

**OBSERVATIONS ON A WORK BY MR.
BICKERSTETH, ENTITLED, "REMARKS ON
THE PROGRESS OF
POPERY;" , AND AN ANSWER TO HIS
ATTACK ON THE SOCIETY FOR
PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE**

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WILLIAM BRUDENELL BARTER

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AND AN

A N S W E R

TO

HIS ATTACK ON THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

BY THE REV.

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OBSERVATIONS,

&c.

I HEARD that Mr. Bickersteth had written a short pamphlet, in which a most useful refutation of Roman Catholic error was to be found; that his book was a perfect Protestant's Vade Mecum in these times of rebuke, and that it also contained a very candid and useful exposure of some doctrinal errors, which he had detected in some of the Tracts published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. I was told also that a large number of the members of that Society who thought with him on this subject, had determined to make a stand on the ground which he had chosen, and to demand the correction of detected error, or rather the erasure of such tracts from the lists of the Society.

On opening the book I read the following sentences:—

“The glorious Gospel of the blessed God, committed to the trust of his ministers, (1 Tim. i. 11.) is the richest treasure which they can dispense to men. In proportion to the excellency of the treasure is the responsibility of faithfulness to their trust.

“How rich that treasure is, what tongue can utter! It is *the good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all*

people, that there has been born for us, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. It is the faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the very chief. It is the good news, that, though our God is beyond compare pure and holy, just and righteous, he so loved the world, the sinful, rebellious world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

“By simple faith in God’s testimony concerning his Son, we enter into the most delightful of all feelings, that God loves us, though vile and sinful, and is our most tender and merciful Father, and thus we have the rich privilege of being his children. This faith is its own evidence in the peace, joy, love, and gratitude with which it fills the bosom of the Christian, and the holiness which it produces in his life. *He that believeth hath the witness in himself.* In his very coming to Christ he knows that he is among the elect, and has been drawn of the Father to come; *all that the Father giveth me shall come unto me: no man can come to me, except the Father draw him: my sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me.* Under the blessed influence of these truths, and by the new creating power of the Holy Ghost, the Christian loves as his tender Father the great God, loves his Saviour Jesus, and all his fellow-men; and in the diligent use of all God’s appointed means of grace, he is daily conformed, more and more, to his heavenly Lord, and becomes meet for his everlasting inheritance.”

Now had I met with this passage in a sermon, as I could not expect to find in every paragraph the

whole Gospel of our Lord and Saviour, nor perhaps a statement of all its principal truths in one discourse, though I must have considered it rather as a homily than a sound form of words; though I should have thought our entering at once on the most delightful of all feelings—a description rather of those who “receive the Word with joy,” than of those “who, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruits with patience”—yet the warmth of religious feeling expressed by the author might have left a pleasing impression.

But when this statement occurs at the beginning of a work which promises to set forth a confutation of the mischievous errors of Popery, and also of those other errors, less glaring indeed, but equally destructive to the vitality of true religion, which we are told have crept into tracts circulated by the Christian Knowledge Society, a clear and exact understanding of the author’s meaning in this passage is absolutely necessary to any useful perusal of his work.

Now in these sentences the author professes to inform his readers not only what the religion of Christ really is, but in what way we are bound to receive it; in what consists the evidence of our having received it aright, and what effects will be produced by its real reception in the heart. We must therefore regard this passage as of the utmost importance. We must inquire not only whether what is said, is said truly, but whether the whole truth is indeed scripturally set forth. Now if we find that either of these conditions, but especially the last, on which alone we ought to yield our confidence to any writer, has not been fulfilled, we shall not surely