

Poetry.

KIND WORDS.

What a world of deep sweetness  
There is in the tone  
That comes to us kindly  
When weary and lone;  
Enwreathed with the laurel,  
What rest could we find,  
If love never cheered us  
With words that are kind?

The floating of music,  
When morning is bright,  
May fall on the spirit  
Like droppings of light.  
For O, they are pleasant—  
The hymns of the birds;  
But never, no never,  
So sweet as kind words.

I've sat in the shadow  
Of twilight's short wing,  
And dreamed about angels  
And songs that they sing.  
They're lonely—such visions  
By fancy combined,  
But O, how much sweeter  
Are words that are kind.

O thou, who art favored  
With fortune and friends,  
In whose cup of gladness  
No bitter drop blends;  
Wherever the tempter  
Is spreading his snare,  
Remember, I charge thee,  
Thy brother is there;  
And although all degraded,  
And sinful and blind,  
Thou yet may'st redeem him  
With words that are kind.

ANGRY WORDS.

Angry words are lightly spoken  
In a rash and thoughtless hour,  
Brightest links of life are broken  
By their deep insidious power;  
Hearts inspired by warmest feeling,  
Ne'er before by anger stirred,  
Oft are rent past human healing,  
By a single angry word.

Poison-drops of care and sorrow,  
Bitter poison-drops are they,  
Weaving for the coming morrow  
Saddest memories of to-day.  
Angry words, O let them never  
From the tongue unbridled slip;  
May the heart's best impulse ever  
Check them ere they soil the lip.

Love is much too pure and holy,  
Friendship is too sacred far  
For a moment's reckless folly  
Thus to desolate and mar.  
Angry words are lightly spoken,  
Bitterest thoughts are rashly stirred;  
Brightest links of life are broken  
By a single angry word.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION.

[From Mrs. Dana's Letters.]

MY DEAR SIR,—You say I would never have arrived at my present conclusions by reading the Bible alone, and insinuate that I have received my ideas from Unitarian books. You forget my assertion, in a letter to my father, that my mind was satisfied upon the subject before I had read a single Unitarian author, excepting, of course, the writers of the New Testament. As this matter is evidently misunderstood, I will give a particular account of it. I started then in my investigation, with one idea firmly fixed in my mind—this idea was the unity of God, which doctrine is certainly revealed in the Old Testament. This, then, I considered a certain truth, and now my object in examining the New Testament was to learn whether a Trinity was there taught. I soon discovered another certain truth, namely, that Christ was a distinct being from God, and another, namely, that he was called the Son of God; and yet another, namely, that he was a human being. Here, then, were several certain truths, plainly revealed.

But I soon arrived at some passages which seemed to assert, inferentially, that Christ was God. Here, then, was something at variance with those certain truths contained in the same revelation. Here was a truth, apparently revealed, which contradicted the certain truth of the unity of God, and those three other certain truths, namely, that Christ was a distinct being from God, and that he was the Son of God, and that he was a human being. These truths were contradicted; but still I saw nothing about the Trinity.

I noted down these passages, and read on.—The rest of the book still recognized, in the plainest and most explicit manner, all those certain truths of which I have spoken. The whole tenor of the New Testament certainly proved them. Now what was to be done with those texts which seemed to contradict them? I reasoned with myself thus: if, in reading any other book, I should come to hints and statements which seemed to contradict the plain assertions, and to differ from the general scope and tenor of the work, I should endeavor to give to those hints and statements an interpretation and a meaning which would harmonize with what was plainly laid down. To do this, it would not be correct nor natural for me to assume incredible propositions. This would be no way to harmonize discordant ideas, nor to reconcile contradictions.

But this strange and unnatural plan, it appeared to me, had been pursued with the Bible. That holy book had been treated as we should not think it right to treat any other. The doctrine that Christ possessed two natures, a finite and an infinite one, had been assumed to account for those passages where he seemed to be spoken of as God. I say this doctrine had been assumed, for it is nowhere plainly laid down.—This course I could not justify, and what next was to be done?

Was it not possible that those perplexing passages might be interpreted in some other way? If they proved what they were said to prove, namely, that Christ was God, they proved that there were, at the same time, one only God, and two Gods; and that the same being had both a finite and an infinite nature. These things were contradictions, and could not be proved in any way; nor did I see anything about the mystery of the Trinity. These passages, then, must have some other meaning.—I now read the various interpretations of learned men, both Trinitarians and Unitarians, and was soon satisfied that they did not assert the deity of Christ, but that a fair interpretation could be given to all of them, which would perfectly harmonize with those plainly revealed truths, of which I have spoken, and which were likewise taught by the whole tenor of the New Testament. These passages, then, did not teach the deity of Christ. Christ was not God—the Bible was consistent with itself—and the doctrine of the Trinity existed no longer in my mind as an article of faith.

You say "you should be lost if your own reason were to be your guide." Your expression is rather indefinite, and it depends upon what your exact meaning is, whether or not I can agree with you. If you mean that it would be dangerous—aye, fatal—to depend on reason alone, I fully and heartily acquiesce in your declaration. But if you mean that reason is to be laid entirely aside, I cannot at all agree with you. Without reason, of what possible use would a revelation be? Place the Bible in the hands of an idiot, who never enjoyed the gift of reason—or of a madman, whose reason had been dethroned—and what a mockery you make of their sad misfortunes? You cannot then mean that we are to make no use of reason. But if you believe that with the revelation from our Heavenly Father in our hands, we are to use our utmost efforts to ascertain what it is that God has spoken, why, then, as I said before, in this matter we entirely agree. I am as much opposed as you can be to exalting reason above revelation—to deciding what ought and what ought not to be in the Bible; but we must certainly use our highest faculties and our best efforts to ascertain what is there. And if the Scriptures anywhere seem to teach doctrines contrary to those which they have elsewhere plainly taught, we are bound, if possible, to give those seemingly discordant passages a different construction: and if, as may be the case, we cannot find out what they mean, we must imitate the great John Locke, and humbly say so; and we must patiently wait until we enter upon a more perfect state of existence, when all will be explained to us—when all that is dark will be brought to light—when faith will be exchanged for sight.

The Rev. John Wesley, in his controversy with Toplady concerning Election, said, that he would not believe any doctrine which charged God with unrighteousness. No words nor texts of Scripture, he said, would compel him to do it. So I say in regard to the Trinity. No words nor texts of Scripture will compel me to believe that the Bible contradicts itself. We must keep reason in its right place, but we must not undervalue it. It is dangerous to use it rashly, but it is quite as dangerous not to use it at all. There is danger in everything. The very fact that we possess reason places us in responsible circumstances; and responsibility implies danger. Our reason is the highest gift of God; let us see to it that we neglect not "the gift that is in us." If we make no use of our reason, would not our Heavenly Father justly charge us with the guilt of hiding our talent in the earth? Is it not clear, that as each man, in his individual capacity, is responsible to God, so each individual must sift and determine this matter for himself? At the same time, I heartily respond to the exclamation, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall!"

Again, you observe, "When I draw instruction from the Bible, I like to take the whole of it." My dear Sir, so do I. And this is a great Unitarian principle. They take the whole Bible, and judge of detached passages by its general scope and tenor. In this position, I am glad to be able to inform, you will find yourself sustained by the whole body of Unitarians. And it is by adhering strictly to this great, this radical principle of all just interpretation, that they arrive at Unitarianism.

You are certainly laboring under a mistake when you assert that Unitarianism "would persuade men to be at peace with themselves, not to flee from wrath." Unitarianism does not persuade men to a false peace. It is not an easy, indolent religion. No, no, very far from it. Let any one read Dewey's Sermons on the Law of Retribution, and see whether Unitarianism points out an easy road to heaven. "This is a system," says Dr. Gannett, "which requires of its disciple the greatest measure of goodness that he can render, which prohibits every indulgence contrary to the strictest virtue, and imposes continual effort and conflict. Who that comprehends its requisitions would ever think of pronouncing them light. Unitarianism as we receive it, the patron of a lax morality and a worldly spirit! Verily, it requires a confidence by no means enviable to make such an assertion in the face of everything that has been said by advocate and by opposer."\*

But, the fact is, I know of no easier mode of arriving at heaven, than by the Calvinistic scheme, if that scheme be true. To depend for salvation entirely upon the merits of another, who has become our substitute, is a very comfortable thing. But then, under these circumstances, what moral progress can a man be expected to make? I joyfully acknowledge that those who hold this faith do make advances in moral growth and vigor; but I believe they do it in the very teeth of their creed, they do it because both Scripture and common sense teach them that "as a man sows, so shall he also reap." On the other hand, the Unitarian doctrine that men are to be rewarded hereafter according to their works, while it is a doctrine of reason and of revelation, is, from its very nature, a prodigious incentive to constant watchfulness and warfare. All the expressions of the Apostle Paul, in regard to the Christian's life of conflict and danger, Unitarians fully understand, appreciate, feel. They well know what he means when he speaks of "striving for the mastery." They can enter into his feelings of joyful exultation when he was able to say, "I have fought the good fight." They believe the Apostle James was correct when he said, that "by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." They attend to the injunction of the Apostle Peter, "Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." At the same time, they believe that their salvation is all of grace, or favor; that it is obtained through the abounding mercy of God, in Christ; who has graciously promised to forgive the sins, and to overlook the shortcomings of those who earnestly repent and endeavor to reform. They believe that the lives which they live in the flesh, they must live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved them and gave himself for them. They endeavor to follow him—he is their example—and thus it is they live by faith in him—a faith which will inspire them with zeal and with strength to follow him "fully."

It seems strange to me, that any one can believe that the requisitions of the Unitarian faith are easy; that only those who wish to lead careless lives choose that religion. I solemnly declare to you, that I hesitate now at many things which I formerly deemed matters of trivial importance. My standard of gospel morality is higher, my views are more elevated, my aspirations after moral excellence altogether more ardent than they were before my change of argument. I earnestly wish that my standard of duty had been all my life what it is now; it would undoubtedly have saved me a vast amount of sorrow and regret. At the same time I frankly confess, that many things which I once deemed wrong I now think innocent. I have learned, I hope, to discriminate more justly between essentials and non-essentials; and I am more than ever persuaded that, instead of binding myself by certain outward rules and regulations, the only safe

\* In regard to the high tone of morality among Unitarians, Bishop Burnet says, "I must also do this right to the Unitarians as to own, that their rules in morality are exact and severe; that they are generally men of probity, justice, and charity, and seem to be very much in earnest in pressing the obligations to very high degrees in virtue."—BISHOP BURNET; *apud Field's Letters*, p. 26.—See also life of Burnet, prefixed to the "History of His Own Time," vol. 1., pp. 8, 9, Lond. 1848. DR. ADAMS says, "with regard to their moral code, the principles of the Unitarians do not seem to admit of their loosening, in the least, the bonds of duty; on the contrary, they appear to be actuated by an earnest desire to promote practical religion. Love is, with them, the fulfilling of the law; and the habitual practice of virtue, from a principle of love to God, and benevolence to man, is, in their judgment, the sum and substance of Christianity."—*Religious World Displayed; apud Field's Letters*, p. 25.

and certain way to live a truly Christian life, is to see faithfully to it that my heart is right with God.

CONVERSION TO UNITARIANISM.

[From the New York Christian Inquirer.]

It may be interesting to your readers to read some of the exercises and trials of mind of one who more than thirty years since, was converted from Calvinism of the strictest sect, to embrace the principles of Unitarianism, and unite with "a sect which was then every where spoken against." If others can say with Paul, "I was free born," it was not so with the writer; for he purchased his freedom from what is falsely called orthodoxy, "with a great price."

It may not be irrelevant to say that my parents were both Catholics, my father being educated for a priest in that church, but changed his intention as a matter of course in being married. All my early instruction was in favor of the Catholic faith, but losing my parents while young, and being brought in close connection with the orthodox Baptists, I adopted their views, and became a zealous member of that sect, and advocated with great zeal their peculiar sentiments. Being a great admirer of Dr. Gill, Dr. Andrew Fuller, and Booth, I read their works with great diligence and embraced their views of doctrines with much avidity. Gill's Body of Divinity and Commentaries were my constant companions; Fuller's "Gospel its own Witness," &c. &c., and Booth's "Reign of Grace" I considered unanswerable; and hence I became a Calvinist of the strictest sect, believing in hereditary total depravity, particular election and atonement, and that the call of the Gospel was only to the elect for whom Christ died, and that the rest of mankind were from eternity doomed to eternal misery. All the concomitants of this creed—as the eternal sonship of Christ, the covenant of grace between the Father and Son, and the suretyship of Christ as the Federal head of the Church, were firmly believed by me. I need not add that being well indoctrinated in the Athanasian views of the Trinity, the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, and the five points of Calvinism, and being able also to quote every passage both in the Old and New Testaments which had any bearing upon these doctrines, I felt myself able to cope with Unitarians and Arminians of every grade. Satisfied that my sentiments were in accordance with the Scriptures, and that all who differed from me were wrong, I most zealously devoted all my energies to propagate them. I remained undisturbed in my creed, until the controversy between Drs. Channing and Worcester, which excited so much interest in New England. I took sides with Dr. Worcester and his friends against Dr. Channing and his friends, whom I looked upon with the utmost horror as being "the enemies both of the cross and crown of Christ," and that Unitarianism was only infidelity baptized with the name of Christian. The letter of Dr. Worcester I deemed unanswerable, and was more than ever confirmed in the truth of my sentiments.

About this time, however, some of my particular friends avowed themselves anti-Trinitarians, rejecting all human creeds, and taking the Bible as the only guide of faith and practice. This circumstance greatly alarmed me; and after having attempted to convince one of them of his errors without effect, he requested me as a favour to read "Yates' Vindication of Unitarianism." I reluctantly consented, adding, however, that nothing which he could say would ever convince me of the truth of Unitarianism. I recollect well although it is more than thirty years ago, that when I took Yates' work into my hands to read, I felt as if I were committing a sacrilegious act; to read such a book appeared to be a sin; but as I had promised my friend, I considered myself bound to read it. After I had finished the reading of it, I was astonished, but not convinced; astonished that so much could be found in the Scriptures in favor of Unitarian sentiments, and that even those passages which I had relied on as proving the supreme Deity of Jesus, when properly interpreted, proved the reverse. Like other Trinitarians, I maintained, that although the Old Testament did not reveal a Trinity but a plurality, yet the New Testament distinctly stated that there were three persons in the Godhead; that all those passages in the Old Testament where the Aleim says, Let us make man, &c., proved the plurality of the Godhead; but Yates, at one stroke, knocked away this chief corner stone of the Trinity, by showing that by a rule of Hebrew syntax, "Nouns signifying majesty and dominion, having a plural termination, are frequently joined to a verb in the singular number." Further examination of this argument in favour of the plurality of the Godhead, satisfied me that it was wholly unsound, and that if the doctrine of the Trinity were true, I must resort to the New Testament for the proof.

In a future communication I will relate some further particulars of the conversion of AN OLD UNITARIAN.