

in London, in the sixteenth century, called the thirty-nine Articles, and book of Common prayer. Another party vowed adherence to a confession of faith, compiled at Westminster, by some other men, in the next century following. And thus it was, that at a period when the world was emerging from long mental darkness, many of the errors of the darkest ages found their way into those forms, to be preserved there, as well as the truths which they contained. Thus it was, that one authority was thrown off only to erect another to control the human mind in its free investigation of the sacred Scriptures. But as we have already said, in this age of advancing thought, the influence of human standards of faith is fading away. It is a fact, every where quite notorious, that many parts of the thirty-nine Articles, and of the book of Common prayer, and of the Westminster confession, are not really believed by some who profess them, and disbelieved to a large extent by many who nominally adhere to the churches founded on them. And this is one of the crying evils of the system; that on the most solemn of all subjects, which can engage the human mind, it brings men into this false, dangerous, and indefensible position.

And it is a false, and indefensible position for any one to occupy—to adhere to a church, openly and publicly founded on a specific creed, when he does not believe that creed. If men should be thoroughly and solemnly in earnest about anything, it should be about religion. If they should be simple, and truthful, and straightforward about anything, it should be about this. If our church were founded on any specific human creed (which it is not) and any person connected with it come to us, and say, "I find I cannot in conscience assent to the creed which is publicly set forth as our ecclesiastical bond of union; nor can I in honesty appear before the world as doing so, by remaining in connection with your church;" what should be our answer to such an one? It should, and it would be this—"Go in peace, my friend, be loyal to conscience." How commonly do we hear it said of some one that he cannot make a right movement in such a matter lest he should offend or disoblige friends. But we never hear such a thing said of any man, that we do not think what a cruel testimony he bears against those friends. For is it not just saying that they would be the persecutors of an honest conscience? And what harder testimony could be borne against them than this? Surely, if a man's friends are enlightened with the light, and warmed by the charity of the Gospel, they will rejoice to see him paying difference to conscience, and think none the less of him, though he differ from them in opinion. We know, however, that there are thousands in the world who have neither this light nor this charity, but would look darkly and coldly on a brother man on account of honest manifestation of difference of opinion. We know, too, that it is one of the evils of the creed system, thus to contract men's minds, and chill men's hearts. But the generous and enlightened Christian, will always be ready to say to his fellow Christian—"Respect conscience; though you should be put under social ban for your honest opinion—though social denunciation should follow you from street to street, and from house to house,—be not dismayed. Though friends the nearest and dearest, should shun and look coldly on you, as they did on many of the first disciples of the Lord, and many of the first adherents of the reformation; still persevere, for in giving steady difference to your conscience you are rendering most acceptable worship to your God. Though you should be placed in

a position the most painful, or in circumstances the most trying, on account of your conscientious convictions, be ready to say, in any position or circumstances, as Martin Luther said before the diet at Worms, when his life was in their hands;—"Here I am, I cannot say otherwise. God help me."

In the extension of religious liberality, in various parts of the world, and the increase of Christian Societies based on freedom of thought, we should see reason for encouragement and hope. Christianity is a divine religion. It fell fresh from heaven to quicken and purify the earth, to elevate and sanctify mankind, to give new life to a race, dead in trespasses and sins. How deplorable it is that it should ever have been so grossly corrupted! How doubly deplorable, that when light did break in on the darkness of the world, it should have been sought to perpetuate many of those corruptions by embodying them in human forms which are vainly said to be unchanging and unchangeable! What task can be more honorable and inspiring! What effort more worthy of men or angels, than the endeavour to disturb the stagnant pool of religious indifference—to remind men of the importance of religious opinion—to impress them with the supreme claims of the sacred Scriptures as a standard of faith and practice—to rouse them to a consideration of what they believe, and why they believe it—to press them to an examination of the creeds and formulas of faith of the churches to which they belong;—in a word, to excite them to a free, earnest, and reverent enquiry concerning religion, and thus effectually shake every system of stereotyped popular error? In the name of God, then, and for the sake of man, let this be done, that Christianity may be freed from the theological riddles with which it is invested, and speedily restored to its scriptural foundation, its original simplicity, and its primitive loveliness.

#### UNITARIAN CONVENTION AT NEW BEDFORD.

The usual Autumnal Convention of Unitarian Christians was held this year at New Bedford, Mass. The first meeting took place on Tuesday, the 17th ult., in the evening of which, a discourse was preached by Rev. W. H. Furness, D. D., of Philadelphia, from Acts xvi. 31—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The subject of the preacher was "The facts in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, as proof, embodiment, and illustration of Christianity."

Next day the Convention reassembled in the first Unitarian Church; when the following resolutions were submitted by the committee, for the consideration of the meeting:

1. Resolved, that the practical workings of Protestantism as shown in the collision of opinion, and in the prevailing indifference to religious truth, render it the special duty of Christian ministers, now as ever, to make frequent inculcations of Christian doctrine, and of all Christians to become familiar with Christian truth.
2. Resolved, that as the energies of other sects are especially devoted to the diffusion of Christianity abroad, it is incumbent upon Unitarian Christians, who have aided so little in this mode of Christian benevolence, to be foremost in the promotion of freedom, peace, temperance, purity, and piety at home.
3. Resolved, that in an age remarkable for its physical developments and devoted in an unexampled degree to a physical good, the peculiar peril of the times is to be averted only by the spirit of profound reverence, and fervent devotion.
4. Resolved, that the worship of the Sanctuary, the ordinances of Christianity, the religion of the closet and the household, are to be employed and urged more than ever as the paramount means by which to promote the spirit of devotion.
5. Resolved, that in the death of Kay of Northumberland, Ripley of Waltham, Whit-

man of Lexington, and Peabody of Burlington, while we cheerfully acknowledge the dispensations of a wise and benignant Providence, we mourn the loss of able and devoted fellow-labourers.

These resolutions underwent discussion during Wednesday and Thursday, the speakers being, for the most part, clerical. On Wednesday evening another discourse was preached before the convention, by Rev. C. Robbins of Boston, from Matt. vi. 6—"But thou, when thou prayest enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." There was a Conference and Prayer Meeting on Thursday Morning.

During the stay of the Convention at New Bedford, the members were invited to a Social Festival at the City Hall, got up in a very elegant style, by the ladies connected with the Unitarian Societies of the place. The Hon. Judge Elliott of New Bedford, presided.

#### THE PEACE CONVENTION AT BRUSSELS.

The first sitting of the Congress was held at one o'clock, at the *Salle de la Societe de la Grande Harmonie*, on Wednesday, with great splendour and taste. At the further end of the hall, behind the platform, was placed an allegorical statue of Industry, holding a bee-hive in her hand; at her feet were grouped the different emblems of the sciences, arts, agriculture and commerce. The whole was surrounded with evergreens, garlands of flowers, and flags, with the national colours of Belgium; in front was placed the bust of the King. All around the hall were hung the banners of Holland, England, Germany, France, the United States, and Young Italy.

M. Visschers, as chairman of the provisional committee, occupied the president's chair, assisted by MM. Bourson and Lehardy de Beaulieu, as secretaries.

M. Scoble read a list of the English and American delegates, and announced that the following members of the British Parliament, though unable personally to attend, had expressed their cordial concurrence in the object of the congress:—Joseph Brotherton, Esq., Lawrence Heywood, Esq., Wm. Brown Esq., Charles Pearson, Esq., Reginald Blowitt, Esq., John Ellis, Esq., Dr. Bowring, R. Cobden, Esq., and Joseph Hume, Esq.

M. Scoble proposed, and Mr. Elihu Burritt seconded, the nomination of M. Visschers as president of the congress.

M. Rousset proposed the following gentlemen as vice-presidents:—W. Ewart, Esq., M.P., for England; M. Francisque Bouvet, member of the French National Assembly, for France; Mr. Elihu Burritt, for America; and M. Siringar, for Holland. This was seconded by M. E. Banvanhovecheke, member of the Chamber of Representatives.

Mr. J. S. Ruckingham proposed as secretaries MM. Bourson and Lehardy de Beaulieu, for Belgium; Mr. Edmund Fry, for England; and Mr. Henry Clapp, for the United States. Mr. Alvin seconded this motion.

The President then delivered his inaugural address, in which he gave a rapid historical sketch of the rise, progress, and operations of various societies formed in England and America for the diffusion of the principles of permanent and universal peace. He adverted also to the various forms in which, during former times, it had been attempted to embody the same principles as the Amphictyonic council in Greece; the league between the Achians, and the Teutonic league and the Helvetic union, as well as the vast projects entertained by Henry IV. of France, to unite all European States into one great federation. He then passed in review the history of some of the leading European nations in relation to the wars they had waged, and compared the results they had obtained from their wars with those they had realised from the progress and triumph of the peaceful arts. He concluded with an elegant peroration in favour of universal peace, and resumed his seat amid the loud plaudits of the assembly.

The Congress resumed on Wednesday evening. The President (M. Visschers) announced the resolution on the order of the day for the forenoon sitting, "That an appeal to arms for the purpose of settling disputes among the nations, is a usage condemned alike by reason, humanity, and religion; and that it is the duty of the civilised world to adopt immediate measures to secure its total abolition." This proposition met with but one exception to its unanimous adoption. The order of the day for the sitting was then announced; "The utility and necessity of adopting a clause in all international treaties; binding the parties to refer all disputes to arbitration, that war may be avoided, and the way thus prepared for a permanent appeal to the principles of justice

as consolidated in a congress of nations." The discussion on this proposition was introduced by an extended paper by Mr. W. Stokes, of the London Peace Society; after which speeches were delivered by M. Rousset, professor at the University at Brussels; M. Panchand, evangelical pastor at Brussels; M. Rastral de Mongert; M. Ramon de la Sagra, M. Madrid (who controverted the question); Mr. J. Sturge, of Birmingham; and Mr. J. S. Buckingham of London. A desultory conversation then ensued, and the Congress adjourned at ten o'clock.

On the 21st the president announced the resolution as founded on the preceding discussion, which having been put was adopted unanimously with but two exception. The congress then passed to the order of the day. "The utility and practicality of a Congress of Nations, for the formation of a code of international law, by an appeal to which all national disputes may be amicably adjusted without an appeal to war." This discussion was introduced by a lengthened paper on the subject by Mr. E. Burritt, after the reading of which the following gentlemen addressed the congress:—M. Burtinatti, of Turin, Mr. H. Vincent, M. Ramon de la Sagra, of Madrid (who again controverted the question), Mr. Ewart, M.P., who ably replied to the Spaniard, Mr. Scheld, the king's librarian; Mr. H. Clapp, of America; and Messrs. Bouvet, Ewart, and Burritt, who avowed on behalf of their respective nations, an ardent desire for permanent peace.

In the evening sitting several new converts to the cause were named, among whom, M. de Tracy, member of the French National Assembly, appeared conspicuously. The resolution founded on the morning's discussion was then read, and carried unanimously with one exception. The congress immediately proceeded to the order of the day, "to call the attention of governments to a measure of general disarmament, as tending to the removal of national jealousies, and the promotion of those mutual good offices which would prove a guarantee for perpetual peace." An elaborate paper on this subject by Mr. W. Stokes of the London Peace Society was read, and introduced the discussion. Speeches were delivered during the debate on the question by M. Alvin, Director of Public Instruction; M. Siringa, of Amsterdam; M. l'Abbe Louis, of Brussels; M. Rousset, the advocate; M. Huet, Professor at Ghent University; and the Rev. T. Spencer, of Bath. After a discussion in which M. Ramon de la Sagra failed to obtain a hearing, and consequently withdrew, the president put the resolution based on the question of the evening, which was adopted with one dissentient voice.

On the 22nd a *soiree* was given to the congress by the Belgian committee, at which a considerable proportion of the *elite* of Brussels were present. Several speeches were delivered at intervals, chiefly by Belgian gentlemen. At half-past ten in the evening the English delegates withdrew, to prepare for their return to England. A special train having been generously furnished by the Belgian government, the delegates took their places at twelve at night, and amidst hearty cheers from a considerable number of gentlemen who had accompanied them to the train, departed for Ostend, where they safely arrived soon after five on Saturday morning. Here they embarked on board the Giraffe steamer, which landed them safely at Blackwall at about ten at night. After entering the Thames a public meeting was held on deck, and several speeches were delivered by various gentlemen, in which the assembled friends were exhorted to persevere in a cause whose commencement had proved so truly auspicious.

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