

**CIHM
Microfiche
Series
(Monographs)**

**ICMH
Collection de
microfiches
(monographies)**



Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions / Institut canadien de microreproductions historiques

© 1994

Technical and Bibliographic Notes / Notes techniques et bibliographiques

The Institute has attempted to obtain the best original copy available for filming. Features of this copy which may be bibliographically unique, which may alter any of the images in the reproduction, or which may significantly change the usual method of filming, are checked below.

L'Institut a microfilmé le meilleur exemplaire qu'il lui a été possible de se procurer. Les détails de cet exemplaire qui sont peut-être uniques du point de vue bibliographique, qui peuvent modifier une image reproduite, ou qui peuvent exiger une modification dans la méthode normale de filmage sont indiqués ci-dessous.

- Coloured covers/
Couverture de couleur
- Covers damaged/
Couverture endommagée
- Covers restored and/or laminated/
Couverture restaurée et/ou pelliculée
- Cover title missing/
Le titre de couverture manque
- Coloured maps/
Cartes géographiques en couleur
- Coloured ink (i.e. other than blue or black)/
Encre de couleur (i.e. autre que bleue ou noire)
- Coloured plates and/or illustrations/
Planches et/ou illustrations en couleur
- Bound with other material/
Relié avec d'autres documents
- Tight binding may cause shadows or distortion
along interior margin/
La reliure serrée peut causer de l'ombre ou de la
distorsion le long de la marge intérieure
- Blank leaves added during restoration may appear
within the text. Whenever possible, these have
been omitted from filming/
Il se peut que certaines pages blanches ajoutées
lors d'une restauration apparaissent dans le texte,
mais, lorsque cela était possible, ces pages n'ont
pas été filmées.

- Coloured pages/
Pages de couleur
- Pages damaged/
Pages endommagées
- Pages restored and/or laminated/
Pages restaurées et/ou pelliculées
- Pages discoloured, stained or foxed/
Pages décolorées, tachetées ou piquées
- Pages detached/
Pages détachées
- Showthrough/
Transparence
- Quality of print varies/
Qualité inégale de l'impression
- Continuous pagination/
Pagination continue
- Includes index(es)/
Comprend un (des) index
- Title on header taken from: /
Le titre de l'en-tête provient:
- Title page of issue/
Page de titre de la livraison
- Caption of issue/
Titre de départ de la livraison
- Masthead/
Générique (périodiques) de la livraison

- Additional comments: /
Commentaires supplémentaires:

This item is filmed at the reduction ratio checked below/
Ce document est filmé au taux de réduction indiqué ci-dessous.

10X	14X	18X	22X	26X	30X
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12X	16X	20X	24X	28X	32X

The copy filmed here has been reproduced thanks to the generosity of:

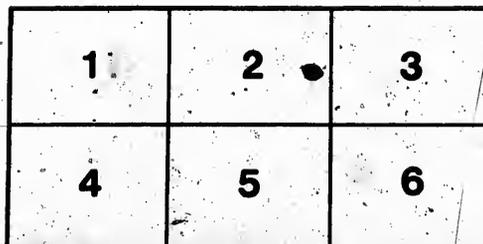
Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library
Baldwin Room

The images appearing here are the best quality possible considering the condition and legibility of the original copy and in keeping with the filming contract specifications.

Original copies in printed paper covers are filmed beginning with the front cover and ending on the last page with a printed or illustrated impression, or the back cover when appropriate. All other original copies are filmed beginning on the first page with a printed or illustrated impression, and ending on the last page with a printed or illustrated impression.

The last recorded frame on each microfiche shall contain the symbol \rightarrow (meaning "CONTINUED"), or the symbol ∇ (meaning "END"), whichever applies.

Maps, plates, charts, etc., may be filmed at different reduction ratios. Those too large to be entirely included in one exposure are filmed beginning in the upper left hand corner, left to right and top to bottom, as many frames as required. The following diagrams illustrate the method:



L'exemplaire filmé fut reproduit grâce à la générosité de:

Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library
Baldwin Room

Les images suivantes ont été reproduites avec le plus grand soin, compte tenu de la condition et de la netteté de l'exemplaire filmé, et en conformité avec les conditions du contrat de filmage.

Les exemplaires originaux dont la couverture en papier est imprimée sont filmés en commençant par le premier plat et en terminant soit par la dernière page qui comporte une empreinte d'impression ou d'illustration, soit par le second plat, selon le cas. Tous les autres exemplaires originaux sont filmés en commençant par la première page qui comporte une empreinte d'impression ou d'illustration et en terminant par la dernière page qui comporte une telle empreinte.

Un des symboles suivants apparaît sur la dernière image de chaque microfiche, selon le cas: le symbole \rightarrow signifie "A SUIVRE", le symbole ∇ signifie "FIN".

Les cartes, planches, tableaux, etc., peuvent être filmés à des taux de réduction différents. Lorsque le document est trop grand pour être reproduit en un seul cliché, il est filmé à partir de l'angle supérieur gauche, de gauche à droite, et de haut en bas, en prenant le nombre d'images nécessaire. Les diagrammes suivants illustrent la méthode.

MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



1.50

1.56

1.63

1.71

1.80

1.88

1.96

2.00

2.05

2.10

2.15

2.20

2.25

2.30

2.35

2.40

2.45

2.50

2.55

2.60

2.65

2.70

2.75

2.80

2.85

2.90

2.95

3.00

3.05

3.10

3.15

3.20

3.25

3.30

3.35

3.40

3.45

3.50

3.55

3.60



APPLIED IMAGE Inc

1653 East Main Street
Rochester, New York 14609 USA
(716) 482 - 0300 - Phone
(716) 288 - 5989 - Fax

G2

E. Corolier
1853-54

A

PASTORAL LETTER

TO THE

CHRISTIAN CONGREGATION

ASSEMBLING FOR WORSHIP AND EDIFICATION

IN THE

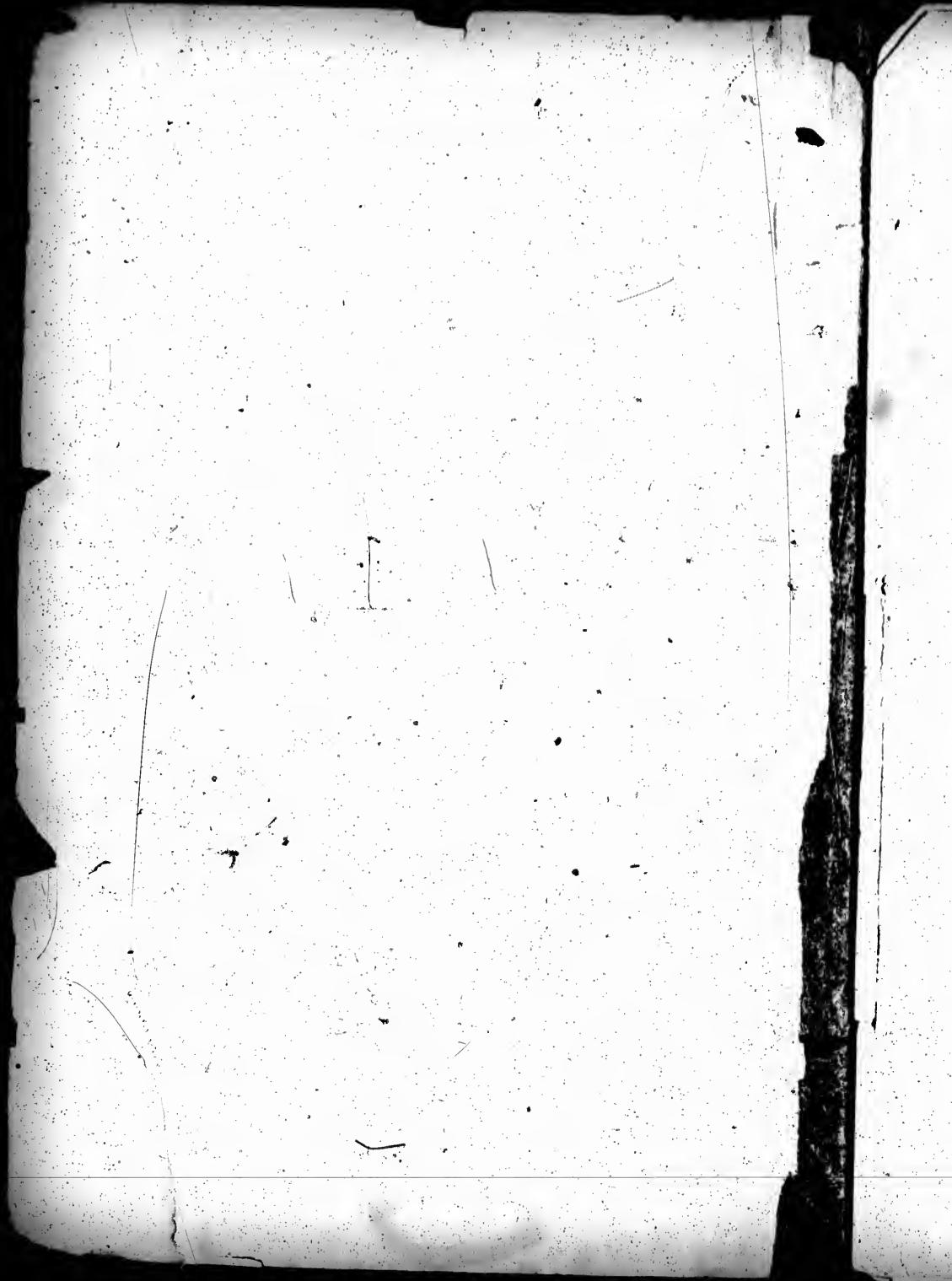
UNITARIAN CHURCH, MONTREAL

From St. Louis
May 1962

MONTREAL:

PRINTED BY H. & G. M. ROSE, 34 GREAT ST. JAMES STREET.

1853.



PASTORAL LETTER, &c.

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS AND BRETHREN,

Ten years have elapsed to-day since I first appeared in this city as a Christian minister. It was on Sunday, 5th Nov., 1843, that I first stood in a very unpretending room in the square just below where our church now stands, to conduct the public worship, and take pastoral charge, of your congregation. It was not, I hope, without a due sense of the great responsibility of the undertaking that I left my native land beyond the sea to enter on the work of the ministry here. Nor has it been, I hope, without a due sense of the great responsibility of the office that I have held it to this day.

It has seemed to me good and desirable, that, at the close of a period of ten years, I should address you in some more special form, on subjects closely connected with the interests of our worshipping society, and therefore I write this pastoral letter. I feel that the ten years just past have been ten years of great importance in my life, and certainly they have been years of great importance, also, in your existence as a Christian body. It becometh us all to mark the rolling years, and wisely note what we have done, and what we have left undone. I hope I shall not be tedious in this letter. I trust I shall secure your attention

while I speak of topics of high and mutual interest. May God grant to me the spirit of wisdom while I write, and to you the spirit of wisdom while you read, so that, writing and reading in the same spirit, we may be moved to greater efforts in the cause of our Master, Jesus Christ—to more especial consecration of ourselves to the great and sacred ends designated by his gospel.

The invitation on which I came here as minister, was signed by nineteen persons; and, on my arrival, I found a congregation about three times that number. This number was not large, but I trusted that they would make up in earnestness of purpose what they lacked in numerical importance. Nor is it improper to say here that I was led to indulge this hope from some communications which were shown to me, addressed by one of your members to a friend in Ireland. The character of those communications influenced me considerably in accepting the invitation. Had I not seen ground to hope for efficient aid from those who called me, I should scarcely have ventured to enter on a work of so much responsibility as the permanent establishment of a Unitarian Congregation in this city. A minister, for the success of his work in any portion of the great vineyard, must depend not only on himself, but on God, and on his brethren. He must look to God for help, in the first place; but he must also look to his fellowmen, among whom his lot is cast. If these continue adverse or indifferent, the greatest efforts of his own must needs fail of any satisfactory result. From the suspected position which Unitarian views of the gospel still occupy in the general community, the difficulty of establishing a Unitarian congregation is obviously enhanced, and hence a more obvious demand for earnest dévotion and persevering co-operation on the part of those who feel the want thereof, and desire the success of the undertaking.

I have received effective aid in my ministerial labors, from the sympathy and co-operation of those who called me, and from many others whose names do not appear at the invitation. Ten years have brought us many and trying changes, but they have also tripled the numbers on our congregational list; and brought many friends to whom, as minister, I am deeply indebted for their constant sympathy and unwearied co-operation. I feel that it is to these, more than to anything else, that we are indebted, under God, for whatever success has accompanied us. No one ought to appreciate more readily than a Unitarian minister, placed at an outpost, the value of such co-operation. Largely cut off from the religious sympathies of the general community, he is thrown more entirely on those of his own people. Let him be ever so strong in body and mind, he will oftentimes feel his own weakness in the constant demand that is made on the resources of both. The weight of his responsibilities will sometimes seem crushing to him. It is then, especially, that the sustained sympathy and co-operation of his people become grateful and valuable. Their familiar and faithful presence in the pews is a source of strength and encouragement to him in the pulpit. Earnest and interested hearers will make even a dull man eloquent. While indifference in the pews, or absence from them, will gradually make an eloquent man dull. Even with little pretension to forcible speech, a sincere and conscientious minister may make the pulpit a place of high usefulness to his hearers. But the most commanding and persuasive voice will fail to move or instruct those who do not feel sufficient interest to give their presence and attention.

In the commencement of any undertaking, or the announcement of any novel views, there will always be a class of persons interested, on whom it would scarcely be safe to rely for well-

sustained support and co-operation. . The warmth of their first impulse gradually cools down to indifference, or other interests spring up which attract and absorb the attention. A religious undertaking is fully as much exposed to such drawbacks as any other. In such an undertaking nothing but a profound and abiding conviction of its importance—nothing but a veritable sense of the value and power of religion—can secure a well-sustained fidelity. And if all among us have not been equally faithful, we ought not dwell too much on this fact. Personally, I feel that I should make great allowance ; for, indeed, I feel that great allowance has been made for myself.

I ought to be very grateful to you, my friends, for your sympathy and co-operation during the last ten years. But you do not seek any thanks for doing a simple duty. I came here a perfect stranger to all of you, but you never let me feel that I was among a strange people. I ought to be grateful to you also for the generous forbearance which has been extended to my failings. I have striven to go in and out among you as a minister of Jesus, according to my own ideas of duty, and as in the presence of God ; but frequent and painful has been the consciousness of my own defects. Your allowance for these defects has been freely and generously made. If any of you have looked for ready and available qualities in me, distinct from those which pertain to my ministerial office, perhaps you have been disappointed. This comes not from mere personal reluctance to more general social intercourse, but from a paramount necessity of my own experience. I have sometimes found that it interfered with other objects of a higher necessity in the faithful fulfilment of my office. I have recognised no distinction among you, rich or poor. I have endeavored to know you all, more or less, and I believe that no member of our congregation is unknown to me.

Where want, or sickness, or suffering, has been present, I have endeavored to be present too, to render what help I might. But where none of these things existed, I have felt that my frequent presence was less necessary.

Enough has been said, however, on this topic, so exclusively personal. It is more fitting that we should look together at the condition of our worshipping society, and at its progress and prospects.

Ten years ago the place where our church building now stands was an unoccupied field. The city lay beneath it; but above it, and toward the mountain, there was little else than open country. Now, fair churches rise on every hand, and pleasant streets stretch in every direction. Herein we see tokens of the progress of our city. In a growing community we ought to have a growth of churches. It has been so here. Of the whole number of churches now in Montreal, Catholic and Protestant, one half has been erected within the last ten years. Within this period we have participated in a fair proportion in the general progress. Ten years since, a very humble hired room was our place of worship. At that time the number of our members was not more than a third of what it is to-day. Now, with our triple increase, we have a commodious and well situated church, almost wholly paid for. At that time our Sunday School had only two regular teachers, and twelve scholars on its books. Now we have eleven regular teachers and sixty-five scholars. With one exception, the families of all these scholars have become connected with the congregation since the commencement of my ministry here. At that time we had no administration of the ordinances, while at our last communion season more than ninety persons joined together in commemoration of the

Lord. At that time we had no legal existence, but now we have full legal rights, and stand on an equality with any other religious denomination in the land.

With such a progress we are justified in regarding our congregation as a fixed fact in the community ; and it becomes us to consider the importance of this fact, not only to ourselves, but to others. I have sometimes directed your attention to its twofold importance. I have sometimes asked you to consider it not only with reference to ourselves, and our own locality here, but also with reference to others, and other parts of Canada. The establishment here of a liberal Christian church, independent of priest, presbytery, or creed, and founded on Christ and the Bible only, will not only be of advantage to ourselves, who cannot accept the humanly constructed formulas of the more exclusive churches around us, by affording us the usual privileges of social worship and instruction ; but it will serve as a missionary station for the propagation of liberal and generous views of Christianity throughout other parts of the country. Canada is prosperous and progressive. Its ample territory is fast filling up. Its great forests, and flowing streams, and fertile acres, are attracting many persons from other lands, and in these newly settled districts there will be many minds who will seek a more generous gospel than the popular orthodoxy gives them, else they will neglect and reject Christianity altogether. Now a congregation such as ours may do much towards the dissemination of more liberal Christian views, by the distribution of books and tracts, and by the migration of persons hence to other parts of the country. Something has already been done in this way by the publication, for six years, of "The Bible Christian," and by the sale of the books and tracts of Channing, Dewey, and other Unitarian writers. Something has been done, also, by persons who have gone from this

city to settle in more remote districts. For our congregation has always been more or less fluctuating, and many persons who have been won to our views here have gone elsewhere strongly impressed with their value, and desirous to explain them to others. I could name a great many places in Canada where our members have gone, and where they still abide, cherishing liberal Christian principles, and making them known. Thus may our worshipping society become a missionary body, and as our country grows, it may help to extend therein the knowledge of the pure and simple gospel of Jesus.

The advantage which our church affords to ourselves is more obvious and immediate, and scarcely requires to be indicated. To lack the privileges of social worship is felt to be a sad want by every one who has any respect for religion. Where the prevailing tone and teaching of the pulpit make man or woman an alien in the Christian sanctuary, the experience is trying and hard to be borne. The traditions still current in Trinitarian churches frequently grate hard upon the ears of those who hold the simpler doctrines of Unitarian Christianity. A soul is deprived of its proper nutriment, and stunted in its spiritual growth, when it is subjected to religious teaching which clashes with its own convictions; just as plant or tree is damaged by contact with unfitting soil, or uncongenial air. A church, then, in accordance with our own convictions is all important to our individual religious growth: and that we possess such an one, and can worship God under our own vine and fig-tree in security and peace, should be a matter of devout thankfulness with us all.

Our position and opportunity are favorable for doing good. Our privileges are great. Our present condition is promising. Nothing can hurt us, or prevent our congregation from fulfilling a

high and divine purpose, but our own unfaithfulness. When I say that our present condition is promising, I am far from saying that it is perfect. It has much imperfection, and presents a great deal which ought to be rectified. But still I believe it contains elements of promise, which, if faithfully developed, may bring forth fruits of holiness and high usefulness. Although our numbers are still small in comparison with those of the more popular religious bodies, yet we are fully as numerous as any reasonable anticipation could have looked for, considering the influences, public and private, which have been brought to bear against us. I say here again, however, that my reliance is not on mere numbers, but on the religious earnestness—on the Christian intelligence and fidelity—of those who belong to us. Those who are Unitarians in a mere sectarian sense, are not to be relied on any more than other sectarians. When the flame of party spirit dies out, they will be cold and indifferent, retrogressive rather than progressive, holding us back, rather than helping us forward in the Christian life. The only thing which gives us proper confidence in man or woman is the deep sense of the value of personal religion, and a serious earnestness on their part to make it their own. It is only to those who have risen to an intelligent appreciation of the value and importance of a liberal Christian church in Montreal, that we can look for a well sustained sympathy and assistance in fulfilling the grand purposes of such an institution. I believe there are those among you who have such an appreciation, and who are ready to improve the position which we have now gained.

It is on this that our progress depends. The gentleman who presided at the Unitarian Festival, recently held in Worcester, Mass., said—“Nearly three-fourths of a century since, a few bold, inquiring, enlightened, conscientious men, in the vindica-

tion of a lofty principle of religious freedom, planted in this, then humble rural village, of less than two thousand population, one of the first congregational societies (if not the very first), clearly and avowedly of our own distinctive denominational character; and through years of bitter opposition and obloquy, misconstruction and misrepresentation, in weakness of numbers, but with unwavering firmness of purpose, they and their children, with scarce an instance of defection or dereliction, maintained its existence, until it has attained its present strength and great prosperity, *with the addition* of one sister church, born of the same spirit, and holding fast to the same doctrines." This was a noble testimony coming from the lips of a venerable man. Half a century hence, shall a like testimony be given here? And who shall speak it? These questions are for you, and for your children.

I say that it is on your religious earnestness and Christian fidelity that the progress and efficiency of our congregation depend. It is gratifying, indeed, to witness increasing numbers, but it were surely better and more satisfactory to worship with a dozen persons of devout heart and reverent spirit, than with a thousand who are wanting in these things. We are all too eager for outward results in building up new congregations. Let us rather lay the foundation sure, though it be slowly done. Then may we hope the superstructure will stand firm. Many of us, too, are apt to give our mere Unitarianism more prominence than we ought. Not that we ought to think less of our Unitarianism, but more of our common Christianity. I wish we could say that the day of dogma is past with us, and that the word of dogmatic controversy is to be no more heard. We dare hardly say this, however. The period of protest for Unitarianism generally stretches beyond ten, or even twenty years. But while

we hold ourselves ready to assert and defend our distinctive doctrines when the task is demanded of us, would it not be far better to devote our chief thought and effort to the apprehension and appropriation of those grand moral and spiritual truths of the gospel, through which men are redeemed from sin, and reconciled unto God? The doctrine of the strict Unity of the Supreme Being is one deservedly dear to us, clearly taught, as it is, in the Scriptures, and fully sustained by our reason, coming down to us, as it does, with the hallowed associations of thousands of years clinging to it, the pure Montheism of the Hebrew patriarchs, of the Lord Jesus and his apostles—a light clear and sacred, giving guidance to the world through a lengthened series of centuries before the alliance of an alien philosophy with the gospel of Christ brought forth the obscure metaphysical doctrine of the Trinity;—the doctrine of the strict Unity, I repeat, is deservedly dear to us, but let us use it, and build upon it, rather than dispute about it. The one God, whose name is One, has specially revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, and through him hath specially commended His love to us. He sent the Saviour into the world to make known to erring and sinful men the way of peace and salvation. Our Lord hath taught us that by faith and penitence and prayer, by devout communion, by unswerving rectitude, and by active love, we may become reconciled to the Father, and be made partakers of eternal life. This is the burden of Christ's message, and our organization, under a Unitarian or any other name, is useful to us only so far as it helps us to accept and realize the divine significance of this gospel.

We meet week after week that we may worship God together, and help each other in the attainment of the Christian Life. When we thus assemble, Worship ought to be our leading object, and the Sanctuary of the Church held sacred as the Presence

Chamber of the Most High. As we enter the portals thereof, our thought should be,

“Lo, God is here, let us adore.”

The setting apart of one day in seven, for the more especial service of religion, is a most beneficial arrangement of Divine Providence. The worn body, and weary heart, of man alike require some such period of rest and religious refreshment. The Sunday is the “Lord’s Day” of the Christian Church, and when it is rightly used it becomes the physical, moral, and spiritual strengthener to every other day of the week. “Man cannot live by bread alone.” Mere worldly thought and drudgery debase the human soul, and destroy its true life. And the more faithfully we employ the Lord’s Day as a season for appropriating to our souls the divine Word which came from God, the more are we strengthened to resist the temptations of our daily experience—the more are we aided to an adequate apprehension of the profound significance and solemn responsibility of the life now given to us, and the better are we enabled to make our daily sphere of labor a divine sphere of duty, so that the life which now is, may become the earnest and preparation for the life which is to come.

Brethren and Friends, I commend these things to your thoughtful consideration. I do so with all affection and respect, and with the sincere desire that we may all be built up in devoutness of spirit, and practical excellence of life. The worship of the Sanctuary must be sustained and made efficient by the worship of the closet and the home. Standing apart from all else, it may be of little use—a mere habit, or form. But thus sustained, it will be a help to all else.

I cannot close this letter without expressing my unabated interest in your welfare, temporal and spiritual. As I think of you,

some in venerable age, some in the full maturity of active life, some as young men and young women just starting on life's eventful journey, and some as pleasant children of hope and promise, with a world of mystery wrapped up in young hearts, I confess I am often at a loss how to present the living Word, so that it may help, and quicken you as I wish. Be assured that your growth in Christian attainment is to me the crown of my rejoicing. My highest desire for you and myself is, that we may be enabled to look beneath the shams and shadows of life to its grand and lasting realities, and thus discerning what is divinely true, may be enabled to pursue it with a fidelity worthy the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Believe me, Christian Friends,

Ever yours, affectionately and respectfully,

JOHN CORDNER.

MONTREAL, 5th November, 1853.

POSTSCRIPT.

The following is a copy of the Invitation originally forwarded to me:—

“MONTREAL, July, 1843.

“WE, the members of the Unitarian Society of Montreal, deeply solicitous for the permanent establishment of religious worship, in accordance with our belief, in this city, and fully impressed with the importance of having a settled minister among us, and being assured, by good information, of the minis-

terial abilities of you, John Cordner, late of Newry, Preacher of the Gospel, do hereby unite in giving you a Call to become our pastor; and we do promise to give you a salary of one hundred and fifty pounds currency per annum; and further, upon your accepting this our Call, we promise you all dutiful respect and obedience in the Lord.

“In witness whereof we hereunto affix our respective names:

BENJAMIN WORKMAN.

J. WHITE.

JOHN ELLIOT.

ASA BURROUGHS.

JOHN JOHNSTON BEERS.

L. H. HOLTON.

LEVI BIGELOW.

THOS. WORKMAN.

EDMUND MILES.

WM. HEDGE.

V. E. BATE.

ROBERT FROSTE.

I. H. ATWATER.

EDWARD GRIFFIN.

THOS. J. DONOGHUE.

WILLIAM KIDD.

JOHN YOUNG.

ASA WILLETT.

JAMES DOUGALL.

“To the Rev. John Cordner,
Newry, Ireland.”

Thirteen months previous to the date of the foregoing, the congregation was organised under the name of the “CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF MONTREAL.” Its distinctive theological basis, as set forth in the Preamble to the Constitution, stands as follows:—

“Whereas a belief in the Unity of God,—in the divine Mission of Jesus Christ,—and in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the only rule of Faith and Practice,—are fundamental principles of Christian Faith; and recognising these principles, we, the undersigned, for the better government of ourselves as a Christian Society, do subscribe to the following Constitution,” &c.

From which it appears that our worshipping Society, at this date, is of rather more than eleven years' standing.

J. C.

