

THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.

while the doctrine that Jehovah of Hosts is a threefold Being has no proper evidence to sustain it. It should be first proved, and then its incomprehensibility might be considered.

But in presenting the proof of that doctrine, the Trinitarian leaves himself justly open to the charge so commonly but erroneously preferred against the Unitarian,—that of arraying reason against revelation. It is admitted and urged on all hands, by friends and opponents of the doctrine of the Trinity, that it is not a doctrine of *express revelation*. The highest ground that has been claimed for it, by its most enlightened advocates, is, that it is a doctrine of *inferential reasoning* from the scripture. It is deduced from the Bible by some such process as this:—First it is alleged that the employment of a certain idiomatic expression by the writer of the Book of Genesis justifies the inference of a plurality of Persons in the Deity;—then it is said that certain attributes, works, &c. which are predicated of God throughout the scriptures are likewise predicated of Christ and the Holy Spirit; and this circumstance, it is argued, justifies the inference that Christ and the Holy Spirit are each Supreme God, as well as the Father Almighty. We need scarcely remind our readers that every conclusion thus inferred from stated premises, is accomplished by a process of reasoning, and does in effect depend for its truth on the correctness of the human judgment in ascertaining the premises and conducting the reasoning. In this manner, then, the doctrine of a tri-personal God has been drawn from the scriptures. It stands merely on a basis of *inferential reasoning*. If it were anywhere stated in the sacred volume that 'God is three,' in would impart an entirely new complexion to the controversy. But we complain of this human inference, that it flatly contradicts the authoritative declarations of the scriptures. The mode of proof could be shown to be fallacious; but even if this were not the case, we should be compelled to reject it on account of its open and unqualified contradiction of the plainest expressions of Holy Writ.—'The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; these three are equal in power and glory,' says the Trinitarian controversialist. 'The Father' is 'the only true God,' says our Lord Jesus Christ. Here, then, we place the infallible declaration of our Saviour, in opposition to the inferential reasonings of man. Can we hesitate a moment as to which should be believed?

Who by searching can find out God? In the replies which the Unitarian and Trinitarian would severally make to this question, we can perceive the Trinitarian tendency to scrutinise, and explain Deity, farther illustrated. The believer in the doctrine of tri-personality, hesitates not to divide and expound the Divine nature. He undertakes to state what part or person is first, what is second, and what is third. Having settled the division and order of precedence, he then proceeds to tell, how one person is 'made of none,' another 'begotten,' and another 'proceeding.' He not only explains the relation which the several alleged persons of the Deity sustain towards each other, but also determines the parts they respectively perform in the economy of Divine Government. In short, by reading the creeds and formularies of Trinitarians, we shall be led to believe that they had 'by searching' found out the incomprehensible Jehovah. Thus it is that men betimes

"rush in, where angels fear to tread."

Who by searching can find out God? The Unitarian is more reverent in his mode of treating this question. He presumes not to penetrate the depths of the Divine nature, as the Trinitarian does. He bows before the incomprehensibility of Deity. He offers the reply which

* We may state here, however, that this portion of the process has been considered unsatisfactory and unsound by some of the ablest controversialists on that side of the question. Calvin designates such inferences as "vicious interpretations."

the records of revelation furnish:—"There is but one God, the Father;"—"God is One;"—"God is a Spirit;"—"God is love;"—"His tender mercies are over all his works." With such answers, drawn from an infallible source, the Unitarian is satisfied to rest.

Mark the two modes of reply. Let him that readeth reflect and understand.

UNITARIANISM IN TORONTO.

Early in the last month, the Rev. J. Cordner, of the Unitarian Church in this city, made a visit to Toronto, and preached there on two Sabbaths. A commodious chapel in George's Street, formerly owned and occupied by the British Wesleyans, was procured as a place of meeting. The services were publicly notified, and the attendance on them was good,—better, we should say, than was anticipated. This was the first time, as far as can be ascertained, that religious services were held in Toronto by a minister of our denomination. Several persons were drawn together and made known to each other as Unitarians, who had never been mutually acquainted as such before. Some of these had been brought up in our faith before coming to this country, while others had become Unitarians by their own calm reflection and candid inquiry in religion. A meeting of those interested in the matter was held, for the purpose of considering the establishment of a worshipping society. Those who assembled manifested a very laudable degree of earnestness, and passed some useful and important resolutions. They have taken means to secure the use of the George's St. Chapel, and have agreed to hold private meetings for religious exercises there, conducted by some of the members themselves, until the services of a suitable minister can be obtained.

We have confidence in the prudence and zeal of our brethren in Toronto. The audiences which Mr. Cordner addressed while there, were quite as large as those to which he preached when he first came to Montreal, about twenty months ago. Since that time the regular members of the Montreal Society have fully doubled in numbers, a congregation has been organised which is still steadily increasing, and a new and substantial church edifice erected for their use. These facts should impart encouragement and hope to our Toronto friends. At the same time, we feel bound to warn them of the many difficulties that may lie in their way, but we beseech them not to be easily discouraged. Those difficulties spring mainly from that unacquaintance with Unitarian principles, which so generally prevails. Timorous minds, are afraid of—they know not what, prejudice slurs and abhors—it knows not what, and dogmatism denounces—it knows not what. In any case, we implore our friends not to 'return railing for railing.' Their system, if they understand it aright, will raise them above mental timidity, narrow prejudice, and unhesitating dogmatism, and we hope they will never descend to employ the weapons of any of these. The Christianity of the New Testament teaches not mental fear, it speaks of rational enquiry, and a sound mind; it recommends not a narrow prejudice, but inculcates universal love—a love so truly universal, that no child of humanity is excluded. It sanctions not a harsh and thoughtless dogmatism, but instructs us to maintain a proper respect for the conscientious opinions of others. While we advise our friends not to resort to such unseemly methods as may possibly be directed against them, we must not fail at the same time to recommend them to neglect no proper opportunity of extending a knowledge of their principles. This we conceive to be the simple and proper way of counteracting all gainsayers. Let the world, if possible, know what Unitarian Christianity really is. If it be true, let it succeed, and if it be not true, we do not wish its success.

Most sincerely do we hope our friends in Toronto may accomplish the work in which they are engaged. Most sincerely do we hope they may be enabled to se-

cure a Society and a sanctuary in which they can worship God, according to the dictates of their consciences. May the God and Guardian of all truth assist them in their effort, and hasten the day when the Christianity of Christ, shall be established in the world, on the ruins of the theology of men!

BOOKS.

We would direct the attention of our readers to the advertisement of Books which appears in another column of our present sheet. Of Channing's Works we need say nothing. They are now largely circulated and extensively known. The edition of Dr. Dewey's Works now offered for sale is quite a new one. It comes from the same publishers that issued the 'People's edition' of Channing, Messrs. Simms and McIntyre, of Aldine Chambers, London, and Belfast, Ireland. It contains, in one substantial and handsome volume, all the published works of the author, comprising "Discourses on various subjects," those on Commerce, Society, and Politics," those on "Human Life," and those "in Illustration and defence of Unitarianism," together with "The Old World and New" and "Miscellaneous Discourses and Essays." "The Old World and New" is the title given to a lengthened and interesting series of remarks, presented to the public in the form of a Journal, kept by Dr. Dewey during a tour in Europe.—Livermore's Commentary on the four Gospels, now offered for sale, is reprinted from the American Edition, and published by the Northern Sunday School Association of Ireland. It comprises in one larger volume, all the Comments contained in the first and second volumes of the American Edition, but without the text.—We would earnestly recommend our readers and friends to procure these books for themselves, and assist in their circulation.

CANADA CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE.

The Upper Canada Christian Conference held its annual session for 1845, on 7th July last, in Oshawa, C. W. Our General Meeting was truly interesting: we had good, sound, spiritual preaching, a large congregation, and good attention.

We trust the fruits of the meeting will be seen in eternity to the glory of God. Our session was one of some interest, not so much union as was desirable—reports generally favourable. We received a delegation from the Unitarian Congregation at Montreal, in the person of their worthy and talented Pastor, the Rev. Mr. Cordner, from whom we heard, on Monday evening, one of the best sermons in favour of the liberal principle of the Gospel we ever listened to. We gratefully acknowledge their favour in noticing us by a delegation, and shall consider them fellow-labourers in favor of an uncorrupted Gospel.—*Christian Luminary.*

UNITARIANS IN SCOTLAND.

The Rev. George Harris, formerly of Glasgow, and more recently of St. Mark's Chapel, Edinburgh, has accepted the pastoral charge of the Unitarian congregation of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England.

On Mr. Harris's notice of his intended resignation becoming generally known, earnest wishes were expressed that he should visit the friends in different parts of the country, before his departure from Scotland. Variety of circumstances unfortunately prevented the full accomplishment of these intentions and desires. Happy and instructive hours and days were, however, spent with long-known and highly-esteemed friends in Greenock, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and East Lothian. Sunday evening, April 13, Mr. Harris preached in the assembly rooms, Falkirk, to a large audience; Sunday, April 27, crowded congregations filled to overflowing the chapel at Aberdeen, on the morning and afternoon of which day he preached in that city. It had been his design to preach in Glasgow on Sunday, May 11, and on the evening of that day, at Paisley; but the unexpected departure of Mr. Boucher, for Ireland and England, on the affairs of the Glasgow chapel, frustrated the design. In the morning of Sunday, May 18, Mr. Harris preached from 1st Thessalonians, ii. 19, and in the afternoon delivered his farewell discourse, at Edinburgh, which was founded on Acts xx. 27, 31, 32.

Some difficulty was experienced in obtaining a suitable place for the farewell entertainment to Mr. Harris, on his departure from Scotland; but the Oak Hall, Bristo Place, having been finally fixed upon, the meeting was held in it, on Monday evening, May 19. The hall was tastefully decorated with evergreens and flowers, and was crowded in every part, even to inconvenience. Old and young seemed equally interested in the proceedings, and all were animated by kindly feelings, earnestness, and enthusiasm. Many friends were also present from Glasgow, Falkirk, Dollar, and other places; and from others still, letters of regret at compelled absence, from various causes, were received, giving evidence of warmest approbation and sympathy in the objects of the meeting.

About seven o'clock, on the motion of the Secretary to the Congregation, Mr. R. Nelson, seconded by the acclamations of the assembly, George Hope, Esq. of Fenton Barns, was called to the chair, and Mr. Morison, Leith-Street, one of the oldest members of the congregation, was appointed Vice-President.

The Chairman, Mr. Hope, then read the resolutions of a Special General Meeting of the Congregation of St. Marks, held on Sunday, 2nd March, 1845, Mr. G. H. Girdle in the Chair.

On the motion of Dr. Gardner, seconded by Mr. Philip, it was unanimously and cordially

Resolved,—That the conduct of the Rev. George Harris, as Minister of this Chapel since October 1841, has been distinguished by zeal, talent, indefatigable industry and assiduity, and unceasing efforts to promote the important interests confided to him.

That his personal conduct has procured for him the highest esteem and respect of his Congregation, to whom his departure from Edinburgh will be a subject of very sincere and heartfelt regret.

That in order to mark the sense entertained by his people, of his merits and sacrifices, it is expedient that a subscription should be raised, for the purpose of presenting him with a pecuniary donation, at such time prior to his departure from Edinburgh, as the Committee may determine.

Memorials were then read from the Unitarian Churches of Glasgow and Aberdeen, and from the Unitarian body in Scotland.

The resolutions and memorials, all beautifully engrossed on vellum, were then presented by the Chairman to Mr. Harris, in name of the different bodies by whom they had been forwarded. The feelings excited by the reading of these memorials cannot be expressed; nor the enthusiasm which responded to their various passages, and the remarks of Mr. Hope, be adequately described. Acclamation after acclamation manifested the heartfelt response they found in every heart. It was an overpowering scene, and can never be forgotten by those who witnessed it.

The Memorial from the Unitarian Christians of Scotland, with the sheets of signatures from the different Congregations and Missionary Stations, including also the resolutions and memorials of the Congregations of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen, all very handsomely bound together in purple morocco, have been forwarded to Mr. Harris, at Newcastle. This interesting and valuable volume, bears the following inscription in gold letters:—"Memorial from the Unitarian Christians of Scotland, to the Rev. George Harris, (on his removal to Newcastle-upon-Tyne,) as a Token and Testimony of their Sincere Gratitude and Esteem for his Faithful and Zealous Labours among them, during a period of Twenty-five years. May 19, 1845." One hundred volumes of handsomely bound books accompanied the manuscript volume.

Other highly prized testimonials of private friendship were sent to Mr. Harris, both from Glasgow and Edinburgh. Amongst the latter, it is grateful to record the following inscription, prefixed to a beautifully bound volume of Thomson's "New Universal Gazetteer and Geographical Dictionary":—"This Volume, figuratively emblematic of the Christian Unitarian's Hope, the gathering together of all Nations in one Bond of Union, irrespective of colour, caste, or climate; is, with esteem, love, and veneration, respectfully presented to the Rev. George Harris, Father of Scotland's Unitarian Christians, by and in grateful acknowledgment of the benefits they have received from his teachings and advice, which have ever tended to lead them to see God in every thing and everything in God.—May 19, 1845."

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

The annual visitation exercises of the Cambridge (U.S.) Divinity School took place on the 18th July, before a large and attentive audience. The graduating class numbered thirteen, being larger by more than one half, than that of last year.—The prospects of the Divinity School were never so flattering as at present, a greater number of students being connected with it now and a larger number about to enter, we believe, than ever before.—*Boston Christian World.*

The new Unitarian Church in New York, (Rev. Mr. Bellows's,) will be dedicated on the 22nd October. A Convention of Unitarians from all parts of the country will be held at that time and place.

NOTICE.

The hours of Public Worship on Sundays, in the Unitarian Chapel, Montreal, are:—Eleven in the Forenoon, and Half-past Seven in the Evening.—Free Sittings are provided for Strangers.