

THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.

THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN
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The Bible Christian.

MONTREAL, JUNE, 1845.

DEDICATION OF THE MONTREAL UNITARIAN CHURCH.

On Sunday, 11th May last, the New Church edifice, erected by the Unitarian congregation of this city, was set apart for the purposes of Christian worship. The services were performed by the Rev. Dr. Gannett, minister of the Federal Street Church, Boston, and the Rev. J. Cordner, minister of the Montreal Church. The dedicatory discourse was preached by the former. Dr. Gannett took for his text, 2 Cor. iv. 13. In the sermon, he gave a brief statement of the prominent points of the Unitarian faith, and adduced the arguments from reason and from scripture by which it is sustained. He then proceeded to point out the leading particulars in which the Unitarians differed from those by whom they were surrounded. They differed, he said, from the Unbeliever, in their views of God. They differed from the Trinitarian, in their views of Christ. They differed from the Roman Catholic, in their views of the Church and Church authority. They differed from the Episcopalian, in their views of the Ministry. They differed from the Calvinistic Presbyterian, in their views of human nature. They differed from the Baptist, in their views of Ordinances. They differed from the Methodist, in their views of religious excitements. And they differed from the negligent and irreligious of every class, in their views of personal righteousness. The discourse was very clearly arranged, and marked by great plainness of speech. It occupied about an hour and a half in delivery, and was listened to throughout by a large and attentive congregation. We are not disposed to say more concerning it now, as we hope to see it shortly in print. The Committee of the Unitarian Society here have requested it from Dr. Gannett for publication, to which request, we are happy to say, he has acceded, and we believe it is now in press.

The Dedication services took place in the morning, commencing at eleven o'clock. In the afternoon of the same day, at half-past three o'clock, there was a special service for the administration of the Lord's Supper. On that occasion there were seventy communicants. There was likewise another service in the evening, at half past seven o'clock, when Dr. Gannett preached again to a large and attentive audience.

On the whole, the exercises of the day were of a highly satisfactory character. We owe much to Dr. Gannett, for undertaking so long a journey to give us his valuable assistance on the occasion. The presence of so many intelligent persons of other religious denominations, was a source of gratification not to be overlooked. They heard our views expressed, and the line of argument indicated, by which they are sustained. They heard it plainly stated wherein and why we differ in certain particulars from other classes of Christians. Now we think such information could not fail to have an interest for candid and truth-seeking minds. We always say that we wish to be understood. We are not of those who deprecate investigation: we rather invite enquiry, full and free. Our desire is that Truth should prevail; and if Unitarianism be not true, we do not desire its prevalence. Every circumstance, therefore, which tends to excite individual or public attention to the first and real point of difference between our views and those of the Trinitarian gives us pleasure. For this reason, strange as it may appear to some, we are even

gratified when we hear of our views being assailed. We have sometimes to regret that they should be assailed with rather more zeal than knowledge, and that perfect courtesy and charity should not always be observed in this matter; but our regret exists solely on account of those who are betrayed into such conduct.

On a former occasion we presented our readers with a print of the Unitarian Church, in the columns of this journal. The building is beautifully situated on Beaver Hall Place, at the head of Rade-gonde Street, and is generally admired as a specimen of simple Grecian architecture. The interior is finished in pure white, and the pews are lined throughout with drab moreen. The pulpit is on a platform elevated about five feet from the floor. This platform is enclosed in front with a row of balusters uniform with those on the front of the organ gallery at the opposite end of the church. In both places, the interstices of the balustrade are filled up by a lining of crimson moreen damask. At the back of the platform and pulpit there is also a large and tastefully hung curtain of the same material. At present the church is capable of accommodating about 450 persons, but, by erecting additional galleries, could be made to seat 600.

We may add here, that the pews and sittings have let to the full extent anticipated by the Committee of Management. Arrangements have likewise been made to accommodate with free sittings such parties as may require them.

BOSTON ANNIVERSARIES.

The last week in May is always a season of agreeable excitement in Boston. At that time, all the religious denominations, and the various moral and philanthropic societies of New England come together in that city, for the purpose of reviewing their operations, discussing those topics in which respectively they take especial interest, and considering their plans of future action.—Such meetings are of vast benefit in arousing and keeping alive a common sympathy amongst all those who are engaged in a common object.

The following notices of some of the meetings connected with our religious denomination are abridged from the larger reports of the *Boston Christian Register* :—

UNITARIAN FESTIVAL.

This joyous and animating meeting realized the highly raised anticipations of the vast assemblage it brought together. The Unitarian Laymen of Boston, on this occasion, extend their hospitalities, to the entire clergy of their faith. They invite all the Unitarian ministers of the land to come, with their wives, to partake of the expressions of their respect, gratitude and affection. The large Hall over the Passenger Depot of the Western Railroad—150 feet long, and about 60 broad—was filled with tables spread with bounty, and adorned with flowers. 932 guests, of both sexes, and from all parts of the continent, were seated around them. It was a beautiful and glorious spectacle,—zeal brightened by intelligence, enthusiasm guided by reason, sympathy of faith expanded by the widest charity, shone over, and illuminated that vast multitude. The most venerable and illustrious citizen of the United States presided; and was a fit representative of the spirit of the meeting.

The Rev. Wm. P. Lunt of Quincy, the Pastor of the President, invoked a blessing upon the occasion.

At the conclusion of the repast, the Honorable John Quincy Adams, President of the day, rose and addressed the company in the following speech :—

FELLOW CITIZENS :

Christian Brethren and Sisters,—Although myself here as an invited guest, I have been requested by the Committee of Arrangements of the Association to enjoy whose hospitality we are here assembled, to preside at this meeting, and in their name to bid you a hearty welcome. I had once before been kindly invited to perform the same service; but my necessary absence from the Commonwealth at the time of the celebration had deprived me of the pleasure of accepting the invitation. In the early ages of

Christianity these assemblages were called Feasts of Love, and although we are here as the members of one variation of the Protestant Churches, yet it is not a sectarian spirit in which we meet, but in a meek and quiet spirit—in the spirit of Christian charity and of mutual toleration. We meet as brethren and sisters of one great family—not in hostility to others—not even in the spirit of controversy, but in the sentiment of the Roman Catholic poet who said,—
'For modes of faith, let senseless zealots fight;
His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right.'

It is in this spirit that I esteem it an honor to have been permitted to participate in this friendly and social meeting, and, though conscious of my comparative unworthiness to preside over it, to undertake that pleading duty in deference to the twice repeated request of the Committee of Arrangements of the Society.

And this assembly, graced and sanctified by the presence and participation of the fairest part of creation, though confined to Christians of one denomination, and holding with regard to certain points of doctrine, a belief differing from those of other Churches with which they would readily hold communion, is in my estimation of no sectarian character. In the earliest age of Christianity it was by witnessing the Love Feasts of the disciples of Jesus, that the unconverted heathen was brought to exclaim—'behold how these Christians love one another'—and if to any denomination of Christians that law of universal love, acknowledged by all to embrace the whole compass of the Gospel dispensation, should be most emphatically dear, should it not be to that which comparatively small in numbers dissects from the rest only under the convictions of a conscience not under their own control?

To such festivals, the time also appears to be peculiarly appropriate—a time when symptoms of internal commotion, yea, of internal convulsion are agitating the bosom of many, if not of all the Churches of Christ.—In our own country—No!—let us turn our eyes, from the scenes passing before them, in the Protestant Episcopal, the Presbyterian, the Methodist and Baptist Churches—let us turn away our eyes, not in enmity to them, but to watch and pray for them—to meditate on the causes of their dissensions, and on the remedies they are resorting to, to heal them—to watch that the infection of their distemper may never reach ourselves—to pray that some balm and some physician in Gilead may be found to save or to retrieve them from the remedy of self-inflicted dissolution.

And in the example of this festal union, and in the self-evident truth of universal freedom founded on universal love, let us recall them in fraternal affection, to the fundamental principles of the Christian faith.—Let us teach them, by the example of harmony among ourselves, how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity—and let us assure them all that when they have found a charmer and a charm to soothe their hearts into harmony among themselves, we shall be ready and rejoiced to receive them, discarding all points of doctrinal dissent, as brethren to our arms.

Rev. Dr. Peirce followed Mr. Adams in his happiest manner; after whom some other speakers addressed the meeting, when the Rev. Dr. Gannett, after giving an interesting account of our brethren at Montreal, whom he had recently visited, introduced one of their number to the company.

Hon. F. Hincks, of Montreal, said he rose on the present occasion under feelings of much embarrassment; and he felt his embarrassment increased when he reflected on the character of the assemblage which he had now the honor of addressing. An assemblage in which was concentrated a great portion of the intelligence and talent of the far famed Capital of New England.—It was perhaps difficult for those by whom he was now surrounded, and who probably had never been deprived of the comfort of being able to worship the God of their Fathers, according to the dictates of their own conscience, to appreciate the feelings of those who like him (Mr. H.) have been for many years deprived of this high privilege. A brighter day, however, had at last dawned on the Unitarians in Canada, and he entertained sanguine hopes that the good seed which had been planted would bring forth fruit abundantly. It was but justice to the Unitarians of Montreal that he (Mr. H.) should remind their friends here, that when their respected pastor (Mr. Cordner) made his appeal for assistance to the Unitarians of the United States, he was enabled to show that there had been no want

of zeal or energy on their part. They had not, like the indolent peasant in the fable, prayed for the assistance of Hercules, until they had first put their own shoulders to the wheel. The subscriptions of the Montreal Unitarians to the building fund of the church, were in proportion to their means large, he might almost say munificent. They were however compelled to invoke the assistance of Hercules, and most generously had it been offered. The present state of the Montreal Unitarian Society was, he was happy to state, most satisfactory. Their numbers were steadily on the increase. Their little periodical, the *Bible Christian*, was doing much good, being circulated principally among those who, scattered over the country, had no opportunities of public worship. It was in the newly settled districts that the dissemination of our periodicals and tracts is calculated to be of the most service, and he (Mr. H.) thought there was no better mode of promoting the success of the cause than by providing for their gratuitous distribution. He (Mr. H.) would desire once more to convey to the Unitarians of the United States on behalf of himself, and his brethren in Canada, the assurance of their gratitude and esteem, and he had also to thank them personally for the kind reception that he had met with.

Rev. Mr. Osgood, of Providence, followed and bore testimony to the value of the services rendered, by our Unitarian scholars, in the cause of religion and truth. Rev. Mr. Gage of Petersham, expressed the thanks of the Unitarian clergymen in the country, to the Boston Unitarian Laymen, for the happy scene to which they had invited them. Rev. Mr. Elliott of St. Louis, Missouri, then rose, and the company were delighted to hear his voice, and to listen to the cheering narrative he presented of the abundant fruits which are already beginning to be gathered from the seed planted there. Dr. Dewey of New York was called out, and addressed the meeting in his own peculiar style of deep feeling and valuable thought. Rev. Mr. Bradford of Bridgewater followed, and after him,

Rev. W. P. Huntington, of Illinois, said that no one present could with any consistency doubt the liberality of the body of Christians who have provided for this gathering. For my humble self, I am present at your anniversaries this week, from a distance of some 2000 miles. I shall not soon forget the happiness which this day has brought along with it. It will continue to cheer me in the remote scene of my labours, as it has done many a time, when contending against prejudice and misrepresentation, to remember that some of my best friends and allies, are amongst the enlightened, benevolent and pious, who surround me this day.

Rev. Edward T. Taylor of the Seamen's Chapel, who, although a Methodist, delights to accept the hospitalities, and to reciprocate the Christian affections, of his Unitarian brethren, delivered a speech, in which the strongest common sense clothed its profoundest maxims, in a native splendor and unstudied force of illustration, perfectly delightful.

The meeting was further addressed by various speakers lay and clerical, amongst whom was J. G. Palfrey, Esq., Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, who styled himself a *Unitarian of the Unitarians*. Mr. P. was called out in consequence of allusions which had been made to his genuine abolition procedure in the emancipation of certain slaves which had come to him by inheritance.

The addresses were closed by an eloquent speech from the Hon. S. C. Phillips, partaking of the character of a review and conclusion, in the course of which he thus refers to Mr. Palfrey and his noble conduct in liberating the slaves :—

"And what, sir, have we seen and heard here this day? One brother commends another for having liberated some fifteen or twenty slaves. The other rises and declares it to have been no more than the simplest act of justice. For says he, I was born in Boston. I was educated an Unitarian. And, had I not done it, I should not have dared to lift my head and to show my face among you to-day. As a Unitarian Christian, I had no more right to retain those persons in bondage or to sell them, than they had to do the same thing to me. It was no more a matter of merit in me to liberate those slaves, who had come into my possession without any act of mine, than it is to pay my toll at the bridge, or my tavern bill on my journey."

The attention of the meeting was relieved at intervals, and the interest of the occasion heightened by several original hymns, in which the company joined, under the lead of excellent singers of their number, and accompanied by a fine organ.