

Athanasius was no Trinitarian; he was scarcely even a Dualist; for he held that the Father was God in a higher manner than the Son. The Papists aver, and truly, that there are no traces of the Trinity in the whole Bible; for they hold that it is a doctrine of tradition. Luther said himself,—"It were better to call Almighty God God than 'TRINITY.'"—*Rev. W. Mountford.*

"I cannot contemplate a death, and, least of all, the death of the Saviour, only as a doctrine. It is to me, I must confess, altogether another kind of influence. It is to me, if it is anything, power and grandeur; it is something that rivets my eye and heart; it is a theme of admiration and spiritual sympathy; it leads me to meditation, not to metaphysics; it is as a majestic example, a moving testimony, a dread sacrifice, that I must contemplate it. I see in it a death-blow to sin; I hear the pleading of the Crucified One for truth and salvation, beneath the darkened heavens and amidst the shuddering earth. It is every way astonishing to me, that such suffering should have been seized upon as a subject for metaphysical analysis; that the agony of the Son of God should have been wrested into a thesis for the theologian; that a death should have been made a dogma; that blood should have been taken to write a creed; that Calvary should have been made the arena of controversy. That the Cross, whereon Jesus, with holy candor and meekness, prayed for his enemies, saying, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!'—that the Cross should have been made a rack for the moral torture of his friends, whereon, in all the valleys and upon all the hills of Christendom, they have been crucified by unkindness and exclusion; is there another such contradiction—is there another such phenomenon, to be found in all the strange history of the world?"—*Rev. Dr. Dewey.*

"We believe sin to be the great and only obstacle to forgiveness and salvation. That obstacle is insurmountable so long as it exists. It can be removed only by its own destruction. Christ lived and died to destroy it. 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil.' He came to 'save his people from their sins.' 'God sent him to bless us in turning away every one of us from his iniquities.' This is the design of the Gospel dispensation,—of the mission teaching, examples, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ,—to bring men into a state of reconciliation with God. Atonement is reconciliation. And a state of reconciliation is a state of submission, faith, repentance, and obedience. This state, this spiritual condition, all God's threatenings and promises, all his revelations and dealings, especially his free gift of a Saviour, are designed to produce. If they do produce it in any soul, if they bring a sinner to obey God, the purpose for which Christ came is answered upon that man, for he is saved from sin; he is forgiven through the grace of God in Jesus Christ. If he is not brought into submission and obedience, but continues in sin, he is not forgiven, and no grace or sacrifice will avail him anything; if he is not saved from sin, he is not saved at all. Sin, we repeat, is the only obstacle, and the necessity and purpose of the mediation of Christ is to save man from sin.

"Here is our interpretation of all the passages which bring into comparison the Jewish and Christian sacrifices. The first pertained chiefly to the purification of the flesh, the last to that of the conscience. Both were designed to secure privilege, and open the way to pardon. Both were to offer mercy to the penitent, to invite the sinner near, to express and put within the reach of all a state of reconciliation with God. And if the former sacrifices could do this, how much more the latter! The blood of Christ can purge the conscience, must purge the conscience, from dead works to serve the living God. That is its design. That, if properly regarded, thankfully, penitently and faithfully improved, will be its efficacy and salvation.

"This is our understanding of that large class of passages which speak of the blood or sacrifice of Christ, and connect with his death sacrificial terms. He was a sacrifice, required, not by the justice of God to satisfy it, or by the mercy of God to make it free, but by the sins of men to remove them. 'He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself'; to put it away, to subdue its power, to destroy its dominion, and thus save from its condemnation. 'Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many'; to bear them in the same sense in which he 'took our infirmities and bare our sickness,' as Matthew explains Isaiah. And John says: 'Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.' Can sin be taken away, except by being subdued? Can it be subdued, except by a moral power, the spi-

ritual energy of truth and love, the power of God's grace and Christ's mediation, acting upon the soul, purging the conscience from dead works to serve the living God? For this Christ offered himself. For this, as our Passover, he was sacrificed for us; to deliver us from bondage—the bondage of ignorance and sin."—*Rev. E. B. Hall.*

"Who can doubt that among the causes which produce in society so much moral and religious deadness, this is one,—that men satisfy themselves by referring to the laws and principles of nature, and stop short of that Being in whom they reside? How much is this a habit amongst us! We talk of the 'laws of our being,' and of living by them and of the consequences of violating them, as we should talk of a machine or of fate. We thus throw out of view the agency and love of the Living God, whose children we are, and claim relationship to inanimate objects. And in so doing we not only wrong the truth, but defraud ourselves of that exercise and enjoyment of the thinking, affectionate spirit in which our highest action and bliss are to be found."—*Rev. Dr. Henry Ware, Jr.*

"The immediate object of the Gospel was to break down the dominion of sin. We regard the mission of Christ as the most decisive rebuke of sin that could be given, and his life as a testimony against it only less emphatic than his death. We consider reconciliation to God through the renunciation of evil courses and the culture of inward purity, to be the great achievement of Christianity, in the case of every one who comes under its power. We believe that it was sin which made the Gospel necessary, that the mercy which it brought was what men most wanted, and the regeneration which it effects was what he himself felt the need of, even if he made no attempt to secure a better experience. What could we say, what could we believe, that would indicate a more positive sense of the evil of sin?"—*Rev. Dr. Gannett.*

"We arrive at our most intimate, consoling and elevating knowledge of God the Father through his Son, Jesus Christ. We acquire our simplest, clearest, kindest, and most practical views of duty from him and his life. We learn from him distinctly what is the acceptable worship and service which man is required to render to his Maker. We know, through him and his resurrection, what we could not otherwise have known, that we are immortal, that we shall live after death, and for ever. By him we are brought into connection with that bright community of angels and sainted spirits, whose voices we hear on earth by faith, cheering us in our journey, and inviting us to the enjoyment of their society and his own everlastingly in heaven. While we continue with him, studying his life, meditating on his image, listening to his words, imbibing his spirit, we are possessed with all his knowledge, faith, and power; but away from him, and without him, where is it to be found, and what can we do? I confess I know not. If I could dismantle my own heart of all traces and memorials of the Saviour, I know that I should be startled at its emptiness and desolation, and, finding in it but little to repair the melancholy loss, be forced to weep in despair over the ruin I had made."—*Rev. Dr. Greenwood.*

"The Father! In this one word what consoling, strengthening, ennobling truth is wrapt up! In this single view of God, how much is there to bind us to him, with strong, indissoluble, ever-growing love, and to make worship, not only our chief duty, but our highest privilege and joy! Who cannot comprehend the dignity and blessedness of such worship?"—*Rev. Dr. Channing.*

"We say, that to hang the chances of salvation upon speculative opinions, or to estimate the worth of character by doctrinal conclusions, is utterly subversive of Protestantism. We are rejoiced to see the gradual melioration of public sentiment upon this subject. Most happy are we to own, that vast bodies of those connected with creed-founded churches are most charitable and generous in their practical Christianity.—But we can never cease to protest against creeds, while they continue to lay traps for the human conscience, to impose shackles upon human understanding, or to afford lurking-places for bigotry and theological hatred. To oppose them is the first distinctive principle of Liberal Christianity, as the emancipation of the human soul was the great object of the Gospel itself; and until thought is free, and the private conscience revered, and the individual man recognized as more sacred than churches and establishments and articles of faith, the everlasting Gospel will not have fairly begun its glorious work of human redemption."—*Rev. H. W. Bellows.*

"Should it once be established that military renown, achieved in warfare, however at-

rocious, affords the surest and quickest passage to the first places at the nation's disposal, we have nothing in prospect but wars and rumors of wars, for generations to come; and every new swarm of aspirants for public favor will work their way to power and office by fomenting discord and stirring up the waters of strife."—*Rev. A. P. Peabody.*

"The world has suffered from nothing so much as from false ideas of greatness. The passion for military glory has been the fruitful cause of slavery, bloodshed, and crime. How little has the experience of its fatal results hitherto done to teach men wisdom!—How is this deadly charm ever to be broken save by the formation of a nobler idea, the creation of a better tone, the erection of the true standard? In Jesus Christ the real greatness of our nature—the glory of a pacific, all-enduring temper is revealed. Let him then be lifted up before all eyes, and all hearts will be touched, and the sword and the spear and the banner bathed in blood will be buried at the foot of the cross, and it will be felt that all other courage is fear, all other glory shame, in comparison with that spirit which subdues by mercy and reigns by suffering."—*Rev. W. H. Furness.*

"What other unity can the Church possess, than that concert of sentiment which flows from a common sympathy with the mind of Christ? Disappointment has been the invariable consequence of an attempt to enforce a unity of doctrine or of discipline. A unity of belief, if it go beyond the first elements of Christian truth, or even if it enter into a minute explanation of these, will be hollow and unreal. A unity founded upon obedience to the same ecclesiastical discipline is a mere semblance. The only true union has its basis in sentiment. The Church is one, because its members are informed by the same spirit, having drunk of the same spiritual fountain, which is Christ, and been nourished on that bread of life which came down from heaven. The voluntary consent of free minds, the accordant pulsation of hearts untrammelled by forms or creeds of human device,—this constitutes the unity of the Christian Church. That unity is not confined to earth, but embraces the saints who have passed into heaven; since there, as well as here, the spirit of truth and love reigns in every soul. The circumstance which determines unity is not that men think alike, or worship alike, but that they are alike. This makes a solid and graceful unity, arising, as it does, not from external pressure, but from spontaneous sympathy."—*Rev. Dr. Gannett.*

"Old terms, old names, old forms, are often retained long after the opinions they were originally used to signify and enforce have been outgrown and abandoned. When, therefore, these at length are laid aside, it is not so much because the people would embrace new opinions, but because they would express more accurately those which they have long held. With regard to a large proportion of the serious and intelligent members of the community, I believe that if they understood Unitarianism aright, and would take the trouble to compare it with their own convictions, they would find them to agree. They would find many of them, to their great surprise, not only that they are now, but that they always have been, Unitarians; believing that Jesus Christ is a distinct being from the Father, and that the Father alone is God."—*Rev. Dr. Walker.*

"We certainly know that much of what is called Christian nurture only serves to make the subject of religion odious, and that, as nearly as we can discover, in exact proportion to the amount of religious teaching received. . . . Something is wanted that is better than teaching, something that transcends mere effort, and will work,—the loveliness of a good life, the repose of faith, the confidence of righteous expectation, the sacred and cheerful liberty of the spirit,—all glowing about the young soul, as a warm and genial nature, and forming in it, by methods that are silent and imperceptible, a spirit of duty and religious obedience to God. This only is Christian nurture, the nurture of the Lord. . . ."

"And this is the very idea of Christian education, that it begins with nurture or cultivation. And the intention is that the Christian life and spirit of the parent shall flow into the mind of the child, to blend with his incipient and half-formed exercises; that they shall thus beget their own good within him, their thoughts, opinions, faith, and love, which are to become a little more, and yet a little more his own separate character. . . . We are never, at any age, so independent as to be wholly out of the reach of organic laws which affect our character. All society is organic—the Church, the state, the school, the family, and there is a spirit in each of these organisms peculiar to itself, and more or less hostile, more or less favorable to religious

character, and, to some extent at least, sovereign over the individual man. . . . The child is only more within the power of organic laws than we all are. We possess only a mixed individuality all our life long. A pure, separate, individual man, living wholly within and from himself, is a mere fiction. No such person ever existed, or ever can. I need not say this view of an organic connection of character subsisting between parent and child lays a basis for notions of Christian education far different from those which now prevail, under the cover of a merely fictitious and mischievous individualism."—*Rev. Dr. Bushnell.*

"There is one grand, all-comprehending Church; and if I am a Christian I belong to it, and no man can shut me out of it. You may exclude me from your Roman Church, your Episcopal Church and your Calvinistic Church on account of supposed defects in my creed or my sect, and I am content to be excluded. But I will not be severed from the great body of Christ. Who shall sunder me from such men as Fenelon, and Pascal, and Borromeo, from Archbishop Leighton, Jeremy Taylor, and John Howard? Who can rupture the spiritual bond between these men and myself? A pure mind is free of the universe. It belongs to the Church, the family of the pure, in all worlds. Virtue is no local thing. This is the bond of the Universal Church. No man can be excommunicated from it but by himself, by the death of goodness in his own breast."—*Rev. Dr. Channing.*

"We boast our light; but if we look not wisely on the sun itself, it strikes us into darkness. The light which we have gained was given us, not to be ever staring on, but by it to discover onward things more remote from our knowledge. It is not the unfrocking of a priest, the unmiting of a bishop, and the removing him from off the presbyterian shoulders, that will make us a happy nation. No; if other things as great in the Church be not looked into and reformed, we have looked so long upon the blaze that Zwinglius and Calvin have beacons up to us, that we are stark blind. To be still searching what we know not by what we know, still closing up truth to truth as we find it,—for all her body is homogeneal and proportional,—this is the golden rule in theology as well as in arithmetic, and works up the best harmony in a church. Not the forced and outward union of cold, and neutral, and inwardly divided minds."—*John Milton.*

"Mighty powers are at work in the world. Who can stay them? God's word has gone forth, and it cannot return to him void. A new comprehension of the Christian spirit,—a new reverence for humanity, a new feeling of brotherhood, and of all men's relation to the common Father,—this is among the signs of our times. We see it. Do we not feel it? Before this, all oppressions are to fall. Society, silently pervaded by this, is to change its aspect of universal warfare for peace. The power of selfishness, all-grasping and seemingly invincible, is to yield to this diviner energy. The song of angels, 'On earth peace,' will not always sound as fiction. O come, thou kingdom of heaven, for which we daily pray! Come, Friend and Saviour of the race, who didst shed thy blood upon the cross to reconcile man to man, and earth to heaven! Come, ye predicted ages of righteousness and love, for which the faithful have so long yearned! Come, Father Almighty, and crown with thine omnipotence the humble strivings of thy children to subvert oppression and wrong, to spread light and freedom, peace and joy, the truth and spirit of thy Son, through the whole earth!"—*Rev. Dr. Channing.*

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.

Let us dismiss these lying vanities, and regulate our lives by the truth and soberness of the New Testament. Benevolence is not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth. It is a business with men as they are, and with human life as drawn by the rough hand of experience. It is a duty which you must perform at the call of principle, though there be no voice of eloquence to give splendor to your exertions, and no music or poetry to lead your willing footsteps through the bowers of enchantment. It is not the impulse of high and extatic emotion. It is an exertion of principle. You must go to the poor man's cottage, though no verdure flourish around it, and no rivulet be nigh to delight you by the gentleness of its murmurs. If you look for the romantic simplicity of fiction, you will be disappointed; but it is your duty to persevere, in spite of every discouragement. Benevolence is not merely a feeling, but a principle—not a dream of rapture for the fancy to indulge in, but a business for the hand to execute.