

Some friends have written for a complete file of the "BIBLE CHRISTIAN" from the commencement. We regret to say that we cannot furnish them. The early numbers are completely exhausted.

The hour of public worship in the Montreal Unitarian Church, on Sunday evenings, is changed from Seven to Half-past Seven o'clock, and will be so continued during the summer months.

The Bible Christian,

MONTREAL, MAY, 1847.

JOSEPH BARKER.

Since the issue of our last number we have received a letter from Mr. Barker, of England, whose name as a religious reformer is now pretty well known in this country. He is still busy in his labours to remove ignorance and error, and to extend the sway of a simpler and purer form of Christianity, than that which now prevails in the world under the name of Orthodoxy. He operates on the public mind mainly by means of the press. His exertions have been attended with a large measure of success. He writes, "I see the cause of truth prevailing, and the cause of error declining. Liberal principles are making their way in this country very rapidly. Great numbers are renouncing the old errors of Orthodoxy, and embracing the simple principles of primitive Christianity. The opponents of Evangelical reform are daily becoming less popular. Their sects are declining both in numbers and in power, and there are signs of an approaching revolution with respect to religious sentiments generally."

We learn also from this letter of Mr. Barker that one of the leading ministers of the Methodist New Connexion in England—the Rev. W. A. McCombe—has lately renounced Orthodoxy, and embraced more correct and liberal views of Christianity.

Mr. Barker likewise enclosed to us the printed copies of two letters already published in England, and very probably republished in the United States. Taken together, they exhibit a correspondence which took place between himself and some members of the Christian connexion in America in the early part of the present year. His request to us, is, that if we should meet with any members of the Christian denomination of Canada, to show them the correspondence. But as these belong mainly to Upper Canada, and as none of them are to be found in this region of the country, we reprint the letters in our columns. Owing to their length, we are obliged to omit a few paragraphs. The Bible Christian finds its way to some of the Christian Brethren in Upper Canada, and the information contained in the correspondence will no doubt be interesting to many others of our readers. The letters will be found on our fourth page.

THE "MONTREAL WITNESS."

A few days since a friend handed us a copy of the Montreal Witness, a weekly journal published in this city which devotes a large share of its attention to religious affairs. The copy to which we refer is that of the 26th ult. The first article on the first page is entitled "Which is the True Faith?" and is written in the form of a dialogue "between Mr. A., Catholic, and Mr. B., Protestant." With its style we have nothing to do, but on one of its statements we feel bound to offer a remark.

To arrive at our point, we may be pardoned if we extract two or three of the commencing paragraphs. The conversation, it will be observed, springs out of a very laudable curiosity on the part of "Mr. A., Catholic":

"Mr. A. What is the object of holding meetings every evening in the Methodist Church?"

Mr. B. In order to bring before the public a large amount of Christian instruction.

A. Can you tell the difference between the various Protestant sects?

B. There is no difference between the various Protestant sects on the principles essential to salvation.

A. Wherein do they disagree?

B. On points that are non-essential. For instance, they are agreed on the doctrine of the Trinity, justification through the blood of Christ, and sanctification through the Holy Spirit."

Now "Mr. B., Protestant," is made to assert here that all Protestants are agreed on the doctrine of the Trinity, and it is this which surprises us. We are somewhat at a loss to account for the assertion. We scarcely know whether to attribute it to the ignorance of Mr. B. concerning simple matters of fact, or whether he is designedly taking a slight controversial advantage of Mr. A., who is evidently a very unsophisticated character in matters of this nature. We are disposed to incline to the former opinion. We think Mr. B. was speaking without sufficient knowledge. We are afraid he was making assertions at random. We regret that the fault is so common with a certain class of controversialists.

And yet—our mind is changeable on this point; that is, concerning Mr. B.'s ignorance. The Protestants all agreed on the Trinity! Is there any individual, we ask, with any pretension to information, who does not know better than this? Could any one, presuming to take up a pen to impart religious instruction, be so entirely unacquainted with the history of the theological controversy, as it has been carried on during the latter half of the last, and up to this time in the present, century, as to suppose that all Protestants believe the doctrine of the Trinity? It is hard to think so. Yet if we do not rest in this supposition, we are forced to the conclusion that Mr. B. was endeavouring to impose upon the Catholic by a false representation, with the view of gaining a paltry advantage in the argument.

Let us glance a moment at a few of those countries where Protestantism exists to any considerable extent. Take the country of the Reformation first. Does the writer in the Witness suppose that the Protestants of Germany are agreed on the doctrine of the Trinity? If he does, he is under a very serious mistake. We saw it stated not long since in one of the London papers, that what would be regarded as heterodoxy in England would be regarded as orthodoxy in Germany, so wide has been the departure of the German Protestants from what would be called orthodox standards in this country. We know that some of the most eminent orthodox divines in Germany decline the use of the term "Trinity" altogether; but what their precise views are with regard to the doctrine denoted by it, we would not undertake to say. Then look at Geneva, the birthplace of one of the most remarkable forms of Trinitarian orthodoxy,—we mean Calvinism. There this system has now found its grave. Efforts have recently been made to revive it, but these have been attended with no very large measure of success. In Dr. Beard's book, lately published, we are informed, that "Generally among Swiss Protestants, the old doctrines [the Trinity, &c.] find few adherents among the clergy or the people. Without falling into extreme rationalism, the ministers, especially the older ministers, have quietly abandoned the ancient church doctrines, while the young men educated in part at German Universities, particularly at Berlin and Bonn, have brought home the views of Schleiermacher under several modifications." Look we now to France. The Protestant Church in that country, in its two divisions, comprises about two millions of souls, with seven hundred and twenty-nine ministers. "How many have renounced the Trinity [we quote again from Dr. Beard's work] we have not the means to determine with exactness. Facts, however, within our knowledge, give us reason to think that not more than two hundred of these clergymen still hold the doctrine in any form." From this it appears that the great majority of the Protestants of France, as well as those of Germany and Switzer-

land, have rejected the doctrine of the Trinity.

Let us come now to Great Britain and Ireland. Is the writer in the Witness so negligent of the religious and political history of that kingdom, as to forget the agitation which existed there about three years ago, in consequence of the interference of Parliament to protect the interests of a certain class of Protestant Dissenters? Did not the camp of orthodoxy then ring throughout its length and breadth, because any protection should be extended to a class of Protestants who denied the doctrine of the Trinity. This was their alleged crime, and there were about three hundred and fifty congregations involved in it. Add to this number, the societies of the "Christian Brethren," referred to elsewhere in our present sheet, and we shall have about six hundred worshipping societies in Great Britain and Ireland who have set aside the doctrine of the Trinity. Now let us cross the Atlantic. Let us look at the United States. And here again we must express our surprise at the statement put forth in the Witness. Does the writer of that statement not know that there are thousands of congregations in America who have long since abandoned the Trinity? These are known by various denominational titles, and have various modes of Church government. Some are called Unitarians, others Christians, others Universalists, &c. Some are Congregationalists, others Quakers, others Baptists, &c. We might extend this explanation farther, but we do not think it needful.

All Protestants agreed on the doctrine of the Trinity! It might have been followed by the statement that all the human race were of the same colour. As far as truth is concerned, the one assertion would be on a par with the other.

THE BOSTON UNITARIANS.

The following notices, taken from our Boston papers just come to hand, may not be without interest to our friends and readers in Canada. It will be seen by them that the Unitarians of Boston are active and earnest, numerous and hospitable. It will be seen too that the laymen of eighteen worshipping societies are concerned in the invitation to the Clergy. These eighteen churches recognize the denominational title "Unitarian," and of course have no faith in a three-fold Deity. Besides these, however, there are a dozen other churches in Boston (known by other names) which have no more belief in the Trinity than they have in Transubstantiation. The knowledge of these facts may be of some use to such random discourses as "Mr. B., Protestant," of the Montreal Witness:—

TO THE CLERGY OF THE UNITARIAN DENOMINATION.

Brethren,—The period of our anniversaries being near at hand, the committee who were charged with the arrangements for the present year, take this opportunity, in the name of the laymen of Boston, most cordially and affectionately to invite you with your ladies to be present at the annual collation, to be served in the hall over the Maine Rail-Road Depot, Haymarket Square, on Tuesday, May 25th, 1847, at 2 o'clock P. M.

It is hoped that every clergyman who sympathizes with us, from all parts of our land, and all who may be in our country from abroad, will unite with us, on the return of this pleasant occasion, affording to the laymen of the city the privilege of meeting our friends from every section in social intercourse and friendship.

Clergymen's tickets may be obtained at the store of Messrs. Crosby & Nichols, No. 111, Washington street.

We would tender the hospitality of our homes and firesides to all who will favor us with a visit during Anniversary week. The Secretary, to whom all communications on this subject may be addressed, will provide every one who desires it, with a hearty welcome in the families of our brethren in the city.

In bonds of Christian fellowship,
For the Committee,
W. D. COOLIDGE, Secretary,
No. 32, Pearl street.

THE COLLATION.—The Committee who are charged with the arrangements for the approaching Festival, would give notice that an equal distribution of the tickets has been made to each Society, and may be obtained of the gentlemen named below.

It is desirable that an early application be made, so that no disappointment or delay may occur in the necessary arrangements.

- Rev. Mr. Lathrop's Society, of Mr. Eben's Dale.
- Coolidge's, Calvin W. Clark.
- Washington's, Joseph East.
- Gray's, David Price.
- Peabody's, William Thomas.
- Harrot's, Lewis G. Pray.
- Frostingham's, J. T. Hayward.
- Waterston's, S. H. Barnes.
- Thomas's, Francis Alger.
- Lippett's, Emanuel E. Guild.
- Ginnott's, F. W. Lincoln, Jr.
- Robbins's, J. G. Wetherell.
- Young's, B. H. Greene.
- Clarke's, Charles Arnold.
- Parkinson's, G. F. Williams.
- Fordick's, G. G. Loring, Jr.
- Fox's, W. W. Alcott.
- Livermore's, W. W. Alcott.

or of the Secretary,
W. D. COOLIDGE, No. 32, Pearl street.

BOOKS FOR SALE,

AT

G. BRVSON'S BOOK-STORE,
ST. FRANCOIS XAVIER STREET.

THE Entire Works of WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, D.D., in two volumes.

The Entire Works of the Rev. ORVILLE DEWEY, D.D., Pastor of the Church of the Messiah, New York, one volume, 8vo. pp. 887.

A COMMENTARY ON THE FOUR GOSPELS. By the Rev. A. A. Livermore.

THE ESSENTIAL FAITH OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH, Deduced from the Sacred Records. By Harriet Martineau.

LA FOI DE L'EGLISE UNIVERSELLE; D'APRES LES SAINTES ECRITURES. Par Dlle. Martineau. Traduit de l'Anglais.

SCRIPTURAL PROOFS AND SCIENTIFIC ILLUSTRATIONS OF UNITARIANISM. By John Wilson. 3rd Edition, revised and enlarged.

"Every text connected with the Trinitarian controversy on both sides of the question is noticed in this volume. The book is divided into two parts. The first of these contains 'the Scripture evidence of Unitarianism;' the second 'the alleged Scripture evidence for Trinitarianism.' In the first part, besides quoting the texts as they appear in the authorized version, Mr. Wilson furnishes us, in many cases, with a variety of renderings, by scholars of acknowledged eminence; and throughout the whole he presents us with a series of forcible and pertinent remarks of his own. In the second part, he not only cites the controverted texts in full, but also gives 'illustrative texts' to throw light on the meaning of the prominent terms which appear in them."—Boston Christian Examiner

THE CONCESSIONS OF TRINITARIANS; being a Selection of Extracts from the most eminent Biblical Critics and Commentators. By John Wilson.

"We cannot conceive a Trinitarian looking this book in the face, without a decided sinking of the heart,—without a sense of the ground, which he had taken to be so solid shrinking from under him,—without the involuntary ejaculation 'Save me from my friends!' For here are six hundred pages of refutation of Trinitarianism, by Trinitarians themselves, drawn from over two hundred eminent writers of that denomination. In other words, it is a volume of extracts from celebrated orthodox writers of all ages of the church, in which they have given Unitarian expositions of Trinitarian proof-texts. And it appears, from examining the work—what, indeed, has often been loosely asserted—that there is not one out of all the passages in the Bible brought forward in support of the doctrine of the Trinity, which, by one or more Trinitarian writers, has not been given up to their opponents, as admitting or requiring a Unitarian interpretation. Here, therefore, we have a perfect armoury of weapons for the destruction of the Great Error, furnished by the believers and defenders of the error themselves."

HISTORIC AND ARTISTIC ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE TRINITY; showing the Rise, Progress, and Decline of the Doctrine, with Elocutory Engravings. By the Rev. J. R. Beard, D.D., of Manchester, England.

PRAYERS for the use of Christian Families. With a Preface recommending the Practice of Family Worship. By the Rev. J. Scott Porter.

LECTURES ON CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE. By the Rev. A. Peabody, Pastor of the South Congregational Church, Portsmouth, N. H.

THE APOLOGY OF THE REV. THEOPHILUS LINDSAY, M. A., on resigning the Vicarage of Catterick, Yorkshire.

THE REMONSTRANCE OF A UNITARIAN. Addressed to the Right Rev. Thomas Burgess, D.D., Lord Bishop of St. Davids. By Capt. James Gifford, R. N.

THE ATONING SACRIFICE—a Display of Love, not of Wrath. By the Rev. Noah Worcester.

LETTERS ADDRESSED TO RELATIVES AND FRIENDS, chiefly in Reply to Arguments in Support of the Doctrine of the Trinity. By Mary S. B. Dana, author of the "Southern and Northern Harps," "The Parted Family," &c.

THE RECOLLECTIONS OF JOTHAM ANDERSON. By the late Rev. H. Ware, Jr., of Cambridge University, New England.

SERMONS. By the Rev. F. W. P. Greenwood, D.D., Minister of King's Chapel, Boston. In two volumes.

A COLLECTION OF PSALMS AND HYMNS for Christian Worship. By the Rev. F. W. P. Greenwood, D. D. Montreal, December, 1846.

JUST RECEIVED,

A SUPPLY OF

"WARE ON THE FORMATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER."