

constitute the majority among the ministers, and much more so in the flocks. Our hearers generally entertain a strong repugnance for the exclusive or orthodox doctrines.

"The orthodox have, in general, the advantage of being well organized, and have near the government certain politicians who give them support. The liberal party has the advantage of numbers, but it does not act with the same unity; nevertheless, improvements in this respect have taken place. Our friends in the South of France form a numerous and compact mass, which with much success resists the efforts of exclusiveness."

The French Protestant Church, in regard to its outward relations, consists of two divisions, the Reformed Church and the Lutheran Church; a distinction which is founded in historical considerations, which have now nearly lost their importance. Of these two, comprising about 2,000,000 of souls, the Reformed is by far the larger, having 485 ministers, while the Lutheran division has 214. How many have renounced the Trinity, we have not the means to determine with exactness. Facts, however, within our knowledge, give us reason to think that not more than 200 of these clergymen still hold the doctrine in any form.—*Beard's Unitarianism.*

CHRISTIAN FESTIVALS.

We, Unitarians, are exceedingly jealous of forms and usages. Perhaps too much so. For ourselves, speaking as individuals, we should be glad, because we believe they may be made and in fact often are of positive utility, to see a few of the chief festivals and fasts which have for ages been commonly observed in the Christian world, brought again into universal observance. We refer especially to the seasons of Advent and of Lent, to Christmas Day and Good Friday, to Easter Sunday and Whitsunday. We do not mean that we would have them or either of them observed in form precisely as they are in any of the churches around us; but that the great points in the life of the Saviour should be made more distinctly the subjects of pious meditation, by associating them with certain dates in the calendar, and making the occasions of special religious services. We are persuaded that they may thus become helps to the growth of the devotional and religious spirit. It cannot be that the great body of Christendom is utterly wrong in such observances. We know the dangerous tendencies which are involved in them. We are fully aware how apt men are to substitute forms for realities, the letter for the spirit. We should shrink as quickly as any from the burdensome and unnecessary and superstitious multiplication of such observances which obtain in the Roman church, and to which apparently some would lead the Protestant Episcopal communion. We should deprecate anything which should induce Christians to think they were doing God or Christ service by constantly going to the temple to pray, while they neglected closet and family prayer. And yet even this we are willing to say; there is something delightful in the thought which strikes one so forcibly in Catholic countries, that the sanctuary is always open; so that the bowed and stricken, the contrite and penitent, the joyous and grateful heart, may at any moment, as the divine impulse prompts, turn aside from the great thoroughfares and whirl of life, and amid the solemn silence and "religious light" of the consecrated place seek its God. We have no fears that any among us will be too devout, too much given to prayer, too intent on the great concerns of the soul, too free of worldiness. And therefore it is, that in addition to the weekly Sabbath, that most holy and blessed provision of God for tired and struggling humanity, we should be glad to see all the professed followers of Jesus keep religiously the seasons of his Nativity, his Passion, his Resurrection, his Ascension, and the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Apostolic Church.—*N. Y. Christian Inquirer.*

THOUGHTS OF CHANNING.

[From a Selection by Rev. H. A. Miles.]

True religion is a life unfolded within, not something forced on us from abroad.
We never know a great character until something congenial to it has grown up within ourselves.
No punishment is so terrible as prosperous guilt.
Statesmen work in the dark, until the idea of right towers above expediency or wealth.
Every man is a volume, if you know how to read him.
Great effort from great motives, is the best definition of a happy life.
We cannot be happy beyond our love.
The Spirit of Society, not an outward institution, is the mighty power by which the hard lot of man is to be meliorated.
This country has the best materials for an army in a righteous cause, and the worst in a wicked one.

CHRISTIANITY ATTESTED BY MIRACLES.—We accept the evidence of Christian miracles, then, because they harmonize throughout with what we know of the history of divine Providence as manifest in the Universe. The book of nature and the book of revelation, the written word and the law stamped on the heart, are not at variance with each other, but contain essentially the same doctrine; one goes beyond, but does not contradict the other; it is the complement, but not the substitute, or its predecessor. It is a vain and foolish doctrine, then, that the miracles are useful only as evidences of Christianity, and may therefore safely be put aside if we have testimony enough without them. It is not so. Christianity is itself a miracle—the greatest of miracles—a special revelation from heaven—the authentic record of the latest visible appearance of God on earth—a direct interposition in the former order of events for the noblest of all ends. If it be not so, then is our faith vain, and these teachings also are vain. If our religion does not come from above, if it is not specially attested by the broad seal of heaven, then it is of no authority and no worth. It is no religion at all; for there is no conceivable distinction between a philosophical system of man's device, and a religion properly so called, but this, that the latter comes directly from God, while the former is the mere invention of a frail and erring being like ourselves. Nay, more, if Christianity is not miraculous and divine in its origin, it is an imposition, and its founder was a cheat; for no declaration was more decidedly made by him, no assertion is more frequently written out in the gospels, that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Messiah spoken of in the Scriptures, and waited for by the people, who came to make known the will of the Father, and to save mankind from their sins. In proof of this special commission and divine authority, he pointed to the wonderful works which he did; so that they who deny those works, who say that a miraculous event is incredible, and that it is foolish to suppose that any were ever specially commissioned by the Deity for any purpose, do in fact deny the claims which he put forth, and heap the coarsest reproach upon his memory.—*N. American Review.*

"Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; other to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Reading maketh a full man; conference, a ready man; and writing, an exact man. And, therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets, witty; the mathematics, subtle; natural philosophy, deep; morals, grave; logic and rhetoric, able to contend. *Abeunt studia moros.* (Studies become habits.)"—*Lord Bacon.*

A MOMENTOUS CHOICE.—God offers to every mind his choice between truth and repose. Take which you please, you can never have both. Between these, as a pendulum, man oscillates over. He in whom the love of repose predominates will accept the first creed, the first philosophy, the first political party he meets,—most likely his father's. He gets rest, commodity and reputation; but he shuts the door of truth. He in whom the love of truth predominates will keep himself aloof from all moorings and keep afloat. He will abstain from dogmatism, and recognize all the opposite negations between which, as walls, his being is swung. He submits to the inconvenience of suspense and imperfect opinions; but he is a candidate for truth, as the other is not, and respects the highest law of his being.—*R. W. Emerson.*

SERMONS.—"It amazes me ministers don't write better sermons—I am sick of the dull, prosy affairs," said a lady in the presence of a minister.
"But it is no easy matter, my good woman, to write good sermons," suggested the minister.
"Yes," rejoined the lady, "but you are so long about it, I could write one in half the time if I only had the text."
"Oh, if a text is all you want," said the parson, "I will furnish that. Take this one from Solomon—'It is better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, than in a wide house with a brawling woman.'"
"Do you mean me, sir," inquired the lady quickly.
"Oh, my good woman," was the grave response, "you will never make a good sermonizer; you are too soon in your application."—*Christian Inquirer.*

NOTICE.

The First Quarterly Meeting of the SOCIAL UNION in connection with the Montreal Unitarian Society, will be held on the evening of Monday, the 26th inst.—Chair to be taken at Half-past Seven o'clock.

Books may be obtained on loan from the Unitarian Congregational Library, on application to the Librarian, after any of the public services.

The Bible Christian.

MONTREAL, APRIL, 1847.

DECLENSION OF CALVINISM.

Not long ago a religious convention was held at Syracuse, New York, at which there were twenty-four delegates, the representatives of ten churches. The object of the meeting was to establish some visible bond of union different from the creed and polity of Calvinistic Presbyterianism, to which it would seem they had formerly been subjected. In such a movement we perceive gratifying evidence of a growing love for religious freedom and theological progress. We subjoin an extract from one of the papers submitted to the Convention, and ordered to be printed, on the subject of doctrine. It will be seen to exhibit a marked declension from the usual standard of Calvinism. It shews, in fact, a renunciation of some of the prominent doctrines of that system:—

"OF DOCTRINES.—Educated from early childhood in the Assembly's Catechisms, we still have unwavering faith in very many of its statements and expositions of Scripture. But the removal of ancient materializing systems of philosophy, and the progress of Biblical research, have convinced a majority of the Presbyterian ministry, that their Directory, in not a few of its teachings, is untrue and hurtful to the souls of men; and though some of us were slow in reaching this conclusion, we have at length felt compelled to adopt it. It is now our conviction, that this Confession of faith ought no longer to be imposed on the churches, even 'for substance of doctrine,'—were such a kind of subscription to ecclesiastical standards, not in itself of doubtful propriety.

For example; the Presbyterian Confession teaches that all men are not only involved in the consequences of Adam's sin, according to what are our natural social liabilities, (which we hold as undoubted truth,) but that *man's sin* is literally reckoned by God to be *our sin*, and for it we are all justly exposed to eternal wrath; so that, for the first transgression committed in Eden, before we were conscious or capable of voluntary disobedience, God accounts us wicked, and sentences the whole human family to Hell. [Confession, chap. 6, § 2, 4, 5, 6.] It teaches further, that by the fall, our race have lost all ability to will that which is good, being 'disabled and made opposite,' as well as utterly indisposed;—so that human freedom upon this theory, consists in having the power to commit sin, but in having no ability of will to refrain from sin. Nor is it possible, according to the book, for one to choose what is spiritually good, when aided by the ordinary influences of the Spirit; to do this, requires 'special grace;' [chap. 3, § 4, and 9, § 2, 3.] Christ, it is said, died for only a part of mankind, or for the elect: Legitimately flowing from such views of original sin, is the statement that elect infants, dying young are saved; while others taken from the world in infancy go to hell: [chap. 10, § 3, 4.] Consistently with all this, is the doctrine of Reprobation,—which taken in its connexion, stands thus:—the whole human race are depraved and disabled, so that they cannot render spiritual obedience or choose what is good, without special grace; but this grace God withholds from the non-elect: and then fore-ordains them to eternal wrath for their sins; which sins, in the first instance, they did not commit, but it was imputed to them from Adam; and their sins afterwards, according to the book, they could not help: And this is the decree of Reprobation, which according to the Presbyterian standard, dooms unknown multitudes to hell for ever, that they may be to the praise of the glory of God's justice: [Chap. 3, § 6, and Catechism, Ques. 13.]

In exposing these dreadful dogmas, (and there are others inseparably connected with them, upon which we have not time to dwell,) it is not forgotten that some of our own fathers and mothers of blessed memory lived and died more or less imbued with such faith. But we suppose this came to pass through the influence of time-hallowed tradition, and a sensuous philosophy, which had become interwoven with the pure word, and seemed to leave no alternative, but to embrace these opinions, or reject the Bible. Now that clearer views of Scripture truth prevail throughout the Church, and since a large proportion of the Presbyterian Ministry themselves, utterly repudiate those dogmas, it seems wrong that such a book should remain the acknowledged standard of the denomination;—or that the mass of disciples, (who but very imperfectly understand its teachings,) should in any sort have their consciences bound by it. Sure we are, that if pains had been taken to spread among their congregations the Presbyterian Confession, and make them understand it,—not one quarter of those who have done so, would have joined that communion.

MISSIONARY EFFORTS IN CANADA.

[The following article on the subject of Unitarian Missions in Canada has been furnished by a very warm friend of the cause of liberal Christianity. We consider the topic one of great importance. The Unitarian congregation of this city has scarcely yet passed its infancy; so that we should hardly expect any extensive missionary operations to originate with it at present. We would willingly, however, keep our friends here in remembrance of the work that is before them, and let us hope that the day is not far distant when they shall find themselves both able and willing to engage in it.]

We should bear in mind, that for the last seventeen years, immigration by the St. Lawrence, and through the seaports of the United States, has added to the population of this province an average increase of more than 50,000 per annum. Of this increase, a portion are Unitarians. In this city, the Unitarians of European origin are, to the gross population, in a proportion of about four to a thousand.* Now taking the population of Upper Canada at 750,000, and assuming Unitarians to bear the same ratio in that province to the gross population, as those of European origin do to that of Montreal, we would have three thousand of our brethren without preachers. Three thousand Unitarians left destitute, obliged to join Episcopacy, Calvinism, or Methodism, or to remain without enjoying the ordinances of religion! Some of your readers may be startled at this calculated number of our destitute brethren in Upper Canada; and inclined to doubt its accuracy. But, let me ask you, is it probable that less than 3000 Unitarians came to our shores among the 900,000 immigrants that have arrived since 1827?

By missionary efforts, we would increase the number of our worshipping societies. In other Christian denominations, missionaries, in almost every instance, find congregations, and settle down as pastors. I have no doubt that such would be the result among us, if we were zealous enough to make the attempt; and that the sending forth of six missionaries would result in the establishment of six congregations within five years.

But it is not among the immigrant population only that missionaries would find hearers. Among the native Canadians, speaking the English language, many Unitarians exist. This class of our population is distinguished for candid, enquiring minds. They are deserting the antiquated errors of the prevalent sects, and it may be truly said that in Upper Canada, and among the Protestant portion of Lower Canada, the current of public opinion is flowing successfully in the channels of reformation, and bearing to oblivion the antiquated doctrines of prevalent orthodoxy. Within a limited number of years about forty congregations have been gathered together, who, under various denominational titles, have rejected the doctrine of the Trinity. There is a readiness to hear on the part of the people,—a desire to judge for themselves,—and a decided partiality towards the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice,—which invites us to spread God's pure truth before them. This favorable state of public sentiment ought to be attended to; and let us see that we do not rest satisfied with merely saying it *ought* to be done, but that we bestir ourselves to *do* it.

It would greatly facilitate the progress of Unitarianism in Canada, if we could bring pious young men, natives of the colony, into the ministry. We must look forward in the hope that such persons may be easily found. The Meadville Theological School offers a favourable means of ministerial education. Let us endeavour to find such young men and send them into the field, trusting to God for his blessing and his increase.

Let not Unitarians be deterred from missionary efforts by the smallness of their numbers. It is frequently the mission of small numbers to achieve great ends. Look at the Baptist denomination, one of the smallest sects in Canada, and, from the exclusiveness of their discipline, likely to remain so, and yet they have erected a college, one of the handsomest or-

* The Unitarians of all origins in Montreal stand in the proportion of upwards of six to a thousand.—*Ed. B. C.*