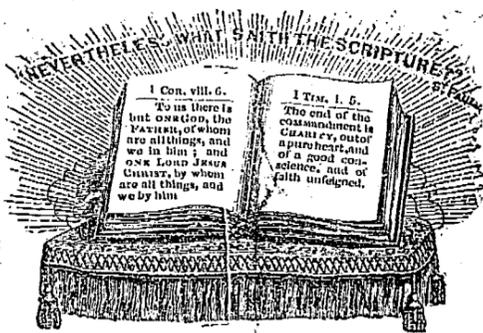


# THE BIBLE



# CHRISTIAN

TRUTH, HOLINESS,

LIBERTY, LOVE.

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## RELIGION—ITS UNIVERSAL PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE.

There is a distinction generally made between what is religious, and what is secular. This is well enough in common parlance, for purposes of convenience, as we divide and sub-divide the ocean into seas, bays, and inlets. But in more exact speech, no such distinction exists. The ocean is one and the same; and all things in this world are religious. There is religion in commerce, in steam-boats, and steam-presses, since they help the progress of Christianity. There is religion in politics, in constitutions, declarations of independence, and charters, since these affect the freedom of religion. On the other hand, there are politics in theology; whole systems of government, jurisprudence, commerce, art, and enterprise, included in justification by faith; the simple fact being, that all parts are mutually attracted to each other in a common system. Truth belongs to a system; it is not a detached and isolated thing at all.

While Christianity reveals her own presence and power by all the arts, enterprise, and freedom, by all the various sciences and pursuits which spring up in her path, like verdure after the rain, all the politics, commerce, jurisprudence, and enterprise of the world, are designed to aid the promotion, development, and triumph of Christianity. By this relation, every study, every pursuit, everything, if it be a true thing—if it be not true it is "nothing" at all—becomes invested with a mysterious importance. No man can tell the effects which will follow the smallest fact which science discovers, or art performs. Natural philosophy and theology might seem to have nothing in common, to be of all things remote. But the one in her appropriate work, discovers a power by which a little piece of steel is made to vibrate on the face of a dial—all of which you might imagine was a toy for a child. A little thing, to be sure, which science has picked up by the way; but it is no small thing at all. It is a great religious power; it circumnavigates the great globe; discovers new continents; re-establishes Christianity; advances the Church; brightens all the prospects of the world.

However it may have been in times subsequent to our revolution, it certainly is true now, that Christianity has her ablest advocates in all departments of intellectual and physical science, and her firmest believers among the intelligent friends of popular progress. The reason of this felicitous conjunction is, that Christian theology, liberated from ancient bondage and abuses, is here thoughtful, studious, free, open to the sun, promoting rational inquiry and independent action; and scattering her blessings on every hand. Scholars and statesmen, men of thought and men of action, have gradually been working their way to the conviction, that the Christian religion is the grand patron and ally of all secular improvement and progress; and whatever is done, to give to the institutions of religion a broader basis, is a sure pledge of all national prosperity. All that can be done to strengthen such sentiments is undergirding the great social experiment in which we are embarked. And frequent gatherings of men of literary and scientific pursuits, are something more than an opportunity for the indulgence of pleasant sympathies; a great practical power and promise. There is profound truth in the remark of M. Arago: "It is the men of study and thought, who, in the long run, govern the world; and the spirit of union among men of science is the certain presage of the union of nations and the good of the world."

As in ancient Rome, it was esteemed the mark of a good citizen, never to despair of the fortunes of the republic; so the good citizen of the world, whatever may be the aspect of particular events or times, should never despair of the fortunes of the human race, but should ever act upon the principle, that the longer he lives, and the more his observation extends, the more of truth, order, and benevolent design will be seen in the

universe. Every scholar, especially, should be in truth what Mr. Coleridge was wont to call himself, an "inveterate hoper," with his face all luminous, turned towards the sun-rising. We love to listen to the strains of ancient lyrics, Pindar and Ovid; but we do not believe that society is retrograde from an age of gold to one of iron; neither do we hold that it is stationary, fluctuating only within certain limits, in mutual encroachments of civilization and barbarism. Nor have we any faith in the indefinite perfectibility of human nature, according to the theory of Condorcet, and other French authors, much less in any political atheistic millennium, with modifications of society which are wiser than Providence and better than Scripture. But we do hold, and that most firmly, to the sober faith of the good old Bible of our fathers—that God designs to make this world the theatre of substantial, rational, religious joy, by means of the Gospel of his Son. What revolutions of time—what eclipses of truth—what trials of faith—what strugglings and sacrifices shall intervene before that result is attained, we cannot say. In lonely cells, in midnight toils, on bloody scaffolds, the scholars, the martyrs, the freemen of our race, have looked forward and upward, with hope and faith, saying *Dominus quædam*? and in these days of brighter promise, shame on us if our faces are not in the same direction, hopeful of greater changes, compared with which, the highest splendor that ever visited the earth, was but the shadow of death.—*New York Biblical Repository.*

## EVIDENCE OF DESIGN.

Whether indications of design, countless as they are inimitable, with which the whole universe is inscribed, are likely to be the result of chance, is a question which turns on principles of evidence with which man is so familiar that he cannot adopt the affirmative without contradicting all his judgments in every other analogous, or similar, or conceivable case. On the other hand, the objections to the conclusion that there is some Eternal Being of illimitable power and wisdom are precisely of the nature we have mentioned. A man makes a difficulty, we will suppose, (as well he may,) of conceiving that which has existed from eternity; but, as something certainly exists now, the denial of the existence of such a Being does not relieve from that difficulty, unless the objector plunges into another equally great—that of supposing it possible for the universe to have sprung into existence without a cause at all. This difficulty, then, is one which re-appears under any hypothesis. Again, we will suppose him to make a difficulty of the ideas of self-subsistence, of omnipresence without extension of parts—of power which creates out of nothing, and which acts simply by volition—of a knowledge cognizant of each thing and of all its relations—actual and possible, past, present, and to come—to every other thing, at every point of illimitable space, and in every moment of endless duration. But then these are difficulties, the solution of which clearly transcends the limits of the human understanding; and to deny the doctrines which seem established by evidence which we can appreciate, because we cannot solve difficulties which lie altogether beyond our capacities, seems like resolving that nothing shall be true but what we can fully comprehend—a principle again which, in numberless other cases, we neither can nor pretend to act upon.

It is much the same with the evidences of Christianity. Whether a certain amount and complexity of testimony are likely to be false; whether it is likely that not one but a number of men would endure ignominy, persecution, and the last extremities of torture, in support of an unprofitable lie; whether such an original fiction as Christianity—if it be fiction—is likely to have been the production of Galilean peasants; whether anything so sublime was to be expected from fools, or anything so holy from knaves; whether illiterate fraud was likely to be equal to such a wonderful fabrication; whether infinite art

may be expected from ignorance, or a perfectly natural and successful assumption of truth from imposture;—these and a multitude of like questions are precisely of the same nature, however they may be decided, with those with which the historian and the advocate, judges, and courts of law, are every day required to deal. On the other hand, whether miracles have ever been, or are ever likely to be admitted in the administration of the universe, is a question on which it would demand a far more comprehensive knowledge of that administration than we can possibly possess to justify an *a priori* decision. That they are possible is all that is required; and that, no consistent theist can deny. Other difficulties of Christianity, as Bishop Butler has so clearly shown, baffle us on every other hypothesis; they meet us as much in the "constitution of nature," as in the pages of revelation, and cannot consistently be pleaded against Christianity without being equally fatal to Theism.—*Edinburgh Review.*

## HOME.

"As a community, we need to be specially cautioned, that our greatest safety lies in our homes, where our sympathies and our duties are, and where our religious duties, surest recognized, may best be performed. The love of home is next to the love of God; it is intimately blended with this, inducing to it; and, as it regards states and individuals, it exerts the most salutary, as it regards the religious community, the most sanctifying, spiritualizing influence.

We will consider then, first, the usefulness of staying at home, and the beauty of fostering piety at home. That man, who has no home, is to be pitied. He who has no affection for the home stead is to be reproved. Those parents, who can neglect home, are to be despised; those children who avoid it will be ruined. A pleasant home is at once the greatest blessing and safeguard for the child; a cheerless, or a wicked home, at once the greatest curse and exposure. Our home associations are ingrained and will be permanent and our earliest affections will be our last. I can fancy that some friendly hearer is saying to himself, 'this is all very true, but very trite; we all know this.' True, I am aware that you all know it; and I would that your knowledge were reduced to practice. I know, too, that I am placed here not to delve in subtleties, in hopes of dragging to light some dazzling new truth, but to enforce in all sincerity, and with what power I can, the practice of old duties. Looking upon my parishioners in an affectionate spirit of sympathy; upon society at large with friendly interest; upon the times as full of good as of evil; I ask, before every discourse, what sin most needs rebuke; what danger, guard; what inexperience, advice; and what virtue, commendation? Under this last head we range domestic virtue. There seems to be a truant disposition in this community, and especially among the gentlemen; most of the evenings are spent abroad. The social circle, it would seem, is wanting in excitement; or man has so long been accustomed to live, move, and breathe in associations, as to recognize action only in combined action; the individual feels lost, his unaided efforts powerless, and his home dull. I am now speaking of the sad effects resulting from too frequent an absence from the domestic circle, in search of a wider sphere even of usefulness; from our losing a relish for the purest sympathies and sweetest affections of our nature. That man is cruel and unjust, who condemns the partner of his bosom to long hours of solitude, while he seeks excitement in committees, or lyceums, or, yet worse, misspends his hours at the feast or the card-table. Those nations are most respectable, as are those individuals most happy, among whom the pleasures of home are best known and appreciated. It has been said, that the dissipated French are at home, only when abroad; whereas the virtuous Swiss, and the respectable German, reluctantly quit the homestead, and long for their return.

Blessed are they whose pleasures are found by the side of their duties; who are to

be found at home, building by their own house. I have spoken of lyceums and their lectures, by no means with disrespect. So far as they take the place of more frivolous amusements; so far as science, or history, or literature, woos us from the maudlin sentiment, and shameless indecency of the modern drama, so far they are doing a good work. But this may be overdone; your children are expectants of knowledge; they may not roam the streets, exposed to all bad influences; most then do they require your kindness, when, from want of it, they are most exposed. Lend them your experience at home; give them a shield in the very word, and build up around your own house a wall of good tastes, and sweet influences. But here the philanthropist puts in a strong plea of disinterestedness, and the place-man talks of public spirit, and the agent tells the need of unceasing vigilance, and a zeal that never tires. But whence this sad necessity?—Why, for the very reason that men do not, will not, 'repair, every one over against his own house.' God and nature divide mankind into fathers, mothers, and children. Sin and passion only, call for travelling agencies, and committees of vigilance; our duty in the former relations complied with, the necessity for the latter will cease.—*Rev. W. J. Swell.*

## WAR.

The time has come when nations, as well as individuals, should learn that there is a better way to redress a wrong than to commit another of equal or greater magnitude. What if the governments of this country and Mexico have a dispute? The individuals who are engaged in this conflict have had no quarrel; and yet they meet for the first time on the field of slaughter. Why should they abuse their humanity, and worry and devour each other like wild beasts? There is no sufficient reason, yet there is a moral conflict. They labor to disfigure the image of God! to destroy his last and noblest work—to demolish the beautiful temple he has erected for the spirit to dwell in. When Caesar is thus employed, we cannot conscientiously enlist in his service. As the civil power is at all times liable to transcend its appropriate limits, it becomes necessary to exercise an intelligent discrimination. All will admit that there is a point beyond which the state can claim no jurisdiction, where the subject is accountable to no earthly tribunal. If it be true that man existed with all his individual duties and obligations before the origin of the government, it is sufficiently evident that he is subject to a superior power, and must be governed by a higher law. This authority he is not at liberty to disregard. He may be authorized to act in a legislative capacity, but he cannot abrogate the institutions of nature. The supreme law is not made to depend upon the peculiar circumstances of his social and political condition. It is a part of the original constitution of things. This, man is required to obey in all cases, while he is only bound to sustain the civil authority so far as it is intended to secure the ends of justice, and is likely to preserve the universal harmony. Now, if nature and God forbid that I should inflict an irreparable injury upon my fellow, the State has no right to legalize the deed. It is not for us to abolish the divine law and make one of our own. Inasmuch as all civil and political institutions derive their existence from man, it follows that their authority can never be paramount to the principles of nature, and the laws of God.

Again: I observe many who are engaged in this conflict are husbands and fathers. Their fidelity is pledged in the most solemn manner to those whose earthly destiny has been committed to their immediate keeping. The promise made at the altar is still binding. They have children, young and helpless, and of necessity entirely dependent upon their care. They are bound by the paternal relation, by the ties of nature and the laws of God, to watch over them, and, as far as possible, to shield them from all harm. whether in savage or civilized society, the parent cannot be insensible to the eternal ob-