

determined to accomplish; and that was, to finish the work which was given him to do.

The other thing essential to the manly Christian character, is, that this decision of mind shall be accompanied with energy of action. Our Saviour exhibited this in every moment of life; not only did he resolve without hesitation, but he accomplished his purposes as soon as it was formed. Very different this from the usual ways of men. They make up their minds that they will do a duty, and then delighted with this victory over themselves,—they sit down as self-satisfied as if it were actually done, and take the care to forget that resolving is one thing, and performance quite another. If their conscience upbraids them, they put it off by saying that they will do the duty to-morrow; and this is precisely the same as saying that they will not do it now. They have no reason to think that a day will bring forth any better disposition, any holier energy; they know that time sweeps away the resolution as well as the works of man; it always destroys, and never rebuilds, nor repairs. The word to-morrow should be blotted from the calendar of life; it is a mirage, which gives encouragement ending in despair.

[W. B. O. Peabody.]

DIALOGUE ON UNITARIANISM.

[The following dialogue appeared in the pages of the Unitarian Miscellany, published in Baltimore, Md., some five and twenty years ago.—Such conversations sometimes take place still, and we think it will bear reading in Montreal at the present day.—Dn. B. C.]

The conversation was commenced by an elderly gentleman, who had been engaged in reading a tract entitled, "What is Religion?" Having finished it, he laid it down, and turning to the person who had handed to him, addressed him in the following words:

Eld. Gent. I see that this tract was published by a society in New York. I hear there is a Socinian church built there lately, but that they are all young men who are connected with it. This Socinianism is quite a new doctrine—some new fancy for young minds.

Unit. The society to which you allude, Sir, disavow the name of Socinians. This is a term which implies that they believe as Socinus believed; that they take Socinus, a fallible man as a guide in matters of faith. But, on the contrary, they profess to have no guide or master but Christ, and no creed but the Bible. It is not generous or charitable to fasten on any society a name which they deny.

Eld. Gent. If not Socinian, then, pray, what are they?

Unit. They call themselves Unitarian Christians, as they believe in one God in one person, and worship one Being, and are thus distinguished from other Christians, who believe in what they themselves denominate a "trine God," or a God in three persons, each of whom, under different names, they worship as God. As to this society's consisting exclusively of young persons, though frequently said with a view to its discredit, I presume you do not imagine that truth resides only with age. The fact, however, is not so. But whether young or old, it is much more to the purpose, that you will never hear any one call in question their seriousness, or their Christian deportment, as compared with other societies, who are exhorted by their pastors to have no intercourse with them, and even to shut their doors against them.

Eld. Gent. But you admit that this Unitarianism is a very new doctrine.

Unit. So far from it, they hold its distinguishing tenet to be as old as the first revelation God made of himself to man; that it was taught explicitly by God himself to the people of Israel, when he said, "Hear, O Israel! the Lord your God is one Lord;" or, as the passage is translated by many critics, "the Lord is your God,—the Lord is one." "See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no God with me." They hold also, that it was taught by our Saviour, in language which could hardly be misunderstood, when he declares, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

Eld. Gent. Well, all this may be true, but I am content to be as wise as my fathers were in these matters, and I shall leave these points to be settled by the priests, for it is their study and their concern.

[The Unitarian turned from this disciple of the doctrine of his fathers, with a look of pity. A younger gentleman, with the manners of a man of the world, and the confidence of a practiced disputant, now took up the word with a good-humoured, self-complacent air.]

For my part, I am a Trinitarian, because I am an Episcopalian. I feel perfectly safe under the guidance of the church, and shall believe as the church believes. Apropos, I tell the other day into the King's Chapel, in Boston, where they have strangely deserted their former belief, though they have preserved some of the church forms. They use a form of prayer, principally taken from our excellent liturgy, but so garbled, that I hardly knew it again. I observed, though, to my surprise, that they address their prayers to the Father, through Jesus Christ. I wonder what they believe Jesus Christ to be?

Unit. I presume they believe him to be what he declared himself to be—the Son of God.

Episcopalian. They believe, then, that Jesus is the Son of God. I did not know they believed so much. But what signifies it, if they do not also believe in his divinity?

Unit. They do believe in the divinity of his mission, and of his doctrines. They believe that he was sent from God, divinely instructed, for purposes the most important to mankind; that he taught with the authority of God, and spake as he was commanded of God. And Unitarians honour him even as they honour the Father; for he was the ambassador of God, the sent of God, commissioned to make known his will. In him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily, for he did what no man could do, unless God were with him; and in him were manifested the power and grace of the beneficent Father of all.

Epis. Still, they do not believe that he was equal with the Father.

Unit. No; and for this plain reason, that he himself declares his own inferiority. "My Father is greater than I." "Of that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." And there are numerous passages to the same effect.

Epis. But these he said in his human nature.

Unit. Where do you learn that? He himself makes no mention of his being possessed of two natures, and how else could we have derived the knowledge of a combination so wonderful, a combination of the Infinite with a feeble man, of Omnipotence with ignorance, of Almighty power with that dependent frailty, which cannot provide for its own support a single moment.

Epis. Henowhere says, however, that he was not possessed of two natures, the human and divine, and upon no other supposition can we reconcile Scripture with Scripture.

Unit. Upon no other supposition can you reconcile Scripture with the Athanasian Creed. But how can you set aside the positive testimony of our Lord himself upon the subject? You will admit that of Jesus it is truly said, "no guile was found in his mouth." Now, suppose I were to shut one of my eyes, and protest, while I was looking at you with the other, that I did not see you. I might excuse myself for this falsehood, by saying, I did not see you with the eye which was closed; but would you think me guiltless in attempting to deceive you by such a quibble; will you impute such conduct, as would be base in another, to him who was without guile, and whose example we are commanded in all things to follow?

Epis. Without answering what, I am willing to confess, I find at present rather difficult to answer, I will bring the plain words of Christ against you, to prove that he was God. He says, "I and my Father are one."

Unit. True; but does he not sufficiently determine the meaning of this expression, by what is recorded a few chapters afterwards? In praying for his disciples, he says, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are." And further on he makes the signification of these words still more general, by saying, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Does Jesus Christ mean to say, that he and his Father are one, in any other sense than that in which, not only his immediate followers, but his disciples through all ages, might become one? You surely cannot help seeing, that the passage you have quoted is not only of no assistance, but that it is of decided disadvantage to your argument. And even if it proved all that you thought it did, it would not prove the doctrine of the trinity. It would prove, that three were two persons only, and not three, in one.

[Here the first Speaker, who had been for some time silent, again rallied to the attack, with a look of expected triumph.]

Eld. Gent. The trinity may not be proved in that text, but it certainly is in this—"There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one."

Unit. I have nothing to do with what is, or is not proved by words which were never penned by one of the sacred writers. The verse which you have cited from the first Epistle of John, is contained in not a single Greek manuscript of the Scriptures, of any antiquity or authority. The most learned among the orthodox themselves have altogether rejected it, as not genuine; and it is a shame that it should still be printed in our Bibles, as a part of the oracles of truth.

Eld. Gent. Well, well, I know very little about those matters. But did not Jesus command his disciples to go and teach all nations, "baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?" That is in the manuscripts, that is genuine, is it not?

Unit. It is. I cannot see, however, that it proves the doctrine of the trinity. It does not go on to say that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one God. The converts to Christianity, by their baptism, acknowledged their belief in, and subjection to, the one God as their Father, to Jesus Christ as his authorized and inspired Messenger, and to the Holy Spirit of God, by whose influences, and not by those of any other power, the new religion had been revealed, its Messenger had been directed, and its apostles endowed with supernatural gifts. You cannot think that the mere circumstance of these names being placed together in the same sentence, is of any weight. In 1 Chron. xxix. 20, it is said, "All the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord, and the king." Now, you would not contend, from these words, either that Jehovah and the king were the same being, or that the people, in worshipping them, as our translators have rendered it, paid them equal homage: would you?

[How much longer this conversation would have continued, or what impression was produced by it on the advocates for the Trinity, I know not; for, just at this time, the steamboat touched the wharf at New York. In a moment, all was confusion. The porters swarmed into the boat; each man hurried to look after his own baggage, and then took his own way into the city.] S.

CHRISTIANITY IN RELATION TO CIVILIZATION.

[From the Quarterly Reviewer.]

"From this brief and hasty survey of the doings of Christianity in the past, and the relation which it bears at present to the civilization and progress of the entire human family, it is abundantly manifest that it alone commands the power that can renovate mankind. Christianity has ever proved, through all its checkered history, and all the perversions it has suffered, the great patron and promoter of human progress, yet having a special source and foundation of its own, executing a mission peculiar and sublime. It arises with civilization, and it rises above it. It crowns that civilization when it is highest, stimulates it when it is lowest, and originates it where it is not. The mental vigor which Christianity calls forth, is the very element out of which civilization springs, and in which it produces its most healthy enduring roots. Yet Christianity is neither the effect nor the offshoot of civilization. It asserts a sublime independence of it, as of everything else that is purely human. Confiding in its own resources, evincing its own divine and independent life, originating its own impulse, and providing for its own defence, it has slowly but surely advanced in the execution of its high behest, in defiance of all antagonisms with which it has had to contend, the greatest of which it has already overcome, and the whole of which it will ultimately exhaust. The great secret of its power over human nature lies in the fact that it fills all the desires, and gives scope to all the capabilities of man. It fully comprehends his nature, recognises and satisfies all his objective tendencies, while it ennobles and purifies all the subjective. It does so perpetually and perfectly, and it does so by placing the origin of man's nature upon the only foundation worthy of him, and directing it back again to the only issue that comports with so honorable a beginning, and answers to such noble power. But this origin and this consummation are both found in the infinite, the eternal, the perfect and blessed—short of this, man never rests, and can never be satisfied. In this perfect adaptation of Christianity to his nature, are to be found the sure arguities that the system is designed by the author of nature for perpetuity and universality. It meets no rival; and it fears no opposition. There is nothing upon earth, nor among the possibilities of the future, that can endanger its existence or prevent its triumph. Who can entertain a doubt of its ultimate universality, while we witness in its doings whether of ancient or modern times, an om-

nipotence that converts enemies into friends, and obstacles into facilities."

"But it ought still further to be noticed, that Christianity secures and promotes human civilization in a way altogether its own, and carries it to the highest point, by a principle directly opposed to paganism and Mahomedanism, and yet a principle which instantly approves itself to human consciousness, and universally secures its concurrence; it makes every man profoundly conscious, in the first instance, of his own individuality. It brings to light his true and proper dignity, and places him upon a natural and moral equality with all his fellow beings. There is the secret of its mighty power. There it first proves its life, and shows its deep wisdom. In this consists its fundamental distinction from heathenism. This demonstrates and explains its infinite superiority. Paganism, under all its forms, destroys the sense of its individuality, by perverting it to something extraneous. Christianity recognizes, authorizes, and sanctifies it: undertakes to sustain and guide it to its only adequate and satisfactory issue. Christianity alone harmonizes all the sacred rights of individuality with the social tendency, with the supremacy of law, the claims of government, the spirit of nationality and of patriotism. Hence, it most effectually works for civilization, and carries it, upon sure principles, to the highest point. It founds all rights upon the rights of conscience, which precede all others in order, and ought never to be superseded or counteracted by any that follow them.

But the civilization and religion of all pagan nations have been based upon the denial of these rights. The state was supposed in theory to create or confer all the rights that the individual man possessed. He was the creature of the state, not the creature of God. Hence the individual conscience was practically annulled. It was recognized only in the public conscience, it worked only as it was influenced by the national authority.—Man was nothing by himself. He became a contribution to a vast aggregate, but he never rose to the sublimity of his own individual being. The state was his commanding idea. Around that centre all his powers and affections moved; towards it all were attracted, into it all were absorbed. Between the citizen and the worshiper there was no distinction. The rights and the duties of the latter were identical with those of the former, and founded upon them. Civil and religious law formed but one code, and both flowed from one fountain. Neither the state nor the individual recognized, except in the lowest department, and very occasionally the rights of personal conscience; never when they came into collision with those of the state.—Hence personal faith, domestic education, independent government of families, and the supremacy of moral right over civil, were all denied and superseded by that principle of legislation which made the people the property of the state, and immolated the man to the aggrandisement of his country. The domestic hearth had no sacredness; the family no independence. They were not circles complete of themselves, and overflowing with spontaneous joy. They were but segments and fractions of that large circle which had its centre in the public place, where the human materials met to be appropriated by the organs of the state. The machinery was admirably contrived, and worked well for state purposes, and for those only. But it was felt all the time to be jarring and crushing to human emotions. It started on a wrong principle, and it aimed at a false end. States should be for men, and not men for states."

EXTRAVAGANT LANGUAGE.

Nearly akin to these offences against good grammar is another untasteful practice, into which you are probably more in danger of falling, and which is a crying sin among young ladies, I mean the use of exaggerated extravagant forms of speech,—saying *splendid* for *pretty*, *magnificent* for *handsome*, *horrid* for *very*, *horrible* for *unpleasant*, *immense* for *large*, *thousands* or *myriads* for any number more than *two*. Were I to write down, for one day, the conversation of some young ladies of my acquaintance, and then to interpret it literally, it would imply that within the compass of twelve or fourteen hours they had met with more marvellous adventures and hair-breadth escapes, had passed through more distressing experiences, and seen more imposing spectacles, had endured more fright, and enjoyed more rapture, than would suffice for half a dozen common lives. This habit is attended with many inconveniences. It deprives you of the intelligible use of strong expressions when you need them. If you use them all the time, nobody understands or believes you when you use them in earnest. You are in the same predicament with the boy who cried wolf so often when there was no wolf, that nobody would