

makes sickness work for our good. It increases the pleasures of society, and it cheers the hours of solitude. It makes life joyful,—it makes death peaceful, and it gives eternal delights in heaven.

Not only is a good education better than wealth, but it often secures wealth. Thousands in our land are at this moment abounding in wealth, who if it had not been for a religious education, would have been poor as beggars. And thousands more, who are not possessed of great riches have, through the blessing of God on their good education, obtained a full share of all the enjoyments of life.

And a good education teaches men to make a good use of their riches. When riches are in the hands of ignorant and ungodly men, they often become a scourge. They make the owners miserable, and they make them troublers of their neighbours. But knowledge and religion teach men to use riches in such a way, as to make them blessings to themselves, and blessings to the world.

### UNITARIANISM.

Considering how very superficially all subjects, especially religious subjects, which require any reach or comprehension of thought, are wont to be viewed by the great mass of those to whom they are presented, it is no matter of surprise that liberal Christianity has been misapprehended in every possible manner. From the freedom and fearlessness of its character alone, it is calculated to raise up such clouds and hosts of alarms, misgivings, and prejudices, that its features and designs are almost necessarily distorted to the view of common beholders. Few will approach sufficiently near to it to form a right judgment of its features, and the greater number make a merit of keeping at so great a distance from it, that they must needs be deluded. Because it comes out and denies the truth of certain doctrines, which for centuries have been generally received as fundamental and essential doctrines of Christianity, it is charged with the denial of Christianity itself; and this charge is made by two very different parties, the one regarding unbelief with horror, and the other beholding it with approbation, but both uniting in this point, perhaps, that they wish the charge to prove well founded, because the former party would thus gain a victory, and the latter an accession of strength and respectability. One fact is confirmed to us by this state of things, which is, that the doctrines to which we just now alluded, and which we regard as the corruptions of our religion, such as the imputation of Adam's sin, the Trinity, and the popular scheme of the atonement, have been so intertwined and incorporated with the Christian system, that they have been esteemed, in almost universal opinion, as one and the same thing, with that system. This is just what we have always asserted. We have always asserted that the world in general had little idea of Christianity, as separate from those doctrines, and that this was one of the main reasons why they who could not believe the doctrines rejected Christianity. They thought that in disbelieving the former, they did in fact reject the latter. It is in perfect accordance, therefore, with this prevalent, though extremely erroneous notion, that we, who have discarded those doctrines, which we conceive to be gross misconceptions of Christianity, have been accused of an utter want of faith, and suspected of a corresponding laxity of principle. Men without faith and without principle, often remain in professed communion with a popular and lucrative establishment, the creed of which they silently condemn, but they do not voluntarily bring themselves into trouble by laboring for an unpopular belief, which they equally condemn. The course which we have taken sufficiently proves our seriousness. If we had been infidels, we should either have quietly refrained from touching the least portion of what is generally regarded and revered as Christianity, or we should have cast away the whole. But we have done neither. We have incurred the opprobrium of infidelity, and have been all the while laboring for the great Christian cause. When we determine to give up Christianity, we shall announce it ourselves. Till then, we claim to be believed, when we declare, that it is our reverence for its purity, and our desire for its increased influence alone, which induce us to separate it from those opinions which, in our view, greatly injure it. We are no more to be confounded with unbelievers, than the husbandman, who, with great care and toil, frees from weeds and stones the garden in which is his delight and nourishment, is to be confounded with the wild beasts who rush in and lay waste the beds, and trample down weeds and fruits and flowers in one common ruin. We may be wrong in our views of Christianity; that is certainly within the range of possibilities, but we know we entertain them as friends and not enemies to Chris-

tianity, and that a sincere regard for its honor and truth, and efficacy, is the motive which impels us to declare and diffuse them.

We believe, from abundant evidence both external and internal in the truth of the Scriptures. If we believe that Jesus of Nazareth was sent from God, as the Christian Scriptures say that he was, to announce God's will to men; that he proved the reality of his mission by the performance of miracles which no one could have performed unless God were with him; that he lived a life of spotless purity and virtue, and that after a violent and cruel death he rose from the grave,—if we believe this, and none of our accusers have as yet had the hardihood to charge us with denying it—then the Scriptures have an authority over us which is strictly divine, and consequently of the highest possible character. As soon as we confess that the precepts which appear in the Gospels as those of Jesus, were really uttered by him, and that he was in truth a teacher sent from God, then these precepts become to us the words of God, and of course an absolute rule of conduct. As soon as we acknowledge that the character of Jesus is accurately delineated by the evangelists, as honest historians, that moment does his example become our professed guide to virtue, happiness, and heaven. And we would now simply ask, whether, if a man receives the precepts of Jesus as truly divine commandments, and the life of Jesus as the model of his own, he could by any effort of faith or imagination, attribute a higher and more effectual authority to the writings which propose these commandments and that model? We ask, whether obeying Christ as an instructor and law-giver, sent to him by their common Father and God, he is not in the way of being a good Christian? We ask, whether he deserves to be called an infidel?

We believe in one only God, the self-existent Creator, and worship him alone; we revere, we love his Son Jesus Christ, and would observe his precepts, and enjoin others to observe them, as the word of God, and the way to God. If this faith is not serious, we are not yet acquainted with the signification of that term.

The single word, *life*, includes within its meaning much doctrine, and may serve as a test of moral opinions. What, then, do we think of life, of human, mortal life? We certainly do not look upon it as a sporting time, which may be wasted in the pursuit of amusements and trifles, or a grieving time which may be consumed in sadness and tears, but as a season of mental and moral advancement, of usefulness, of discipline, of preparation for a future state. We believe that of this our life God is the giver and upholder; that it is passed under his all-searching and perpetual sight; that he beholds what is good in us with complacency, and what is weak with pity, and what is evil with displeasure, and that he will reward the first, and assist the second, and punish the last.

Like others we are to die. With the faith which we entertain, this knowledge cannot make us gloomy, but we cannot be, in the view of so certain and momentous an event, reckless or heedless, or teach others to be so. We regard death as a change, a solemn one; and a change for which the manner of our life, its duty, and its piety, ought to make us at all times ready.

After death comes the judgment. Are we not to be judged? We believe that we are, and that we must render an account, and take the consequences of every action of our lives. Believing this, is it probable, is it possible, that we can be so palpably, so sadly inconsistent, as to be licentious in faith or practice, or induce others so to be? Is it possible that we can intentionally undervalue God's word, dishonor his Son, and trifle with his commandments; when we believe that we are soon to be summoned to our account before his judgment seat? Are we to be suspected of playing the fool and the madman at this astonishing rate? No; if our creed contained but this one article; if all that we believed, was, that we were to be judged by an Almighty and Holy God, according to the deeds done in the body, that single article ought to be sufficient to secure us against the charge of a want of seriousness.—*Greenwood.*

Prayer was not invented; it was born with the first sigh, the first joy, the first sorrow of the human heart; or rather, man was born to pray; to glorify God, or to implore him, was his only mission here below; all else perishes before him or with him; but the cry of glory, of admiration, or of love, which he raises towards the Creator, does not perish on his passing from the earth; it re-ascends, it resounds from age to age in the ear of the Almighty, like the reflection of his own magnificence. It is the only thing in man which is wholly divine, and which he can exhale with joy and pride. It is an homage to him to whom homage alone is due—the Infinite Being.—*Lamarline.*

## The Bible Christian.

MONTREAL, SEPTEMBER, 1848.

### PROTESTANTISM.

Strange things sometimes turn up by mere accident. As we were turning over a pile of old pamphlets and papers, a few days since, we met with a supplement to the "Church" newspaper, containing a charge or rather a portion of a charge (for the first eight sections are not in the supplement) "delivered to the clergy of the Diocese of Toronto, at the Triennial Visitation, held in the Cathedral Church of St. James, Toronto, on the 6th June, 1844, by the Honourable and Right Reverend John Strachan, D. D., Lord Bishop of Toronto." The first thing that struck us on looking at this document was the title, from which it appears very plainly that our Episcopal friends attach some importance to a name. Dr. Strachan evidently designs to amaze the simple people of this simple Province by his prodigious prefix and affix. An "Honourable and Right Reverend" "Lord Bishop" is not to be thought lightly of by the vulgar. Some, we know, regard the use of such titles in this country as an unauthorised assumption. For our own part we like brief modes of address, and our objection, therefore, would be mainly on account of their length. That the Episcopal Church in Canada has shown itself ready to put forth most arrogant pretensions is obvious to all. We regret this, because it brings essential injury to the proper Christianity of a country. All arrogance is contrary to the Gospel Spirit, and when exercised by one sect or party, has the effect of stirring up resistance in the others. Hence so many miserable religious broils, bringing the very name of religion into disrepute.

In the ninth section the Bishop enters with all due gravity upon the "surplice question." "In riding from place to place, it is very inconvenient [for the clergymen] to carry about with them both a surplice and a gown." So says the Bishop. He admits the fact of the inconvenience, and what is better, he makes up his mind to submit to it, and proceeds to "charge" accordingly. He "recommends the preference of the first to the second"—that is, of the surplice to the gown—"when both cannot be had." And this recommendation is not hastily or thoughtlessly given—it is not given without book. Thus he reasons—"because the surplice ought to be used on all occasions, except when preaching, and even then the authorities are divided, and, therefore, its use can at no time be improper." As we would not for the world do ought to disturb the even tenor of this solemn argument without proper notice, we think it right to state the italics are our own. Under the circumstances given, then, Dr. Strachan recommends the surplice. It is curious to observe how very differently different minds will view the same subject. Our recommendation in such a case would be entirely the other way. Not having studied "the authorities" (from which, however, there is probably not much to be gained; since they "are divided") we, in our simplicity, should argue somewhat after this fashion. The surplice is white, and the gown is black. Now it is universally known and admitted, that a white garment is more readily soiled than a black one. Therefore, to save yourselves and your laundresses trouble, leave the surplice at home, and put the gown in your travelling bag. But nature never intended us for a "Lord Bishop of Toronto." That is quite clear.

If the excellence of one section, however, can redeem the puerilities of another, we should be disposed to say that the remarks on preaching in the tenth, amply atone for those on the surplice in the ninth. "Faith and practice," he says, "are never separated in the Scriptures." "We should so preach the doctrines as to make them bear upon practice, and the practice as intimately connected with, and flowing from, the doctrines." "Frequent and earnest appeals to the practical precepts of the gospel must be made; minute descriptions of temper brought home,

and special expositions of the personal and social duties urged at one time by the most endearing, and at another by the most alarming motives." "We should avoid abstract and technical views, either of doctrine or duty, because they are apt to perplex our hearers, to chill their best feelings and make them think that religion is a business altogether separate from the occupations of life, and has little in common with human pursuits, hopes, and fears, but is unsocial and repulsive, narrow and forbidding. Such preaching can lead to no practical good. How much better to teach heavenly-mindedness and purity of heart, and that our religion, as taught by the Apostles, adapts itself to all the circumstances of life, and is a religion of love, sobriety, moderation, temperance and justice, giving a promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come." Such remarks as these are very worthy the attention of every preacher, whether Episcopal or non-Episcopal.

But it is not our intention to enter on a review of the Bishop's Charge. For such a task we have neither time nor taste just now. We took up the pen to notice a statement which appears in the twentieth section, and which involves a question touching the very nature of Protestantism. "The Church of England," he says, "has never recognised, much less maintained, the unqualified right of private judgment, in matters of religion." "Unlimited private judgment in religious matters is not the doctrine of the Reformation, nor of the Church of Christ in any age; for if the Bible were to be believed according to every man's interpretation, there could be no such thing as heresy or erroneous doctrine. Again, the Bible as explained by every man's private judgment or opinion is not the doctrine of Protestants. For one reads the Bible without any knowledge of the original language, or any help from, or deference to authority, which in all other matters he respects, and he becomes an Arian, or a Socinian, or a Quaker, &c. Private judgment must therefore, in matters of religion, be directed and controlled as our Church directs and controls it, otherwise there could be no such thing as religious error, or heresy, or dissent."

Now, on reading a passage such as the foregoing, the question is suggested. What is Protestantism? We have been accustomed to regard the term as denoting a sacred principle standing in open and distinct opposition to Romanism. Have we been right or wrong? Is such a principle essential to Protestantism, or may the term be legitimately employed to cloak a purely papal spirit? Shall any church, or outward ecclesiastical organization, authoritatively control the individual conscience? Or shall the individual stand free before God, and accountable to him only? These are the fundamental questions at issue between the Romanist and the Protestant. The Papal system asserts authority, and demands submission. The Protestant Reformation took its rise from a denial of the one and a refusal of the other. When Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of Wittenberg Church, his act was at once an assertion of individual right, and a rebellion against authority. Subsequently, at various times and various places—even before the Diet at Worms—he was called on to retract and submit. But standing on his rights as an individual man he refused to do either. His answer always was—"If I am not convinced by proof from Holy Scriptures, or cogent reasons, I neither can nor will retract; for it cannot be right for a Christian to speak against his conscience." In the face of this historical fact we do not see how any one can presume to say that private judgment—"unlimited private judgment in religious matters is not the doctrine of the Reformation." What authority was to satisfy Luther? None, save that of reason and Scripture. And who or what was to determine the point of its application, or the measure of its binding power? Who or what was to determine its decisions? His own judgment. His own private judgment, unlimited and unshackled. Unless his mind was legitimately convinced by proper argument drawn from those two sources only, he would not yield. He felt that it could not be right for a Christian to give outward acquiescence when his inner conscience was not legitimately satisfied. And he refused to do it. On the strength of his own judgment, he stood alone against the Church.

[To be concluded in our next.]