

sial book. It has seemed to me the wiser course, in my situation, to devote what time I have had to the careful study of the Bible. To this volume I suppose all Christian sects appeal as an ultimate authority. I have thought therefore that if I could learn what the Bible teaches, I should learn the truths which make one wise unto salvation. Now however, that I happen to be in the company of one who has come, I suppose, from the midst of a controversy, that seems to be regarded as a very important one, I shall be much pleased to learn what are the precise points at issue between Unitarians and Trinitarians."

"It will be very agreeable to me, sir," I replied, "to answer your inquiries, but before I do so, allow me to hear from you a full statement of your own religious opinions." He rejoined, "Why do you wish me to give you a statement first; why not as well afterwards?" "I have, sir," said I, "a good reason for pressing this request, which I will give you, if it does not appear before the close of our conversation. I have never before met with an intelligent person, who could say, as you have done, that he had studied the sacred Scriptures alone in order to learn the doctrines and precepts of our religion. I am, therefore, particularly curious to know to what conclusions you have been brought."

He consented to gratify me, and after a few minutes, evidently spent in collecting and arranging his thoughts, he gave me, at considerable length, a full and lucid statement of his religious belief. He permitted me to guide him somewhat by my questions, in the order of his exposition, so that I drew from him his opinions upon all the principal points then in controversy between "rational Christians" and "the orthodox." When he had finished, I said to him, "You will probably be surprised, sir, at what I am going to tell you, but it is true. You are a Unitarian!"

The announcement disconcerted him. He was offended; and his countenance fell. "I am disappointed," he said with considerable emotion. "I took you to be a gentleman and a Christian—too serious-minded to trifle upon a subject like this. I did not suspect that you meant to entrap me. I thought you were one from whom I might draw information upon a subject, to which I have not been able to give any personal examination. But I find I was mistaken. I am disappointed."

After a minute's silence, I resumed. "It is not unaccountable to me, sir, that you should be affected as you are, by what I have told you. Your displeasure shows plainly enough how much of the current prejudice against Unitarians, you have unconsciously imbibed. Although you have not read any books of the controversy, it is evident you have heard so much unfavorable to Unitarianism, that you deem it a reproach to have it said, that you hold that form of doctrine. I thought it might be so, and that was the reason why I urged you to give me your system of belief before I answered your inquiries. I wished that your statement might be wholly unaffected by a feeling of unwillingness to be found in the rank of the New England heretics. I am a Unitarian—a preacher of Unitarian Christianity—and I do assure you that the opinions you have just now expressed, are very similar to those that I suppose to be generally entertained by the people called Unitarians, or Liberal or Rational Christians." I then went on to give him some account of the rise of the sect, then and since known by one or all of the above appellations. I stated to him the doctrines of the Humanitarians, not at that time numerous, of the Arians, who constituted the greater portion of our sect, and of some other minor subdivisions respecting the nature of Christ. I also stated to him the doctrines of Pelagius and Arminius, with the opinion of Dr. Priestly, and of the prominent Unitarian divines of our own country, on the nature and destiny of man. He asked me many questions; listened with great attention and increasing kindness—until he became pretty well satisfied that his own opinions resembled very nearly that of Arius and Arminius, or the opinions that were then very generally held by the people called Unitarians.

"But, sir," said I, "as you do not know me, I cannot insist upon your receiving my statements as true. If you will favor me with your address, I will ere long send you copies of our best publications, that you may see for yourself what are the doctrines which we are endeavoring to disseminate." He immediately gave me the name of "Hon. John Greene, Fredericksburg." He was a Judge, if I remember correctly, the Chancellor of Virginia. Our conversation had occupied several hours. We soon after reached Richmond, and there parted, to meet no more on earth.

Immediately on my return to Baltimore, Mr. Sparks kindly furnished me with copies

of the best tracts then extant, and I sent them to Judge Greene.

Some months afterwards, I received in Boston, a very cordial letter from him, informing me that he had read the tracts, and found his own views of divine truth on the whole well expressed in them. We exchanged several letters afterwards, respecting the education of his sons, whom he proposed to send to school in Massachusetts. But his plans, and our correspondence, were in the course of a year or two, terminated by his death.

Here you have one instance of an intelligent man, who had become a Unitarian from the study of the Bible alone, and had lived honored in the midst of an orthodox community, without being suspected or suspecting himself, that he held opinions that were elsewhere denounced as a fearful heresy. Nor was this, by any means, a solitary instance of the kind within my own acquaintance. And I doubt not, if we should go the country through, we might hear of thousands of men and women who had lived or are living respected and beloved in the bosom of orthodox churches, whose religious opinions, when stated in their own plain language, (divested of the technicalities of "the creeds,") would be found very similar to the opinions of Unitarians.

S. J. M.

### A HOLY LIFE THE MOST PERSUASIVE ARGUMENT.

For a short time after the ascension of Christ, God wrought with his apostles by signs and wonders; but the arm of power was soon drawn back into heaven, and the work of propagating the gospel was then left to human charity. Now there is nothing that tends so much to retard the progress of the Christian religion as the unholy lives of its professors; on the other hand, there is nothing so well adapted to aid its propagation as the holy lives and conversation of its professors. To show this, we have only to glance at the history and present state of the Christian Church.

The conversation of the Apostles was worthy of the Gospel. They were blameless in the sight of enemies as well as of friends. Malice itself could find no charge against them, except that they were defenders of a faith everywhere spoken against. Their first disciples were imitators of them. "See how these Christians love one another!" was the remark even of the Pagans concerning them. In an accusation brought against the early Christians by the celebrated Pliny, he states that it was a part of their regular religious service to bind themselves by an oath to lead pure and honest lives. While this was the character of the Christian Church, it grew in spite of the rage of the persecutor. The blood of its martyrs was a seed from which sprang a most abundant harvest. The purity with which the Christians lived, the fortitude with which they suffered, the triumphant hope with which they died, called forth the admiration of their enemies, and often changed them from enemies to friends. The very men who bound the martyr to the stake often left it Christians. The name of Jesus was, ere long, preached throughout the then known world. Christianity soon mounted the throne of the Caesars. But its elevation was a curse to its prosperity. Its ministers, when they put on purple and scarlet, dropped the garment of righteousness; and, when they began to fare sumptuously in kings' palaces, they forgot the example of the meek and lowly Jesus. Corruption and spiritual death brooded over the church; and then its borders ceased to be enlarged, except by the power of the sword. There was then nothing to draw unbelievers into its fold. The conduct of Christians was no better, and hence there was no reason to suppose their faith any better, than that of the surrounding heathen. And from that time to the date of the Reformation, hardly any accessions, except by force, were made from Paganism to Christianity. Since the Reformation, the moral character of Christendom has been constantly improving; and the prospects of the missionary enterprise have been in the same proportion constantly brightening.

What is the greatest obstacle to the christianizing of the world? It is the unchristian conduct of those who call themselves, or are called, Christians. Our North American Indian will point to his white neighbors, and say: "These are the men who first taught us the vice, and who gave us the means, of intoxication. These are the men who cheat us and lie to us, and teach us to cheat and lie. They call themselves Christians, and want us to be Christians too. But our religion never taught us to take advantage of each other's ignorance, or to take by violence or fraud the property of those at peace with us. Our great Spirit approves not of such deeds nor of those who practice them, nor will He permit his children to embrace your religion." The Hindoo will point to the European or American sailors, and say: "These are your Christians—men who blush

not to wallow in vices which we abhor even to name. Better that a few devotees should crush themselves beneath Juggernaut's car, better that a few widows should fall victims to their nuptial vows, than that our people should be stained with such crimes as these Christian sailors commit." The African will point with a tearful eye and an aching heart to the slave-ship, as she leaves his shore. "There were men here," he will say, "not long since, who tried to persuade us to become Christians. That cursed ship was manned by Christians. The religion of our fathers did not teach them to send their prisoners of war into bondage in a strange land. These Christians taught us this lesson. It is Christians who send their ships across the deep hither, to lade them with the living spoils of war and treachery. We want not the religion of such men; our own is better." And to those heathen who are so situated as to behold the internal state of the Christian Church, what a picture must it present! "How can they," might an intelligent heathen justly say, "how can these Christians call theirs a religion of peace and love? Is it not rather one of strife and dissension, of pride and vain-gloriousness? When we go up to worship, we reach forth the hand to every fellow-worshipper, and should disdain to feast upon a sacrifice of strife. But these men quarrel, and rail at each other, and abuse each other, even in the temple of their God. Let us keep peace among ourselves, and not endanger it by changing our religion.

Such are the wounds which Christ receives in the house of his professed friends. His avowed enemies have done his cause comparatively little harm. That cause can never flourish, till those who call themselves his friends are his friends indeed, and show themselves such by keeping his commandments. The word of God gives us reason to expect the universal supremacy of Christianity. But before that can take place, there must be a revival of pure and undefiled religion throughout Christendom,—all the inhabitants of Christian countries must exhibit such a conversation as becometh the Gospel; and then the Gospel will have free course and be glorified. Then every ambassador, every traveler, every sailor, will be a missionary of the cross. Those who now sit in darkness will not be long in learning that justice and truth and mercy govern the hearts and lives of all who dwell in Christian lands, and they too will court the beams of the Sun of righteousness. But this moral renovation in Christendom is to be produced by individual effort, by individual holiness. Let every one live as the Gospel requires, and he does vastly more towards the diffusion of the Gospel, than he could otherwise do, by bestowing upon benevolent objects all his time, or the whole of his property, however large.—A. P. Peabody.

### RELIGION AND SCIENCE.

The opinion that religion and morality are revealed only in the Bible, and that science is "godless," has led to great practical evils. The religious world has, in consequence, too much neglected the teaching of science as the basis of conduct; and the men of science have too much overlooked the religious element with which all science is imbued. One hears in many pulpits God's terrestrial creation, including man himself as he naturally exists, decried and degraded; while, in the halls of science, we may study for years without hearing God referred to as the fountain of the truths expounded, or any practical inferences drawn regarding what they teach concerning His will. Many divines are either too intent upon the truths of Scripture to study and appreciate Nature and her record, or they are jealous of her. There are, indeed, enlightened exceptions to the truth of this remark, but I speak of the general character of pulpit teaching. The man of science, on the other hand, although not ignorant that he is expounding the "doings of the Lord," is yet too little alive to the practical nature of the truths which he unfolds, as guides to human conduct; and he is also afraid of trenching on the domain of the divine, and perhaps of teaching something which the latter might regard as not altogether doctrinally sound. He will thrill our highest faculties by his descriptions of the stupendous magnitude of creation, and demonstrate to us one God, and one law, ruling in every sphere. After having stretched our imaginations to their utmost limits, and deeply excited our wonder and veneration by these solemn gigantic truths, he will direct our attention to the minutest insect, and show us the same power, wisdom, and skill, employed in combining and regulating the minutest atom of matter to constitute a living and a sentient being. Our souls expand and glow under such contemplations. But here the man of science too generally leaves us. He either does not perceive, or is afraid to announce, how the truths of science bear a direct relation to

the human mind and body, and prescribe certain courses of practical action or restraint. Every function of the body, and every faculty of the mind, has probably received from the Creator a sphere of action, as certainly defined and as wisely appointed as is the orbit of every planet. Each is liable to aberrations by the disturbing influence of the other powers; but limits are prescribed to its deviations, and counteracting forces are instituted to draw it back into its normal course. Sound expositions of these laws of mind and body constitute at once science, religion, and practical wisdom; yet how rarely are the teachings of science thus applied! Scientific discoveries are employed with promptitude and vigor to increase wealth, to improve the arts of destruction, and to augment our sources of recreation and amusement, (all proper in due season and proportion) but they are too much shut out from the school and the pulpit as rules for human conduct, and themes for human devotion.—Combe.

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## The Bible Christian.

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### SLAVERY.

#### THE BRITISH UNITARIANS AND THEIR AMERICAN BRETHREN.

We have seen by the *London Inquirer* that the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, at its last Annual Meeting, which was held at Hackney, in May last, had rather a smart discussion on the subject of Slavery in connection with American Unitarianism. The topic was introduced in quite an unlooked-for manner. A friendly invitation had been sent by some of the Boston Unitarian ministers to their brethren in Britain, to attend the approaching anniversary meetings of the denomination in the capital of New England. A notice of this invitation appeared in the Secretary's Report of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, which caused the enquiry to be more particularly made concerning the source of the invitation itself. It was thought by some persons present, that no invitation whatever should be accepted from American Unitarians, so long as they maintained their present position in relation to slavery.

Now, whilst we are always gratified at seeing a free and open testimony given against the enormous evil of slavery, we are constrained to express our humble opinion that the manner in which the Boston letter of invitation, its signers, and indeed the Unitarians in general of the United States, were spoken of by some of the gentlemen at the Hackney meeting, was scarcely courteous or just. It would have been better, we think, if no formal or official notice had been taken of a communication, in itself so perfectly friendly and informal. It would have been better, we think, if Dr. Hutton, of London, to whom it was addressed, had replied to it, as Dr. Montgomery did to that which was sent to Ireland. But since it was noticed, and the topic of slavery introduced in connection with it, we think that more discrimination should have been exercised by some of the speakers. From the tone of some of the remarks, a person unacquainted with the circumstances would be led to suppose that the British Unitarians had been invited to mingle with "defenders and apologisers for slavery," and in some way to aid them in their very inglorious work. But such an impression would be entirely false. The American Unitarians, as a body, are as decidedly anti-slavery in sentiment as the British Unitarians are. They differ, however, concerning the modes of action to be adopted in opposing it. But the British Unitarians do the same. We have attended several meetings of the American Unitarian Association, both special and general, and we never heard a remark uttered of a higher pro-slavery character than one made by Rev. Mr. Madge, at the late meeting at Hackney. Yet we suppose none of our