than the loins of prelacy," or even papacy!

Surely, the chivalrous Doctor, verily, "a knight in the ecclesiastical way," must have been deeply impressed with the responsibility of his high place in the church militant, must have burned with intense desire for some exploit, must, indeed, have been absolutely longing for adventure, when he made so furious a tilt upon the harmless doctrine of this sermon. But where there exist strong natural aberrations of intellect, confirmed by a chronic affection of the brain, things are always seen through a distorted medium. The valorous Doctor doubtless thought the sermon an object worthy of his mighty prowess; and he felt himself called upon to redress this theological grievance, and chastise with appropriate gallantry and grace the temerity of its author. It is possible too, that, in this adventure, the renowned knight may have been moved, in some degree, by his benevolent sympathies for his unfortunate Squire, who, in the honorable anxiety to save himself, by seeking, with instinctive sagacity, the shelter of some redoubtable name, personal or corporate, it matters not, may have been tempted to "play false" with his master. Should there be truth in this suggestion, that worthy gentleman has done wrong, has indeed been ungrateful; and his conscience, we are sure, must drive him on to the stool of repentance. And we are willing to think that, when he sees the sad predicament into which he has helped to lead his valiant and generous protector, he will hasten to *disabuse* his noble mind of the pious fraud he has practiced upon it.



But to the Doctor's *contras*:—and here, it must not be supposed for a moment, that we intend a discussion with the Doctor on the subject of an intermediate state. This is very far from our intention, and for reasons which, before we are through, will be sufficiently manifest. Why should it be attempted? Mr. S. has placed the doctrine of his sermon on the sure and impregnable basis of reason, revelation and the authority of the Church; nor has the Doctor, in the whole of his labored review, adduced any thing to shake, in the slightest degree, one of his positions. He has indeed given us an abundance of hard names, bold assertion and reckless denunciation; but any thing like fair, dispassionate and manly argument, we have not been able to discover.

We have said that the Doctor is against himself. We begin with this *contra*, from personal respect to the Doctor, and for personal convenience to ourselves. For, it being seen that the Doctor's hands are against himself, there will be less difficulty in showing, as well as less surprise in finding them against others.

In looking over the Doctor's twelve or fifteen large newspaper column review,\* a sufficiently respectable article in length, improved and perfected by all the advantages of as many months of consideration, correction and republication, we noticed, as we thought, some rather low personalities—some little want of good temper, kind feeling and gentlemanly courtesy—some slight indications of vanity—and something like cant, sneering and bitterness:—thus,—“*Our Rector*”—“*though not a Goliath to encounter*”—“*hastening to teach others before he has himself studied the topic of discussion*”—“*the puerile and unanswerable logic of the Rev. Rector of St. James*”—“*inexcusable ignorance of church history*”—“*meagre gleanings*.”† These, with a suitable number of *et ceteras*, and a dazzling display of the “punctum admirationis,” are a few specimens of the dignified manner, graceful diction, and elegant witticisms, by which the learned and accomplished Doctor would forestall the judgment of his hearers and readers, stifle the voice of truth, and excite odium against an unoffending christian brother. But as we cannot suppose that even the Doctor thought that these rude personalities could take the place of argument, or in any way serve the cause of truth, we conclude that he intended them merely as ornaments—sparkling little gems, to adorn this super-elegant and double-refined Review. We shall therefore take no further notice of them than to set them down as so much against the Doctor's *self*, as a courteous and gentlemanly reviewer.

\*The Christian Intelligencer edition, the only one that we have seen.

†These, with many other expressions of a like nature, grace the Doctor's first No. in the Intelligencer.

The Doctor commences his review by assuming and declaring, and this too, in the face of facts to the contrary, that Mr. S. was the aggressor—was indeed a “challenger.” Now happening to know something of the origin of this sermon, and of the circumstances under which it was preached and published, we affirm, and without the fear of contradiction, that the Doctor’s assumption and declaration have not even the semblance of truth for their support. So far was Mr. S. from being the aggressor, it is notorious that he was himself assailed, wantonly, violently and publicly assailed. It is indeed possible that the Doctor may have been deceived in this matter; but then, if so, we must say, willingly, as he held in his hands the proof that what he had assumed and declared was not true.

In his further efforts to make Mr. S. the aggressor, the Doctor asserts—shall we say “with inexcusable ignorance?” O, no;—could we bring ourselves to retort upon the Doctor his own courteous language, it would not meet the point, but with incredible infatuation; and, as if to make the strange fatuity more apparent, he repeats the assertion, that “Mr. S. has charged upon us,” the R. D. Church, it is supposed, “an ancient heresy.” This heresy, the Doctor says, in direct and unqualified terms, “Mr. S. through inexcusable ignorance of church history, has actually charged upon us as our doctrine.” Nor is Mr. S. the only one who falls under this terrible denunciation of charging, thro’ inexcusable ignorance of church history, this ancient heresy upon their neighbors. For, says the Doctor again, “they,” the high church party, “charge upon us the guilt of adhering to an ancient heresy.” O, ye Pearsons and Bulls, ye Burnets and Seckers, ye Horns and Horsleys, ye Seaburys and Hobarts, ye, ye Calvins and Campbells, and ye Wesleys and Clarks, come bow your diminutive heads to this mighty censor, this self constituted Oracle of the Collegiate R. D. Church, and confess before him your ignorance and folly! But what was that ancient heresy, at the very thought of which the Doctor is so filled with horror?—All that Mr. S. says on this subject is in these words,

“There was an ancient heresy which set forth the doctrine that the souls of the faithful go at death immediately into heaven, and enter on the full fruition of their God. And it must be admitted that, with some variety of form, this doctrine has had its friends and supporters in different ages of the Church: nor yet can it be denied, that it has its advocates even at the present day. It is but justice however, to remark, that between the ancient and the modern exhibitions of this doctrine, there is sometimes found this difference,—that, in the former, the doctrine is, for the most part, connected with a denial of the resurrection of the dead, and consequently of the general judgment; whereas in the latter, these great christian verities are generally admitted, although it may be somewhat difficult to see in what consists the value of the admission, or to understand the nature of the resurrection, and the reason of the general judgment.”

But does Doct. B. admit that the doctrine of sending saints to heaven, at death, is a heresy? Is not this the very doctrine which throughout the whole of his laboured review, Dr. B. is endeavoring to establish? And does he not again and again declare this to be the true doctrine? Listen to some few of "his profound conclusions." Having wrested certain portions of scripture from their true and obvious meaning he says,\*

"Hence departed souls are now with him [Christ] in heaven."—"Therefore departed souls of believers do go into heaven and its eternal glory."—"Therefore the souls of departed christians are with Christ in the glory and happiness of heaven."—"The departed are of course in *heaven*, as certainly as those who are *not* departed are upon earth. There is of course no middle place. It is unknown on the pages of the Holy Bible. They are all either in heaven, or on earth. Hence every member of Christ's family, when they leave the church below, are [is] received into the family of God above, in the heaven of heavens."

Verily, if the doctrine of sending souls, at death, immediately to heaven, be heresy, "nothing has ever yet existed so precisely like" heresy, dear Doctor, as this your review. But heresy or not, where is the evidence of the truth of the Doctor's unqualified, deliberate and repeated assertion that "Mr. S. has charged this heresy upon us," Dr. B., the R. D. Church, or any other individual or body? Not a particle exists. But will Dr. B. deliberately and repeatedly, preach, print, and reprint such a direct and unqualified assertion without proof? Has he not referred to the very page of Mr. S.'s sermon for the evidence by which this assertion may be sustained? The Doctor has indeed made such a reference; and sorry we are, *on his account*, that he has done so. We have given above, every word that Mr. S. has said respecting that ancient heresy. And we wish that all who can lay hands on that sermon, would turn to page the 7th, to which the Doctor has twice referred, and read for themselves. It will be found that the Doctor preached, and largely too, on something besides, "inexcusable ignorance," when he ventured on such a reference for the support of this utterly unfounded and cruel assertion. He very well knew, that not one of ten thousand, who had heard, and would read the various spoken, written, and printed versions of this wicked calumny, would ever see the sermon of Mr. S. to which this falsehood appeals for its support; or if seeing it, would ever take the trouble to examine it. We however have examined carefully the page referred to, and we defy the power of genius to draw from that page, or any other part of the sermon, the slightest warrant or justification for the Doctor's broad, unqualified and repeated assertion. And as for the appendix written for the express purpose of further elucidating the doctrine of the sermon, and defending its author against the "gross attack," made upon him, Mr. S. is so

\*See Chris. Intel., Dec. 21, 1839, No. III.