

wise love; not because God cannot otherwise pardon.

Our last extract, to show the altered views of modern Orthodoxy concerning this doctrine, shall be taken from a late number of the "New Englander," an Orthodox periodical, published at New Haven.

"The system of truth, so denominated, is indeed what it was in substance, but not in form. The science of theology has made great advances since the Unitarian controversy began, and was nearly concluded in this country. New philosophical theories have made plain and unobjectionable to reason those doctrines of the Orthodox, from which, owing to bungling explanations, the common sense of Unitarians revolted. Some objections to their restoration have also been removed by the comparatively light estimation in which the Orthodox have come to hold the philosophy of dogmatic theology. Hypotheses relating to the mode of divine existence, to the origin of evil, to the Atonement, to regeneration, and the nature of human depravity, designed to make these doctrines clear to reason, but adapted more or less to obscure them, are now recognized by the Orthodox as mere philosophical speculations, and not as matters of faith. All that is essential, for example, to Orthodoxy, in respect to the vital doctrine of Atonement, is, that we should ascribe the salvation of man to something which Christ has accomplished by his incarnation and sufferings, and without which salvation would be impossible. Whether this necessity consists in the indispensableness of his death as a means of ransoming mankind from Satan, or of appeasing divine anger, or of maintaining the authority of the Lawgiver while the penitent is pardoned, or in some other principle, Orthodoxy requires only that we should believe in the necessity, and ascribe to Christ's death our salvation and the glory of it."—*New Englander*, Oct. 1815.

"These instances are specimens of the entire alteration which has taken place in modern times in relation to this doctrine. There are few anywhere who maintain the theory of the entire satisfaction in its ancient rigor. It may even be asserted that some modern Orthodox writers have gone too far from the ancient doctrine, and that there is a meaning and reality in it which they fail of perceiving. It would not be surprising if the Unitarian theory of the Atonement, in its further development, should accept more of the theory of Anselm than is now generally received by the graduates of the Calvinistic Theological Schools of New England.

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The Bible Christian.

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PROGRESS OF RIGHT VIEWS.

We do not believe that the most enlightened friends of Unitarian Christianity look for its very rapid and extensive diffusion as such. Unitarianism is an unpopular faith, and a great number of persons, although they may sympathise with Unitarian views, are very slow to identify themselves with a denomination cast out of the pale of popular favour. Yet, notwithstanding such obstacles, Unitarianism, as a system, is making a steady and satisfactory progress. But the progress of right views in Christianity is not to be estimated merely by the extent of increase of the Unitarians as a denomination. The essential principles of Unitarianism are finding their way into various bodies of what are styled Orthodox Christians. A free and generous spirit of enquiry has been introduced, the result of which has been to modify many of the tenets of rigid Orthodoxy, and open the way for the adoption of more liberal and scriptural views. Important modifications have taken place with regard to the Trinity, total depravity, the eternity of punishment, the atonement, the value of creeds, &c. Professors in Orthodox Colleges can now publish to the world that "the different stones in the temple of Orthodoxy will be more minutely scrutinized" than heretofore, and that it will be a "benefit" to have this done. Half a century ago this temple was thought to be complete. Half a century ago the world of Orthodoxy was as well satisfied with it, and had as high an opinion of it, as had the Free Church of Scotland a short time since, when in the simplicity of its confidence in its symbols it forwarded the Westminster Con-

* Dr. Davidson, of the Lancashire Independent College.

fession and Catechisms as models of a perfect faith to the Reformers of the German Catholic Church. And in connection, too, with the scrutiny of the stones of the temple of Orthodoxy, learned Professors of that ilk can now boldly affirm that "God is not honoured by an unintelligent adherence to time-honoured dogmas." And, again, when Orthodox Professors evince a disinclination to keep pace with the progress of the age, we hear of them vacating their chairs to make room for those who will. The venerable Dr. Woods, of Andover, in the United States, has lately resigned, and the current report among all parties is that this was the cause. All this affords evidence—ominous evidence—that Orthodoxy is undergoing an important modification.

As a farther proof of the point before us, we would adduce the fact that in the early part of the present year, the Rev. Charles Beecher, a Presbyterian Clergyman, son of the well-known Dr. Beecher, preached a discourse at the dedication of a Presbyterian Church at Fort Wayne, Indiana, in which he utters some very plain truths, and speaks quite as unpalatably to the popular taste as the most thorough Unitarian. The title of these dedicatory discourses (for there are two of them), is "The Bible a sufficient Creed," and the aim is to show that creed systems are pernicious; enslaving to the mind of man, and unfavorable to the free and proper development of the truth of the Bible. Such is the manly and truthful tenor which pervades them, that they have been printed entire in one of the Boston Unitarian newspapers, and a large impression of them struck off at the same office for general distribution. We here present our readers with an extract from one of them, and we ask them to bear in mind as they read it, that the language thereof is that of a Beecher, and that the occasion on which it was spoken was the dedication of a Presbyterian Church in one of the Western States of America:—

"There is nothing imaginary in the statement that the Creed Power is now beginning to prohibit the Bible, as really as Rome did, though in a subtler way. During the course of seven years study the Protestant candidate for the ministry sees before him an unauthorized statement, spiked down and stereotyped, of what he must find in the Bible, or be martyred. And does any one, acquainted with human nature, need be told that he studies under a tremendous pressure of motive? Is that freedom? 'The liberty wherewith Christ maketh free?' Rome would have given that. Every one of her clergy might have studied the Bible to find there the Pontifical creed on pain of death. Was that liberty? 'Hence I say that the liberty of opinion in our Theological Seminaries, is mere form. To say nothing of the thumb-screw of criticism, by which every original mind is tortured into negative propriety, the whole boasted liberty of the student consists in a choice of claims—a choice of handkerchiefs—whether he will wear the Presbyterian handkerchief, or the Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal, or other Evangelical handkerchief. Here it has secretly come to pass that the ministry themselves dare not study their Bibles. Large portions thereof are seldom touched. It lies useless lumber; or if they do study and search, they dare not show their people what they find there. There is something criminal in saying anything new. It is shocking to utter words that have not the mould of age upon them.

"Thus are the ministry of the Evangelical Protestant denominations, not only formed all the way up, under a tremendous pressure of merely human fear, but they live, and move, and breathe, in a state of things radically corrupt, and appealing every hour to every baser element of their nature, to shut up the truth and bow the knee to the power of apostasy."

Reader, we ask thee still to remember that this is the testimony of an eminent Trinitarian Clergyman, brought up amongst the people of whom he speaks. Is there not leaven of the right kind there—the leaven of freedom and truth? Do we not perceive there the pledge and promise of progress? The principle of Mr. Beecher's discourses is just the fundamental principle which the Unitarians have been insisting on ever since they assumed the attitude of a distinct denomination.

As a still farther evidence and illustration of what we now refer to—that liberal views of Christianity are making progress among Orthodox denominations, and that they are therefore approximating more closely to Unitarianism, we copy the following article from the *Presbyterian*, a religious paper representing the denomination whose name it bears. It will

be seen that it is mainly a comment on a paragraph which had appeared in the *New York Christian Inquirer*. The celebrated "Theological Seminary" referred to, is that at Andover:—

"UNITARIANISM.—The *Christian Inquirer*, a Unitarian paper recently established in the city of New York, copies an editorial from the *Presbyterian*, referring to the decline of Unitarianism, and accompanies it with comments. We refer to the comments chiefly with a view of copying the following pregnant paragraph.

"Unitarianism is not on the decline. The manifestations of her influence are somewhat changed. Orthodoxy has relented. Mild and reasonable views of Christianity are now to be heard in Calvinistic pulpits, and liberal Christianity is doing her work under other names, and with more efficiency than ever. We care not how soon the denomination is disbanded when the holy war is over. If Orthodoxy throws down her arms, and quietly and unconsciously turns her face and fights on our side, we are willing to look defeated. We do not stand out as prominently as we once did. The tide of Christian truth has risen about us, and our rock is submerged; not broken, abraded, or sunk. If 'Unitarianism is a heartless system,' we shall begin to mourn that its general principles are spreading so fast. From the general tenor of the best Orthodox literature, we are beginning to feel that our 'occupation is gone'; that our 'peculiar' views are no longer characteristic of us. The great point of difference has generally been accounted that which is created by our opposite views of the atonement. But a writer in the *Methodist Quarterly Review* of October, labours with learning, argument and eloquence, to show that every other view of the atonement than that which ascribes to it a moral influence over man as its essence, is unscriptural, unphilosophical, and irrational. And Orthodox works are every day coming out in opposition to the doctrine of vicarious punishment. Unitarians believe in the vicarious sufferings of Christ, not in the technical, but the only real sense of those words, as fully as any Christians."

"It is lawful to be taught by an enemy. There is too much truth in the remark that many, professedly Orthodox, are unwittingly aiding the cause of Socinianism. The views of atonement, taught in a celebrated theological seminary in New England, but not confined to the region or Church with which it is associated, are in a very slight degree better than Socinianism, and are unquestionably an advance towards that system. We are not at all surprised that Unitarians should exult in the propagation of such theories, or that it should hail them as pioneers of a still more thorough disclaimer of the distinctive peculiarities of Orthodoxy. If the persons referred to, do not speedily resume their 'armour of proof,' the good old fashioned doctrine of atonement, they may as well give up the battle. They fight uncertainly as one that beatech the air, and while they deny Unitarianism, it, in turn, smiles on them, as efficient auxiliaries."

FARTHER EVIDENCE OF THE PROGRESS OF RIGHT VIEWS.

Since writing the foregoing article, we have seen the account of a remarkable and important religious movement which recently took place in New York. It is the organization of a new congregation of Germans, seceders from the Roman Catholic Church. Stimulated, no doubt, by the movement which has recently taken place in their native country, a large number of the Germans of New York, in connection with the Rev. Mr. Guistiniani, recently a Roman Catholic priest of the order of St. Francis, were led to reflect upon the validity of the claims of Rome; and the result has been the complete rejection of those claims and many of their accompanying doctrines. The new congregation was organized with great solemnity in the Tabernacle, which was crowded to excess on the occasion.

We subjoin their declaration of what they reject, and their confession of what they adopt:—

DECLARATION.

1. We reject the following:—
1. The doctrine, that the Pope is the visible head of the Church, standing in the place of Jesus Christ; and we repel in advance all concessions which may possibly be made by the Hierarchy to subject the Free Church again to her yoke.
2. We reject the doctrine that by ordination there is conferred upon the priests any special elevated dignity above the laity, and that by virtue of the same, authority is given them over faith and doctrine, over the consciences and the opinions of men.
3. We reject the constrained celibacy of the clergy, as an ordinance not founded upon the

Holy Scriptures, but rather a contrivance devised by the Popes for their domineering purposes.

4. We reject auricular confession.
 5. We renounce the invocation of Saints, the worship of relics and images.
 6. We reject indulgences, fasts, pilgrimages, and all such hitherto appointed church regulations, which can only lead to an empty self-righteousness.
 7. We reject the doctrine of purgatory.
- But we freely profess the following well established tenets of the Gospel:—

II.

Confession of Faith.

As the general substance of our belief we adopt the following creed:

1. We believe in God the Father, who through His Almighty Word created the world, and rules it in wisdom, righteousness, and love. We believe in Jesus Christ our Saviour. We believe in the Holy Spirit, a holy universal Christian church, the forgiveness of sins, and life everlasting. Amen.
2. We assign to the church individually the duty of bringing the import of our faith to a living Christian development adapted to the times.
3. We allow entire freedom of conscience, the free investigation and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, with no recognized external authority; we abominate especially all coercion, all hypocrisy and all lying, and therefore find in the diversity of views and readings of our doctrinal basis no ground for division and denunciation. We hold our creed subject to a deeper scrutiny of Holy Scripture founded on the development and influence of the Holy Spirit.
4. We acknowledge on the authority of Holy Scripture only two sacraments instituted by Christ, *Baptism and the Supper*; but as Church institutions in the spirit of the Gospel; *Confirmation*, (reception into the congregation by a confession of faith on arriving at years of discretion;—the laying on of hands with prayer) *die Buss*, *Repentance* (prayer for the forgiveness of sins); *der Priesterliche* (ordination; laying on of hands with prayer.) *Marriage* and preparation for death (with prayer.)
5. Baptism shall be administered to Children, with the expectation that it will be followed by a ratification of the Confession of Faith (Confirmation) on their arriving at years of discretion.
6. The Lord's Supper shall be partaken of by the congregation as it was instituted by Christ, in both kinds.
7. We recognize marriage as a holy, binding rite, and attain for it the Church's blessing; yet we acknowledge no other conditions and limitations than such as are fixed by the laws of the State.
8. We believe and declare that it is the first duty of the Christian to manifest his faith by works of Christian love.

The *New York Spectator*, in speaking of this movement, seems to derive satisfaction from the fact that the New York German Reformers have kept clear of some of the errors of Ronge and his followers. The principal charge laid against Ronge is that of an inclination to extreme Rationalism. How far this charge may be well founded, we cannot undertake positively to say. We have seen it both asserted and denied. Under the term Rationalism, we understand, are included two or three shades of opinion. Rationalistic tendencies, we know, are widely spread in Germany, while, to borrow the language of a recent writer, "the adherents of strict orthodoxy are, if not extinct, yet few and far scattered." As far as we have been able to gather from the various detached accounts which we have seen published, the majority of German Protestants are to be found occupying a middle position between strict Orthodoxy and extreme Rationalism. The opinions of this majority would correspond in the main with those of the Unitarian Christians of Great Britain, Ireland, and the United States. We only express the feelings of the Unitarians of these countries, when we say, that with extreme Rationalism, or that system which rejects the supernatural element from Christianity, we have no sympathy. Yet we would neither abuse nor denounce its abettors. If, in the legitimate exercise of their right of thought, they have come to such conclusions, let God judge them, not us.

The *New York Spectator*, however, is scarcely to be relied on in his account of the opinions of the new congregation. As an evidence that they have not fallen into some of the more serious mistakes of their fellow-countrymen at home, he says that they have made a distinct enunciation of the doctrine of the Trinity. But there is some error here. We fear he has read the first article in their "Confession" with Trinitarian eyes, else he would not have made such a statement. This article is in fact substantially and almost literally the same as the 5th article of the