

DOCTRINE.

JESUS KNOCKETH.

Behold I stand at the door and knock.—Rev. iii. 20.  
Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.—St. Matthew, xxv. 40.

Let your lamp be trimmed and burning,  
Ever waiting for the Lord,  
Standing ready when he knocketh,  
Listening to obey his word,  
Know ye not the holy influence,  
That shall now create the earth?  
'Tis the angels' peaceful chorus,  
Chanted at the Saviour's birth.

Jesus knocketh—when the weary  
Travel-worn, and wasted one,  
Asks for rest, and food and comfort,  
While his lingering sands may run—  
Listen to his earnest pleading,  
Christ himself hath said to thee,  
"If ye help my weary brother,  
Ye have done it unto me.

Jesus knocketh—when the sinner  
Bowed with grief he cannot bear,  
Seeks some gentle human bosom  
To assuage his weight of care;  
Ye in weakness tread the pathways,  
Where this lone one stumbling fell,  
Stretch a friendly hand to aid him,  
For he is a brother still.

Jesus knocketh—when the prisoner  
Begs of you to give him light,  
Flesh and soul, by sin and error,  
Bound in chains of darkest night,  
Jesus speaks in tones of anguish,  
"By my stripes I made him free,  
Will ye slay again your Saviour,  
On the Cross of Calvary?"

Jesus knocketh—when the warrior,  
Soiled with streams of human gore,  
From the field of carnage carried  
Fights in dreams his battles o'er.  
Pray—that swords be turned to ploughshares,  
Tumults, wars, and fighting cease,  
Nation rise not against nation,  
But all hail the Prince of Peace.

For the last time, Jesus knocketh—  
Death is near, the goal is won;  
Ye shall sit with Christ in heaven  
If like him ye overcome.  
And as odors from the flowerets  
Long remain, though hues decay,  
So the influence of your labor  
Will not pass with life away.

SPEECH OF SIR FRANCIS LE HUNTE,  
As Chairman of the late Meeting of the Irish  
UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN SOCIETY, held in Dublin  
on the 9th of May last.

Dear Christian Friends, (for such I trust you will permit me to address you.)—You have, in the absence of the President of the Irish Unitarian Christian Society, placed me in a situation which, however honourable, I should, as a stranger, have declined occupying, were it not for the assurance which I feel that I shall receive from you the kind consideration due to a Christian brother and fellow-labourer in the good work of propagating the great truths which distinguish us as a body, and which, however opposed by superstition and bigotry, we believe, and, I trust, know, by our own personal experience, to be all-powerful in promoting "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Whilst we freely and cheerfully yield to our fellow Christians of other denominations, the praise and honour which are their due.—whilst we admit that they have, each of them, such glimpses of divine truth as produce much of human happiness and virtue,—we are persuaded in our own minds, by our own experience, that the conceptions which we have, as Unitarian Christians, formed of the attributes of God are so elevated, so pure, so free from degrading superstition, that to disseminate them is a duty which we owe to our fellow-men, and the fulfilment of which we cannot decline, if we wish to preserve our own inward peace, our consistency as lovers of truth, and the character which belongs to the children of God and the disciples of Jesus. Far from us, dear Christian friends, be the indolence and indifference which would lead us to decline, through good report and through evil report, bearing our cheerful testimony to the gladdening truths which we have received: a testimony which requires each of us, my Unitarian brethren, to be a burning and a shining light, so that they who differ from us may, by seeing our good works and labours of love, not only glorify our Father which is in heaven, but be led to inquire into the true character of our pure and simple faith, at present little understood, and, in consequence, much reviled. In the present state of society, the silent teaching of a good man's life most effectively recommends the faith by which he is guided and governed,—may we, dear Christian friends, with our lips, when opportunities offer, and,

much more, in our lives, at all times, give abundant evidence that we hold fellowship with God, the Father of our spirits, and with his Son, our Saviour and Redeemer. Having received into our hearts, as we hope and believe, the faith once delivered unto the saints, let us contend for it, as God's dear children, with only those weapons which the armory of love supplies, and which the wisdom which is from above will allow us to handle. I cannot conclude this brief address without offering a few words of advice to the young persons who hear me. Allow me, dear young friends, in a spirit of gentleness and love, to urge upon you the calm yet earnest consideration of the great truths which distinguish the Unitarian Christian body, to which, I presume, most of you belong. Be assured of the vast importance of correct views of divine truth, in its widest signification, as respects the character of that great Being who created us in his own image, who sustains us by his power, and whose presence, if we are to enjoy true happiness, we must at all times feel. Is it, dear young friends, a matter of indifference whether the God whom you love and worship, whom you regard as the Creator and Ruler of the world, in which you live, and of the vast universe which you behold—is it a matter of indifference, I would ask you, whether this Almighty Being is regarded by you as a God of infinite love, whose mercy endureth for ever, or as a jealous and vengeful God, who condemns countless millions of his rational creatures to endless excruciating torments? No, of all the important truths revealed to us, this is the most important, that the God who made us is our Father, and that "like as a Father pitieeth his children," so the Lord our God "pitieeth them that fear him." Again—Consider, I pray you, what an important influence it must have on your peace and happiness through life, whether you regard the lovely creation by which you are surrounded as abiding and suffering under God's curse, and man, as born the heir of a corrupt and fallen nature, which can only be restored to the divine image by a mysterious operation from without; or whether (which I believe to be the truth) the world in which we dwell is no less replete with manifestations of its Creator's wisdom and love, than it is with forms of beauty designed to ravish our hearts, and to elevate and ennoble our natures; and man, as placed in this great theatre of action, that he may, by a right use of his powers, originally given him for this end, become, day by day, so purified in heart and life, as to be finally a fit inhabitant of that better country, a happy citizen of that glorious city whose Builder and Maker is God. Prove all things, hold fast that which is good, avoid all appearance of evil; especially avoid, as you value your peace of mind, and as you love virtue, appearing to be other than what you really are; hypocrisy is the blight of the soul, destroying its beauty, and polluting the sources of its purest joys. When circumstances require it, make a candid and manly confession of your faith, whatever may be the consequence of doing so. Finally, my dear young friends, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things, and the peace of God shall be with you. In conclusion, dear Christian friends, partakers, I trust, in one common faith, sharers with me in the same joys and hopes, permit me, in the midst of you, to express the warm attachment which I feel to the doctrines which we, as Unitarian Christians, profess to believe; doctrines which enlightened reason approves, and which animate the best affections and sympathies of the heart; doctrines which, whilst they free us from a fearful thralldom, open to us such views of providence and love as fill our hearts with joy and peace in believing them. Let me add, dear friends, that to value these doctrines we must, in very truth, believe them, and so believe them that they form a part of our inner being. Be it ever kept in mind that the "Negation of error is not enough to secure a living foundation for the truth." To have renounced error is much, but not enough; far from it, many have done so who are now living without God in the world, having neither faith nor hope. May we, dear friends, never rest satisfied with the mere negation of error. Truth, lovely and immortal, invites us to search after her in the book of revelation, in the book of nature, in our own hearts, and in every way by which she reveals herself to those who diligently seek her. May God guide us unto the knowledge of all truth; and may we, by a holy life, devoted to his service and to the advancement of the dearest and highest interests of our fellow-men, so recommend the truths revealed to us, that others may be stimulated diligently to seek this pearl of great price! Amen.

RELIGIOUS REFORM ON THE CONTINENT OF EUROPE.

"THE PROTESTANT FRIENDS."

The following passage from Dr. Beard's Essay on Anti-Trinitarianism in Germany will convey to our readers an idea of the Progress of Religious Reform in that country. The "Protestant Friends" it will be observed are an Association of Religious Reformers:—

At the head of the "Protestant Friends" stands the Pastor Ullrich, of Pömmelie, near Schönbeck, in the Grand Duchy of Saxony, who, in the Spring of 1841, invited several brethren in the ministry to meet with him periodically, in order to take such measures as might seem best fitted to counteract the efforts of the partisans of religious reaction, and secure for a scriptural and rational Christianity the development it needed, and the reception it deserved. The first assembly took place at Gnadau, on the 29th June, 1841, when sixteen clergymen assembled. Another meeting was appointed for the ensuing Michaelmas, to be held at Halle, when the number present amounted to fifty-six. From this time two meetings took place yearly at Köthen, at which the numbers rose, by degrees, to above two thousand, composed of laity and ministers of religion, who enjoyed equal privileges in originating and supporting measures, and putting forth opinions. These periodical meetings, the proceedings and speeches in which were speedily disseminated throughout Germany, produced a great impression on the public mind, already to a great extent prepared to renounce the shadowy forms of a deceased orthodoxy. Its friends, however, grew alarmed, and began a very vigorous, unsparring, and, in some respects, unscrupulous attack on the maintainers of this effort for a popular religious reform in the Protestant Church, employing hard words, anathemas, and denunciations, as well as arguments. The power of the state was invoked against the mis-believers, and even the immediate succour of Heaven was implored. In the *Evangelischen Kirchenzeitung*, Guericke declared the "Protestant Friends" enemies of the Church, and demanded against them the intervention of the magistrate. Supported by this authority, a clergyman at a Missionary Meeting held in Berlin, June 6th, 1844, proposed that, in the name of the "Triune God," they should be excluded from the Church. The motion was lost. On the next day, after a violent speech against them, made by another minister, the whole assembly threw themselves on their knees, and prayed for the conversion of their peccant brethren. This new species of argument found acceptance, and was speedily imitated in many places, by small knots of orthodox believers. Ten clergymen put forth at Neuhaldensleben a species of excommunication. The excitement rose to a great height. Yet the majority, both of clergy and laity, kept themselves free from Trinitarian contagion. This was proved at the Synods of Prussian clergymen, which took place in the year 1844. At Magdeburg, out of 179 ministers, 150 declared for the New School, and only 29 for orthodoxy. The meetings of "the Friends of Light" became more frequented, more animated, and more influential. An assembly, held May 15, 1845, was so numerous (from two to three thousand), that it was adjourned to the open air. Herr Ullrich brought forward thirteen propositions which contained the principles of the new Reform. The numbers and respectability and social weight of this assembly, gave great encouragement and a new impulse to the "Protestant Friends," who forthwith shewed much activity and untiring zeal in holding district meetings. Meanwhile, Government had grown uneasy; and at length, encouraged by their orthodox assailants, issued its prohibition, commanding the Reformers to desist from these popular manifestations of their sentiments, power, and determination. The last assembly was held at Asse, a hill in the Duchy of Brunswick. This intervention on the part of Prussia and Saxony was met by obedience and protests. Ullrich and his associates turned all their energy to the Press, which is now their chief arm in the warfare against religious corruption. During the controversy, the established Confessions of Faith have been brought forward, on one side with the intention of enforcing their authority, on the other for the purpose of showing their contrariety to Scripture, and, in consequence, their invalidity. The most important position of the Unitarian party is, that in these Confessions of Faith the Scripture is set above all human declarations, and declared to be the only test of Christian truth. Thus the Smalkald Articles (ii, 2, 308), declare "the Word of God shall determine points of faith, apart from which

no one, not even an angel, shall have any authority;" and "the Formulary of agreement" says, "the Holy Scripture remains the only judge, rule, and test, according to which, as the sole touchstone, ought and must all doctrines be learnt and determined."

WHAT IS PREACHING?

What is preaching? is a question to which there would probably be as many replies as to, What is truth? Almost every minister, and almost every man, has his own taste, and his own standard, and his own weight, and his own measure on this subject. One man thinks, that to preach means accurately to divide a given topic, logically to illustrate it, and to observe a perfect but cold propriety through the various steps and stages of the discourse. This is the mechanical plan of preaching. Another imagines preaching to be the exposition of a particular passage of scripture, bringing out from it all that is in it, and nothing more. This is the textual idea of preaching. Another cares not a straw for a sermon, if it do not contain a train of rigid argumentation, diversified by occasional bursts of party rage, and strong squirts of the *odium theologicum*. This is the polemical idea of preaching. Another likes no preaching but what contains a string of appeals and queries and adjurations, unconnected with principles, unsupported by reasonings, and loose as a rope of sand. This is called, though falsely, practical preaching. Another wants a sermon to be a series of electrical shocks—one burst from beginning to end; the clouds returning after the rain, and no cotton so thick, and no conscience so hard as to exclude or resist the perpetual tumult. This is the clap-trap idea of preaching. Another wants flowers, whether natural and fresh from the soil, or artificial and faded, it does not matter; if he do but get flowers, and hear them rustling about his ears, in the breeze of brilliant declamation, he is quite satisfied, whether they keep him languishingly awake, or lull him into dreamy repose. This is the florid, or Corinthian idea of preaching. Another is content with exclamations: he is not pleased unless every other sentence begin with Oh; the interjection Ah, has to him a peculiarly pathetic sound: it seems to melt into his midriff like snow; and that preacher would be his Magnus Apollo, who should say, "Oh, we remark in the next place." This is the interjectional idea of preaching. Another desiderates chiefly delivery: no minister is a favourite unless his voice be musical, and his attitude smack of the boards; unless he indulge in a profusion of studied declamation, pointing to the four winds when he names them, and laying his hand gently on the heart, when he wishes to indicate that interesting organ. This is the material or Anthropomorphic idea of preaching. Another judges of a sermon by its length, and likes it, either because it is an hour, or because it is only the half of the time. This is the arithmetical idea of preaching. One man abuses a sermon, because he does not understand it; another admires it, because he does not understand it; and a third admires it, because he does not understand it. One man constantly asks, ere giving his verdict, What do the best judges say? Another, with some favourite model in his eye, says, What is this to Hall, or Chalmers, or Thomson? One man likes a discourse to be as full of ideas as a pudding of plums. Another prefers a sermon in which the gold, or even the brass, is beat so thin, that it trembles before the zephyr. A third likes one great general idea to pervade a sermon, and to gather round it, by the force of attraction, a host of illustrations. One likes a discourse endlessly subdivided, all hedges and ditches. Another would have it limitless, free and unenclosed, as a moor or a mountain. One wishes it to be gemmed with Scripture, and with nothing else. Another likes to see the Cairngorm pebbles of earthly poetry sparingly intermixed with the inestimable jewels of celestial song. One would hear a sermon in within very strict-laced limitations. Another would allow it a wide and varied range; to draw illustrations from the meanest and from the loftiest objects—from the flower and the star—from the ant and the leviathan—from the glow-worm under the hedge, and from that final conflagration which shall overwhelm the universe in billows of fire. And so on, *ad infinitum*.—Geo. Gilfillan.

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