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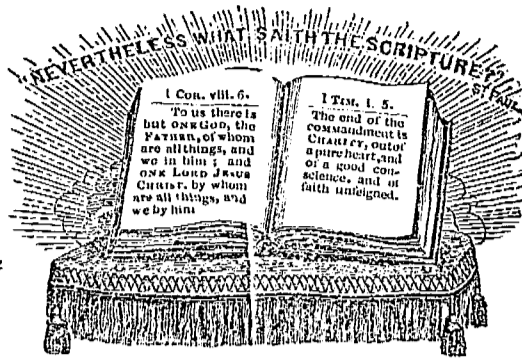
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THE BIBLE



CHRISTIAN

TRUTH, HOLINESS,

LIBERTY, LOVE.

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THE DOCTRINE AND GENIUS OF UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY.

The following copious selection of extracts is taken from the *Unitarian Congregational Register* for 1848, just published. The compiler of that very useful Annual has printed them with the intention of presenting, by means of extracts from its various writers, some general views of the prevailing doctrines and spirit of Unitarian Christianity. We gladly reprint as many as we can make room for, because we consider them well adapted to aid the general design of this sheet. All the writers cited are known as Unitarians, with one exception; that is Rev. Dr. Bushnell, who is an eminent orthodox Divine of the more liberal and generous school. We need scarcely say that on the point for which he is quoted, his views are in harmony with those of the Unitarians:

"UNITARIANISM takes its name from its distinguishing trait, the strict personal unity of God, which Unitarians hold in opposition to the doctrine which teaches that God exists in three persons. This must be called the great leading doctrine, and, properly speaking, the only distinguishing feature of Unitarianism. On several other points they differ among themselves. Professing little reverence for human creeds, having no common standard but the Bible, and allowing, in the fullest extent, freedom of thought and the liberty of every Christian to interpret the records of Divine revelation for himself, they look for diversity of opinion as the necessary result. They claim to be thorough and consistent Protestants.

"Unitarians do not rely exclusively, or chiefly, on what they conceive to be the intrinsic incredibility of the doctrine of the Trinity. They take the Bible in their hands, and setting down to read it as plain, unlettered Christians, and with prayer for Divine illumination, they find that the general tenor of its language either distinctly asserts, or necessarily implies, the supremacy of the Father, and teaches the inferior and derived nature of the Son. At the same time, they all entertain exalted views of Christ's character and offices. In a reverence for these they profess to yield to no class of Christians. 'We believe,' says one of the most eminent writers of the sect, 'in the Divinity of Christ's mission and office, that he spoke with Divine authority, and was a bright image of the Divine perfections. We believe that God dwelt in him, manifested himself through him, taught men by him, and communicated to him his spirit, without measure; so that, through seeing and knowing him, we see and know the invisible Father. In Christ's words we hear God speaking; in his miracles we behold God acting; in his character and life we see an unsullied image of God's purity and love. We believe then, in the Divinity of Christ, as this term is often and properly used.'

"By the Holy Spirit, Unitarians suppose is meant, not a person, but an influence; and hence it is spoken of as 'poured out,' 'given,' and we read of the 'anointing' with the Holy Spirit; phrases which, they contend, preclude the idea of a person.

"They reject the doctrine of native total depravity; but they assert that man is born weak, and in possession of appetites and propensities, by the abuse of which all become actual sinners; and they believe in the necessity of what is figuratively expressed by the 'new birth,' that is, the becoming spiritual and holy, being led by that spirit of truth and love which Jesus came to introduce into the souls of his followers. This change is significantly called the coming of the kingdom in the heart, without which, as they teach, the pardon of sin, were it possible, would confer no happiness, and the songs of paradise would fall with harsh dissonance on the ear.

"There is nothing peculiar in the sentiments which, as a body, they entertain of the Bible. They receive it as their standard, their rule of faith and life, interpreting it as

they think consistency and the principles of sound and approved criticism demand. In proof of their reverence for the Bible, they appeal to the circumstance that several of the ablest defenders of Christianity against the attacks of infidels have been Unitarians,—a fact which no one acquainted with the theological literature of modern ages will call in question.

"To the charge that they unduly exalt human reason, Unitarian Christians reply by saying that the Bible is addressed to us as reasonable beings; that God cannot contradict in one way what he records in another; that if the Bible be his gift, it cannot be at war with nature and reason; that we cannot do it greater dishonor than to admit that it will not stand the scrutiny of reason; that if our faculties are so distempered by the Fall that we can no longer repose any confidence in their veracity, then revelation cannot benefit us, for we have no reason left for judging of its evidences or import, and are reduced at once to a state of utter skepticism."—*Rev. Dr. Lamson.*

"I BELIEVE in the supreme importance of virtue. All faith is summed up in one article and reduced to one breath. God and the Bible, Christ and the Holy Spirit, tell us the fulness of all wisdom and truth in one compendious sentence,—THE SUPREME IMPORTANCE OF VIRTUE. This one truth, time, along the spacious ailes of centuries, from the mouth of God, echoes. This truth, through endless ages, eternity will but repeat and sanction. The witness to it of this life, in our individual hearts, will be carried on in our hearts, through the immortality Christ has brought to light. I believe in virtue,—simple, genuine, sweet-tempered virtue. I believe in working, bearing, self-sacrificing virtue. I believe in household, social, political, business virtue. I believe in its superiority to all external modes and forms (which from it alone, reason or the Gospel being judge, receive any worth), however magnified these may be, like motes in a solar microscope. I believe virtue will enter the kingdom of God before all the Scribes and Pharisees of loud profession and pretended sanctity, and that the measures of its possession or lack will be the exact measures of the rewards and retributions of futurity."—*Rev. C. A. Bartol.*

"WHAT thinkest thou of sin and its consequences? In my view, nothing beside, comparatively, is an evil. Sin itself shocks me more, if possible, than what are called its retributive judgments,—so excellent is the nature of which it is the abuse, so noble the powers of which it is the prostitution, so great and good the Being whose will it sets at naught. What is it but the voluntary throwing away of an innocence which, once lost, can never be recovered; the intentional staining of a purity, than which nothing should be held dearer; the wanton violation of conscience, that holiest of all man's faculties; the willful defilement of the very image of God in the soul; the transgressing, on purpose and adversely to the most sacred obligations, of the righteous and beneficent law of the adorable Creator, the ever-blessed Father of all? But the consequences of sin, as they are termed,—what is to be thought of them? I believe there is a law of God by which guilt inevitably produces misery; a law of cause and effect in morals as well as in physics, which ever has been and ever will be in force; a law to which all human beings are alike subject, each in his own person, and by which every individual of our race has suffered, does suffer, or will suffer in proportion to his wickedness. It may be obscured by the pleasures of sin for a season; it may be forgotten in the delusions of selfishness; it may be disregarded in the eager pursuits of ambition; it may be spurned in the flush of successful fraud; but nothing can abrogate it. Its fulfilment may be delayed, yet not for ever; it will flash in the lightnings of remorse, in future years, if not sooner, on the soul of every guilty one, however he may slumber over it or set it at defiance now.—Nor is this law, in my view, confined to the present life; it belongs, also, in all essential respects, to that which is to come.—

Sin, on the other side of the grave, as well as on this, cannot fail to produce misery; and as every one's condition there will correspond, at any given period, with the character he possesses at that period, so whoever departs from earth a slave to vicious habits of thought, feeling, and conduct must, on entering the spiritual world, find himself subjected to suffering proportioned to his ill deserts. What, then, in the name of God, of conscience, and of happiness, is it wise for us to resolve upon and to do, unless it be, if innocent, to continue so; if virtuous, to persevere; if sinful, to repent and reform, at once and thoroughly?"—*Rev. Dr. Barrett.*

"To admit all the elements of truth into our system, at once to adore the infinity of God, and to give due importance to our own free moral nature, is no very easy work.—But it must be done. Man's free activity is as important to religion as God's infinity.—In the kingdom of heaven the moral power of the subject is as essential as the omnipotence of the sovereign. To rob man of his dignity is as truly to subvert religion, as to strip God of his perfection.

"An enlightened, disinterested human being, morally strong, and exerting a wide influence by the power of virtue, is the clearest reflection of the Divine splendor on earth, and we glorify God in proportion as we form ourselves and others after this model. The glory of the Maker lies in his work. We do not honor him by breaking down the human soul, by connecting it with him only by a tie of slavish dependence. It is his glory that he creates beings like himself, free beings, not slaves, and opens to their faith and devout strivings a futurity of progress and glory without end. It is not by darkening and dishonoring the creature that we honor the Creator. Those men glorify God most who look with keen eye and loving heart on his works, who catch in all some glimpses of beauty and power, who have a spiritual sense for good in its dimmest manifestations, and who can so interpret the world that it becomes a bright witness to the Divinity."—*Rev. Dr. Channing.*

"I CANNOT but look on human creeds with feelings approaching contempt. When I bring them into comparison with the New Testament, into what insignificance do they sink! What are they? Skeletons, freezing abstractions, metaphysical expressions of unintelligible dogmas. And these I am to regard as the expositions of the fresh, living, infinite truth which came from Jesus!—Creeds are to the Scriptures what rush-lights are to the sun. The creed-maker defines Jesus in half a dozen lines, perhaps in metaphysical terms, and calls me to assent to this account of my Saviour. I learn less of Christ by this process than I should learn of the sun by being told that this glorious luminary is a circle about a foot in diameter. There is but one way of knowing Christ. We must place ourselves near him, see him, hear him, follow him from his cross to the heavens, sympathize with him and obey him, and thus catch clear and bright glimpses of his Divine glory. Christian truth is infinite. Who can think of shutting it up in a few lines of an abstract creed? You might as well compress the boundless atmosphere, the fire, the all-pervading light, the free winds of the universe, into separate parcels, and weigh and label them, as break up Christianity into a few propositions. Christianity is freer, more illimitable, than the light or the winds. It is too mighty to be bound down by man's puny hands. It is a spirit, rather than a rigid doctrine,—the spirit of boundless love."—*Rev. Dr. Channing.*

"NIGHT comes down over a ship at sea, and a passenger lingers hour after hour alone on the deck. The waters plunge, and welter, and glide away beneath the keel. Above, the sails tower up in the darkness, almost to the sky, and their shadow falls as it were a burden on the deck below. In the clouded night no star is to be seen, and as the ship changes her course the passenger knows not which way is east or west, or north or south. What islands, what sunken rocks, may be on her course, or what that course is, or where they are, he knows not. All around, to him,

is mystery. He bows down in the submission of utter ignorance.

"But men of science have read the laws of the sky. And the next day this passenger beholds the captain looking at a clock and taking note of the place of the sun, and with the aid of a couple of books, composed of rules and mathematical tables, making calculations. And when he has completed them, he is able to point almost within a hand's breadth to the place at which, after unnumbered windings, he has arrived in the midst of the seas. Storms may have beat, and currents drifted, but he knows where they are, and the precise point where, a hundred leagues over the waters, lies his native shore. Here is Reason appreciating and making use of the revelations (if we may so call them) of science.

"Night again shuts down over the waste of waves, and the passenger beholds a single seaman stand at the wheel and watch, hour after hour, as it vibrates beneath a lamp, a little needle, which points ever, as if it were a living finger, to the steady pole.

"This man knows nothing of the rules of navigation, nothing of the courses of the sky. But reason and experience have given him Faith in the commanding officer of the ship,—faith in the laws that control her course,—faith in the unerring integrity of the little guide before him. And so without a single doubt he steers his ship on, according to a prescribed direction, through night and the waves. And that faith is not disappointed. With the morning sun he beholds far away the summits of the grey and misty highlands, rising like a cloud on the horizon; and as he nears them, the hills appear, and the lighthouse at the entrance of the harbour, and, sight of joy! the spires of the churches and the shining roofs, among which he strives to detect his own.

"Mystery—Reason—Faith;—Mystery is the lowest, Faith is the highest of the three. Reason has done but half its office till it has resulted in Faith. Reason looks before and after. It not only ponders the past, but becomes prophetic of the future."—*Rev. E. Peabody.*

"It is with Scripture as with nature. The everlasting heavens spread above the gaze of Herschel as they did over that of Abraham; yet the latter saw but a spangled dome,—the former a forest of innumerable worlds. To the mind of this profound observer, there was as much a *new creation* as if those heavens had been, for the first time, called up and spread before his sight. And thus it is with the Word of God. As its power and beauty develop themselves continually, it is as if heaven were creating it now, and leaf after leaf dropped directly from the skies. Nor is there any heresy like that which denies this progressive unfolding of Divine wisdom, shuts up the spirit of heaven in the verbal metaphysics and scholastic creeds of a half-barbarous period, treats the inspiration of God as a dry piece of antiquity, and cannot see that it communes afresh with the soul of every age, and sheds, from the living Fount of Truth, a guidance ever new."—*Rev. J. Martineau.*

"The doctrine of the Trinity, if it be true, is of the utmost interest and moment, and ought to mould and shape all our religious notions, and to be recognised in all our praises and prayers. We should, therefore, expect to see it set forth very clearly in a revelation purporting to come from God. But so far is this from being the case, that Trinitarians do not quote a single text as declarative of this prime article of their creed. They admit that it is nowhere distinctly stated in the Bible."—*Rev. A. P. Peabody.*

"St. Augustine once held the doctrine, that God was One Person,—a faith at that time the general belief; and in his mind it was by Platonic philosophy that this doctrine of the Scriptures was modified. Augustine says this in a thanksgiving to God, and then he proceeds with Plato's notion of the Divine nature,—a modified Trinity; for even St. Augustine was not orthodox. It is a common error to read the Scriptures with a heathen lamp, instead of exalting the Scriptures to be themselves the world's light.

Athanasius was no Trinitarian; he was scarcely even a Dualist; for he held that the Father was God in a higher manner than the Son. The Papists aver, and truly, that there are no traces of the Trinity in the whole Bible; for they hold that it is a doctrine of tradition. Luther said himself,—"It were better to call Almighty God God than 'TRINITY.'"—*Rev. W. Mountford.*

"I cannot contemplate a death, and, least of all, the death of the Saviour, only as a doctrine. It is to me, I must confess, altogether another kind of influence. It is to me, if it is anything, power and grandeur; it is something that rivets my eye and heart; it is a theme of admiration and spiritual sympathy; it leads me to meditation, not to metaphysics; it is as a majestic example, a moving testimony, a dread sacrifice, that I must contemplate it. I see in it a death-blow to sin; I hear the pleading of the Crucified One for truth and salvation, beneath the darkened heavens and amidst the shuddering earth. It is every way astonishing to me, that such suffering should have been seized upon as a subject for metaphysical analysis; that the agony of the Son of God should have been wrested into a thesis for the theologian; that a death should have been made a dogma; that blood should have been taken to write a creed; that Calvary should have been made the arena of controversy. That the Cross, whereon Jesus, with holy candor and meekness, prayed for his enemies, saying, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!'—that the Cross should have been made a rack for the moral torture of his friends, whereon, in all the valleys and upon all the hills of Christendom, they have been crucified by unkindness and exclusion; is there another such contradiction—is there another such phenomenon, to be found in all the strange history of the world?"—*Rev. Dr. Dewey.*

"We believe sin to be the great and only obstacle to forgiveness and salvation. That obstacle is insurmountable so long as it exists. It can be removed only by its own destruction. Christ lived and died to destroy it. 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil.' He came to 'save his people from their sins.' 'God sent him to bless us in turning away every one of us from his iniquities.' This is the design of the Gospel dispensation,—of the mission teaching, examples, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ,—to bring men into a state of reconciliation with God. Atonement is reconciliation. And a state of reconciliation is a state of submission, faith, repentance, and obedience. This state, this spiritual condition, all God's threatenings and promises, all his revelations and dealings, especially his free gift of a Saviour, are designed to produce. If they do produce it in any soul, if they bring a sinner to obey God, the purpose for which Christ came is answered upon that man, for he is saved from sin; he is forgiven through the grace of God in Jesus Christ. If he is not brought into submission and obedience, but continues in sin, he is not forgiven, and no grace or sacrifice will avail him anything; if he is not saved from sin, he is not saved at all. Sin, we repeat, is the only obstacle, and the necessity and purpose of the mediation of Christ is to save man from sin.

"Here is our interpretation of all the passages which bring into comparison the Jewish and Christian sacrifices. The first pertained chiefly to the purification of the flesh, the last to that of the conscience. Both were designed to secure 'privilege, and open the way to pardon. Both were to offer mercy to the penitent, to invite the sinner near, to express and put within the reach of all a state of reconciliation with God. And if the former sacrifices could do this, how much more the latter! The blood of Christ can purge the conscience, must purge the conscience, from dead works to serve the living God. That is its design. That, if properly regarded, thankfully, penitently and faithfully improved, will be its efficacy and salvation.

"This is our understanding of that large class of passages which speak of the blood or sacrifice of Christ, and connect with his death sacrificial terms. He was a sacrifice, required, not by the justice of God to satisfy it, or by the mercy of God to make it free, but by the sins of men to remove them. 'He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself'; to put it away, to subdue its power, to destroy its dominion, and thus save from its condemnation. 'Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many'; to bear them in the same sense in which he 'took our infirmities and bare our sickness,' as Matthew explains Isaiah. And John says: 'Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.' Can sin be taken away, except by being subdued? Can it be subdued, except by a moral power, the spi-

ritual energy of truth and love, the power of God's grace and Christ's mediation, acting upon the soul, purging the conscience from dead works to serve the living God? For this Christ offered himself. For this, as our Passover, he was sacrificed for us; to deliver us from bondage—the bondage of ignorance and sin."—*Rev. E. B. Hall.*

"Who can doubt that among the causes which produce in society so much moral and religious deadness, this is one,—that men satisfy themselves by referring to the laws and principles of nature, and stop short of that Being in whom they reside? How much is this a habit amongst us! We talk of the 'laws of our being,' and of living by them and of the consequences of violating them, as we should talk of a machine or of fate. We thus throw out of view the agency and love of the Living God, whose children we are, and claim relationship to inanimate objects. And in so doing we not only wrong the truth, but defraud ourselves of that exercise and enjoyment of the thinking, affectionate spirit in which our highest action and bliss are to be found."—*Rev. Dr. Henry Ware, Jr.*

"The immediate object of the Gospel was to break down the dominion of sin. We regard the mission of Christ as the most decisive rebuke of sin that could be given, and his life as a testimony against it only less emphatic than his death. We consider reconciliation to God through the renunciation of evil courses and the culture of inward purity, to be the great achievement of Christianity, in the case of every one who comes under its power. We believe that it was sin which made the Gospel necessary, that the mercy which it brought was what men most wanted, and the regeneration which it effects was what he himself felt the need of, even if he made no attempt to secure a better experience. What could we say, what could we believe, that would indicate a more positive sense of the evil of sin?"—*Rev. Dr. Gannett.*

"We arrive at our most intimate, consoling and elevating knowledge of God the Father through his Son, Jesus Christ. We acquire our simplest, clearest, kindest, and most practical views of duty from him and his life. We learn from him distinctly what is the acceptable worship and service which man is required to render to his Maker. We know, through him and his resurrection, what we could not otherwise have known, that we are immortal, that we shall live after death, and for ever. By him we are brought into connection with that bright community of angels and sainted spirits, whose voices we hear on earth by faith, cheering us in our journey, and inviting us to the enjoyment of their society and his own everlastingly in heaven. While we continue with him, studying his life, meditating on his image, listening to his words, imbibing his spirit, we are possessed with all his knowledge, faith, and power; but away from him, and without him, where is it to be found, and what can we do? I confess I know not. If I could dismantle my own heart of all traces and memorials of the Saviour, I know that I should be startled at its emptiness and desolation, and, finding in it but little to repair the melancholy loss, be forced to weep in despair over the ruin I had made."—*Rev. Dr. Greenwood.*

"The Father! In this one word what consoling, strengthening, ennobling truth is wrapt up! In this single view of God, how much is there to bind us to him, with strong, indissoluble, ever-growing love, and to make worship, not only our chief duty, but our highest privilege and joy! Who cannot comprehend the dignity and blessedness of such worship?"—*Rev. Dr. Channing.*

"We say, that to hang the chances of salvation upon speculative opinions, or to estimate the worth of character by doctrinal conclusions, is utterly subversive of Protestantism. We are rejoiced to see the gradual melioration of public sentiment upon this subject. Most happy are we to own, that vast bodies of those connected with creed-founded churches are most charitable and generous in their practical Christianity.—But we can never cease to protest against creeds, while they continue to lay traps for the human conscience, to impose shackles upon human understanding, or to afford lurking-places for bigotry and theological hatred. To oppose them is the first distinctive principle of Liberal Christianity, as the emancipation of the human soul was the great object of the Gospel itself; and until thought is free, and the private conscience revered, and the individual man recognized as more sacred than churches and establishments and articles of faith, the everlasting Gospel will not have fairly begun its glorious work of human redemption."—*Rev. H. W. Bellows.*

"Should it once be established that military renown, achieved in warfare, however at-

rocious, affords the surest and quickest passage to the first places at the nation's disposal, we have nothing in prospect but wars and rumors of wars, for generations to come; and every new swarm of aspirants for public favor will work their way to power and office by fomenting discord and stirring up the waters of strife."—*Rev. A. P. Peabody.*

"The world has suffered from nothing so much as from false ideas of greatness. The passion for military glory has been the fruitful cause of slavery, bloodshed, and crime. How little has the experience of its fatal results hitherto done to teach men wisdom!—How is this deadly charm ever to be broken save by the formation of a nobler idea, the creation of a better tone, the erection of the true standard? In Jesus Christ the real greatness of our nature—the glory of a pacific, all-enduring temper is revealed. Let him then be lifted up before all eyes, and all hearts will be touched, and the sword and the spear and the banner bathed in blood will be buried at the foot of the cross, and it will be felt that all other courage is fear, all other glory shame, in comparison with that spirit which subdues by mercy and reigns by suffering."—*Rev. W. H. Furness.*

"What other unity can the Church possess, than that concert of sentiment which flows from a common sympathy with the mind of Christ? Disappointment has been the invariable consequence of an attempt to enforce a unity of doctrine or of discipline. A unity of belief, if it go beyond the first elements of Christian truth, or even if it enter into a minute explanation of these, will be hollow and unreal. A unity founded upon obedience to the same ecclesiastical discipline is a mere semblance. The only true union has its basis in sentiment. The Church is one, because its members are informed by the same spirit, having drunk of the same spiritual fountain, which is Christ, and been nourished on that bread of life which came down from heaven. The voluntary consent of free minds, the accordant pulsation of hearts untrammelled by forms or creeds of human device,—this constitutes the unity of the Christian Church. That unity is not confined to earth, but embraces the saints who have passed into heaven; since there, as well as here, the spirit of truth and love reigns in every soul. The circumstance which determines unity is not that men think alike, or worship alike, but that they are alike. This makes a solid and graceful unity, arising, as it does, not from external pressure, but from spontaneous sympathy."—*Rev. Dr. Gannett.*

"Old terms, old names, old forms, are often retained long after the opinions they were originally used to signify and enforce have been outgrown and abandoned. When, therefore, these at length are laid aside, it is not so much because the people would embrace new opinions, but because they would express more accurately those which they have long held. With regard to a large proportion of the serious and intelligent members of the community, I believe that if they understood Unitarianism aright, and would take the trouble to compare it with their own convictions, they would find them to agree. They would find many of them, to their great surprise, not only that they are now, but that they always have been, Unitarians; believing that Jesus Christ is a distinct being from the Father, and that the Father alone is God."—*Rev. Dr. Walker.*

"We certainly know that much of what is called Christian nurture only serves to make the subject of religion odious, and that, as nearly as we can discover, in exact proportion to the amount of religious teaching received. . . . Something is wanted that is better than teaching, something that transcends mere effort, and will work,—the loveliness of a good life, the repose of faith, the confidence of righteous expectation, the sacred and cheerful liberty of the spirit,—all glowing about the young soul, as a warm and genial nature, and forming in it, by methods that are silent and imperceptible, a spirit of duty and religious obedience to God. This only is Christian nurture, the nurture of the Lord. . . ."

"And this is the very idea of Christian education, that it begins with nurture or cultivation. And the intention is that the Christian life and spirit of the parent shall flow into the mind of the child, to blend with his incipient and half-formed exercises; that they shall thus beget their own good within him, their thoughts, opinions, faith, and love, which are to become a little more, and yet a little more his own separate character. . . . We are never, at any age, so independent as to be wholly out of the reach of organic laws which affect our character. All society is organic—the Church, the state, the school, the family, and there is a spirit in each of these organisms peculiar to itself, and more or less hostile, more or less favorable to religious

character, and, to some extent at least, sovereign over the individual man. . . . The child is only more within the power of organic laws than we all are. We possess only a mixed individuality all our life long. A pure, separate, individual man, living wholly within and from himself, is a mere fiction. No such person ever existed, or ever can. I need not say this view of an organic connection of character subsisting between parent and child lays a basis for notions of Christian education far different from those which now prevail, under the cover of a merely fictitious and mischievous individualism."—*Rev. Dr. Bushnell.*

"There is one grand, all-comprehending Church; and if I am a Christian I belong to it, and no man can shut me out of it. You may exclude me from your Roman Church, your Episcopal Church and your Calvinistic Church on account of supposed defects in my creed or my sect, and I am content to be excluded. But I will not be severed from the great body of Christ. Who shall sunder me from such men as Fenelon, and Pascal, and Borromeo, from Archbishop Leighton, Jeremy Taylor, and John Howard? Who can rupture the spiritual bond between these men and myself? A pure mind is free of the universe. It belongs to the Church, the family of the pure, in all worlds. Virtue is no local thing. This is the bond of the Universal Church. No man can be excommunicated from it but by himself, by the death of goodness in his own breast."—*Rev. Dr. Channing.*

"We boast our light; but if we look not wisely on the sun itself, it strikes us into darkness. The light which we have gained was given us, not to be ever staring on, but by it to discover onward things more remote from our knowledge. It is not the unfrocking of a priest, the unmiting of a bishop, and the removing him from off the presbyterian shoulders, that will make us a happy nation. No; if other things as great in the Church be not looked into and reformed, we have looked so long upon the blaze that Zwinglius and Calvin have beacons up to us, that we are stark blind. To be still searching what we know not by what we know, still closing up truth to truth as we find it,—for all her body is homogeneal and proportional,—this is the golden rule in theology as well as in arithmetic, and works up the best harmony in a church. Not the forced and outward union of cold, and neutral, and inwardly divided minds."—*John Milton.*

"Mighty powers are at work in the world. Who can stay them? God's word has gone forth, and it cannot return to him void. A new comprehension of the Christian spirit,—a new reverence for humanity, a new feeling of brotherhood, and of all men's relation to the common Father,—this is among the signs of our times. We see it. Do we not feel it? Before this, all oppressions are to fall. Society, silently pervaded by this, is to change its aspect of universal warfare for peace. The power of selfishness, all-grasping and seemingly invincible, is to yield to this diviner energy. The song of angels, 'On earth peace,' will not always sound as fiction. O come, thou kingdom of heaven, for which we daily pray! Come, Friend and Saviour of the race, who didst shed thy blood upon the cross to reconcile man to man, and earth to heaven! Come, ye predicted ages of righteousness and love, for which the faithful have so long yearned! Come, Father Almighty, and crown with thine omnipotence the humble strivings of thy children to subvert oppression and wrong, to spread light and freedom, peace and joy, the truth and spirit of thy Son, through the whole earth!"—*Rev. Dr. Channing.*

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.

Let us dismiss these lying vanities, and regulate our lives by the truth and soberness of the New Testament. Benevolence is not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth. It is a business with men as they are, and with human life as drawn by the rough hand of experience. It is a duty which you must perform at the call of principle, though there be no voice of eloquence to give splendor to your exertions, and no music or poetry to lead your willing footsteps through the bowers of enchantment. It is not the impulse of high and extatic emotion. It is an exertion of principle. You must go to the poor man's cottage, though no verdure flourish around it, and no rivulet be nigh to delight you by the gentleness of its murmurs. If you look for the romantic simplicity of fiction, you will be disappointed; but it is your duty to persevere, in spite of every discouragement. Benevolence is not merely a feeling, but a principle—not a dream of rapture for the fancy to indulge in, but a business for the hand to execute.

The Bible Christian.

MONTREAL, DECEMBER, 1847.

THE CHRISTIANITY OF THE WORLD, NOT THE CHRISTIANITY OF CHRIST.

[The following remarks will not be entirely new to many of our readers. They formed (as will be found in reading them) the concluding portion of Mr. Cordner's Lectures, introductory to the Course now in progress of delivery on some prominent topics connected with social and moral Reform.]

We have already seen the character of the Christianity of Christ. Let us now look for a moment at the Christianity of the world. Cast your eyes around you into the community in which you live. But first purge your own mind of the leaven of worldliness that is in it, else you are incapable of attempting the survey. A jaundiced vision is imperfect, and unfit to judge of the harmony and completeness of the landscape. With a sober and earnest mind, cast your eyes calmly upon the community in which you live, and there you will see selfishness in all its forms, reigning far and wide. There you will see mind brought into conflict with mind, and its ruling aim is the aggrandizement of self. Mark the inequalities of worldly condition, and see this miserable selfishness at work to strengthen and perpetuate those inequalities. There, is a man who has more wealth than he knows how to dispose of, yet he burns with eagerness to accumulate more by any means and every means. There, is another man who has none at all—who asks "a brother man to give him leave to toil"—and can scarcely obtain the poor liberty. There, is a man who has a spacious and splendid mansion, amply stored from top to bottom with every conceivable comfort, and has heaps of gold besides. There, is another man who has not where to lay his head, whose stomach pines with hunger, whose limbs ache with cold, and who has not wherewithal to satisfy the first wants of a famishing wife and perishing children. In a lonely and vacant hut, some time since, and in the suburbs of our city, on one fearful night (oh, too fearful a night for us to describe) a destitute mother sank upon its freezing floor, with two or three of her perished offspring, and all closed their eyes in death. A death agonising to contemplate, but welcome to them, since it released them from such a world. On that same night, so fearful in that lonely and vacant hut, there was many a room in our city glittering with splendour, and groaning with superabundant luxury—there were a thousand votaries of Ostentation bowing at her shrine and paying untold gold upon her altar. In many a house in our city, on that night, there was more sacrificed to vanity and show, to fashion and folly, than would have provided for that destitute and dead mother and her starved children for a twelvemonth round. And all this in a community, which, in its Sunday services, professes respect for the Christian precept—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." All this in a community, which, in its Sunday services, says that it is a Christian duty to "do unto others as we would wish that they should do unto us." Are your eyes open? Is your vision clear? Are your minds free from the scum of worldliness? If so, I ask you is such Christianity any thing but a mockery?

And look, too, beyond the community in which you live—look throughout Christendom. How many thousands of our fellow-men are lying in dark and hopeless prisons—the unfortunate victims of vindictive punishment. Christendom has starved and degraded them—has set a mark upon poverty, that its victims are to be mistrusted and shunned—has elbowed them into the darkest corners and the narrowest lanes of its vast and splendid cities—has crowded them out of view, along with the filth of their streets—has left them there uneducated and neglected—and because they have come forth from their dens of dirt, and wretchedness, and ignorance, where vice, undisturbed, held undisputed sway, and where every form of it was rendered familiar, and have infringed the moral law, and transgressed the statute book of the country, they are seized, locked up, and punished, and rendered much more the children of hell, than before. All this is done in Christendom where men profess to admire the divine

beauty of that religion—the founder of which spoke words of kindness to the guilty soul, and sought to redeem it by the power of love. If Jesus was right in his mode of treating guilt, most certainly the world is wrong. But if he was wrong, then the world is right, and it should continue its vindictive punishment, nor ever utter a word of kindness or hope to the wretched offender, nor make any attempt for his reformation and improvement.

Nor is this all. Look throughout Christendom, and you will see millions of our fellow-men who never committed any offence against society, doomed to hopeless and cruel bondage. Men and women like ourselves, are bought as if they were beasts, sold as if they were beasts, worked as if they were beasts, and flogged as if they were beasts. In the colonial possessions of the various countries of Europe, with the exception of Britain, and I believe Denmark,—in those of France, of Spain, of Portugal, professing Christian countries all—the image of God is degraded in the person of humanity by men who profess to give God reverence. And on our own continent too, a neighbouring republic which reads freedom and equality in its Bible, and writes freedom and equality on its flag, stands with its foot on the neck of three millions of African slaves. *Did God make of one blood, all the nations of the earth? Are all the children of a common father?* Yes, says the New Testament. And what do such nations mean, then, who profess the religion of the New Testament, and yet openly outrage its most prominent principles?

Cast your eyes round Christendom again. Let me ask you rather to look beyond its bounds now. I ask you to look beyond its limits that you may see how Christian nations not only outrage the gospel on their soil, but carry their outrages far into Pagan lands. Look into Africa—look to the Algerine country. The cloud of smoke has hardly passed away from its horizon, which issued from a cave in which a vast multitude of men, women, and children were suffocated and roasted to death. The fiend who commanded this act was in the form of man, and was arrayed in the uniform of a soldier. He, and his companions in arms, were soldiers from the Christian country of France. Look now to Asia—find out India, and let your eye rest on the country of Scinde. Tall and gallant men are there, fine specimens of the human form, dark eyed mothers and maidens, innocent and playful children. See that river how it rolls—the Sutlej—but alas, alas, its banks are red with human blood. The message has not yet died away from our ears which came from that river's bank some eighteen months since. "The river was full of sinking men. For two hours volley after volley was poured in upon the human mass. The victors pressed the retreating multitudes on every side, and precipitated them in masses over the bridge. The river literally ran red with blood,—no quarter was given—no mercy was shown." The man who penned that message was a soldier too. He and his companions in arms—the men who thus shot down the fathers and brothers of India on their own soil—who gave no quarter and showed no mercy—were soldiers sent out there from the Christian country of Great Britain. And now come back to this continent again, and within the dominion of Christendom,—cast your eyes southward to the ancient country of Mexico. See its sacked and smoking cities—its ancient temples dismantled—its harmless natives flying from their homes in terror—multitudes of its people lying mangled and bleeding in their own streets. Look on that sad and sickening spectacle, and weep for humanity and Christianity, when you see that the agents of that barbarous work of devastation and death, are men—soldiers, sent for the purpose, by the Christian States of America. Thus it is that France, Britain, and America, three of the most highly civilized nations of the world—three nations that profess the religion of the Prince of Peace—put forth their power, far and wide, to carry on the barbarous and anti-Christian practice of war.

Thus to contemplate the contrast between the Christianity of the world, and the Christianity of Christ, is sufficient to fill us with sorrow. Very clearly may we perceive that the Divine Spirit of the Gospel is but indistinctly appreciated and feebly felt. The world is publicly setting Gospel precepts and Gospel principles at defiance, and seemingly unconscious of the outrage it is committing.

It requires to be aroused, awakened, and reminded what the Christianity of Christ is. It requires to be emphatically reminded that it is essentially a system of meekness and mercy, of forbearance and forgiveness, of love and peace. He who would undertake its reform, in ever so small a measure, must be prepared for a Herculean work. He sees that the principalities and powers of the world are arrayed direct against him. He sees that its high and mighty rulers have a supposed interest in perpetuating the existing order of things, involving oppression and bloodshed, and iniquity in its countless forms. He must pray therefore for the courage of an Apostle, that he may strive to do an Apostle's work. His struggle is to be "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." He must therefore take unto himself the whole armour of God. He must go forth, armed with Christian truth and Christian love, and bear testimony openly and fearlessly, against the public sins of the so-called Christian world.

It will be the aim of the few discourses to which these remarks are introductory, to direct attention more particularly to those glaring public evils which make the contrast so strong between the Christianity of the world and the Christianity of Christ. I propose to treat of *War, Slavery, Intemperance, and the Treatment of Criminals*. I invite your attendance and your attention to these topics. I ask your co-operation in the attempt which I am about to make to bring them more prominently into notice. Let us get mankind to think seriously and earnestly upon them, and on their inconsistency with the Gospel, and we shall prepare the way for their speedy downfall. I ask the co-operation of the man of matured mind, whose experience gives weight to his opinion. I ask the co-operation of the matron who can impress the value and beauty of Christian principle on the minds of the rising generation. I ask the co-operation of the young man who is just stepping forward into the activities of life. I ask the co-operation of the young woman with her warm and generous heart, and whose influence upon the forth-coming generation, none of us could venture to compute. I ask the co-operation of all, to secure permanent and universal peace for the world, freedom for the oppressed and ill-fated slave, reformation for the poor inebriate, and mercy for the criminal condemned. In heaven, or on earth, there can be no nobler or more glorious work than this. For it is a co-operation with God, and with Christ, for the elevation of humanity, and the Salvation of the world.

LECTURES IN THE UNITARIAN CHURCH.

The Course of Lectures announced in our last, is now in progress of delivery. The topics proposed are War, Slavery, Intemperance, and the Treatment of Criminals. At the time we now write, two have been delivered to numerous and attentive audiences. On the Sunday evening immediately subsequent to the issue of this sheet, there will be a continuation of the discourse on war. Service at the usual hour—7 o'clock.—Seats free.

EXCHANGE PAPERS.—We receive four papers from the United States; but owing, we presume, to the ill-starred dispute at present existing between the British and American Governments, concerning postage arrangements, two of them have lately fallen short. These are the Boston "Christian World," and the New York "Christian Inquirer." We have not received either of these journals for a month back. We consider them too valuable to be dispensed with, and we should therefore feel obliged to the Publishers if they would forward the missing numbers, and continue to furnish us with their papers, prepaying to the frontier, and we shall take the earliest opportunity of thanking them for their trouble, and reimbursing their outlay on our behalf.

Persons desiring to have books out of the Library of the Unitarian Church, can obtain them by application to the Librarian, after any of the services.

Persons desirous of obtaining Pews or Sitings in the Unitarian Church, are requested to make application to the Elders, after any of the public services.

DEDICATION IN BOSTON.

The Unitarian "Church of the Saviour," in Bedford-street, was dedicated this morning with appropriate services. The introductory prayer was by Rev. P. Parkman; the selection from the Scriptures was read by Rev. F. D. Huntington. There was then a chant from the choir. A dedication service was then read by the minister and people, alternately, the latter joining in the responses. A prayer by the Rev. E. S. Gannett followed; after which the following hymn written for the occasion by William C. Bryant, Esq. of New-York, was sung:

Ancient of Days! except thou deign
Upon our finished task to smile,
The workman's hand has toiled in vain,
To hew the rock, and rear the pile.

O, let thy peace, the peace that tames
The wayward heart, inhabit here;
That quenches passion's fiercest flames,
And thaws the deadly frost of fear.

And send thy love: the love that bears
Meekly with hate, and scorn and wrong;
And lends itself with generous cares;
And toils, and hopes, and watches long.

Here may bold tongues thy truth proclaim,
Unmingled with the dreams of men;
As from His holy lips it came,
Who died for us, and rose again.

To this the sermon by the Pastor of the Society, Rev. Mr. Waterston succeeded; after which the following hymn, by Rev. N. L. Frothingham, was sung, and the concluding prayer, by Rev. S. K. Lothrop, was offered.

O Saviour! whose immortal Word
Forever lasts the same;
Thy grace within the walls afford,
Here builded to thy name

No other name is named below,
No other sign unfurled,
To lead our hope, or quell our woe,
Or sanctify the world.

Here, many-tongued, thy truth be found,
And mind and heart employ;
Thy Law and Promise pour around
Their terror and their joy.

Here may thy saints new progress make;
Thy loitering ones be sped;
And here thy mourners comfort take,
And here thy poor be fed.

May God, thy God, his Spirit send;
The word is else unblest,—
And fill this place from end to end,
O ark of strength and rest!

—Boston Transcript.

CHRISTIAN COURTESY.

The Eliot and the Mount Pleasant Congregational Societies in Roxbury.—We announced a few months ago, with a feeling of gratification, that the Mount Pleasant (Unitarian) Congregational Society in Roxbury, had invited the Eliot Congregational (Orthodox) Society to worship in their Church while the Church of the Eliot Society was undergoing repairs. The invitation was accepted in the same frank and Christian spirit with which it was given. We are now highly gratified to announce another fact in unison with the above. Rev. Mr. Alger, Pastor of the Mount Pleasant Congregational Society, yesterday morning after the services, read from the pulpit a vote of thanks for the accommodation which the Eliot Congregational Society had received; also a letter from a Committee of that Society, accompanied with an elegant Silver Baptismal Font, with the following inscription:

FROM THE ELIOT CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY,
TO THE MOUNT PLEASANT CONGREGATIONAL
SOCIETY IN ROXBURY, OCTOBER, 1847.

It is truly delightful to record such an interchange of kind and Christian feeling between religious societies, who in all things do not think alike.—Boston Journal.

The hours of Public Worship in the Montreal Unitarian Church are—ELEVEN o'clock a.m., and SEVEN, p.m.

BOOKS FOR SALE,

AT
C. BRYSON'S BOOK-STORE,
ST. FRANCOIS XAVIER STREET.

THE Entire Works of WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, D.D., in two volumes.

The Entire Works of the Rev. ORVILLE DEWEY, D.D., Pastor of the Church of the Messiah, New York, one volume, 8vo. pp. 887.

A COMMENTARY ON THE FOUR GOSPELS. By the Rev. A. A. Livermore.

THE ESSENTIAL FAITH OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH, Deduced from the Sacred Records. By Harriet Martineau.

LA FOI DE L'EGLISE UNIVERSELLE; D'APRES LES SAINTES ECRITURES. Par Mlle. Martineau. Traduit de l'Anglais.

SCRIPTURE PROOFS AND SCRIPTURAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF UNITARIANISM. By John Wilson. 3rd Edition, revised and enlarged.

A COLLECTION OF PSALMS AND HYMNS for Christian Worship. By the Rev. F. W. P. Greenwood, D.D.

JUST RECEIVED,

A SUPPLY OF
"WARE ON THE FORMATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER."

PRACTICABILITY OF PEACE.

The following remarks are not addressed to any who—dazzled by the splendor of martial preparations, the pride of fancied national honor, or classical associations,—would advocate war as a good in itself or its results. It is believed these sentiments are fast fading from the public mind, and are disavowed by every Christian philanthropist. Nor is it intended to examine the defence of war as a mere corrective evil,—an approved process in the course of divine Providence, by which other and greater evils are averted or remedied,—an allegation which has been again and again refuted, by the friends of peace; but there are many sincere philanthropists, who, fully perceiving the vast amount of suffering and corruption caused by this custom, believing such calamity to be unalleviated and uncompensated by any resulting good, and earnestly desiring the extinction of war, still doubt the practicability of that extinction by any means in the power of the friends of peace to apply.

First, it is objected that the magnitude of the evil is such as to be irremovable by private effort. The insatiable ambition, pride of honor, fancied interest, and deep-rooted customs of nations; the enthusiastic canonization of warriors, the brilliant examples of classic history, the flattering voice of poetry, the splendor of monumental arts, the chivalry of patriotism, and the imposing fascinations of military display, all combine to drown the still small voice of humanity,—altogether form an overwhelming power, against which individual or associated philanthropy must strive in vain. What can a few peace societies and their friends effect, against the gigantic pride and customs of sovereign rulers and the political world?

It is not to be wondered at, that men,—even intelligent and considerate men,—make an objection like this; for the world has hitherto seemed to be governed or revolutionized by force; and they are naturally incredulous of any important change without the perception of physical power to effect it. But it is overlooked, that many of the most signal revolutions of the globe have originated in some new or disregarded principle,—religious, moral or political,—brought out by some zealous, perhaps despised individuals, which afterwards proved to be the actuating soul of the great physical movement. Such was the case with the crusades, the discovery of America by Columbus, the American and French revolutions, &c. The most remarkable revolution of the earth was the promulgation of Christianity by a few fishermen of Galilee, and their associates, changing the religion and moral habits of a large portion of the civilized world. It may be thought that this should not be adduced as an instance as it was under the especial and miraculous direction of the Most High; but we are taught that all events are, in reality, guided by his providence; and if the progress of peace principles is predicted, and their promotion enjoined, by this revelation, there is as much reason to expect his divine aid in their extension, as in that of the gospel of which they form so essential a part.

Again, it should be recollected, that under the perpetual advance of Christianity and civilization, mere physical power is everywhere losing, and moral power gaining, the predominance of influence. In former ages it might perhaps be said, that before the proud thrones or passion-led multitudes of the world, moral effort would avail but little in presenting truth, or advocating humanity. Already has the religious and intellectual change been such, that no oppressive abuse of physical power can be long continued in face of the unequivocal rebuke of religious enthusiasm or philosophical philanthropy; and under the obvious progress of society we have every promise that the claims of enlightened benevolence must be heard, and will be effectual. But the friends of universal peace, if guided by truth and warned with zeal, are plainly possessed of a moral influence superior to the power of brute force, however imposing; and if efficiently sustained by those who are in sentiment with them, so that they could bring all the religious and benevolent of the civilized world into an united, energetic protest against the practice of war; neither despotism, nor custom, nor chivalric delusion, could withstand it; the pride of the martial world must bend before the town of Christian reproof. Let us not, then, in timid distrust of moral power, withhold it. Give it in sanguine faith, and it will be decisively victorious.

But we meet with a more serious objection to specific efforts for the cause of peace, among those religious and enlightened men on whom chief reliance is placed as instruments of the cause. They doubt not the power of Christianity to overthrow the power of war; but they consider the process proposed on this subject as wrong in its order; general Christian faith must precede it.—“Make men Christians,” they say, “and

universal peace will follow.” They have no expectation that peace principles will ever be received, until Christianity, as they understand it, is made to prevail in the world; and they accordingly think time and money wasted, in any previous attempts to diffuse them. And yet a little attention will make it plain, that the whole strength of this objection lies in its ambiguity; an examination of what is here meant by Christianity, will dissipate it. If a Christianity is made to prevail over the world which involves the doctrines of forbearance and peace as essential elements, undoubtedly the prevalence of such a Christianity would for ever extinguish war; and the course of the peace-makers is precisely that which the objectors would desire, but which they refuse to aid; for these peace-makers strive to engraft this very feature of peace inseparably on Christianity, and may be considered as missionaries of that religion, in its genuine pacific form.

But the objectors have not this idea of Christianity in mind, in making the objection; they intend Christianity as each understands it, according to the doctrines laid down by his sect or denomination respectively, in none of which, with the exception of the Friends and Moravians, is the peace principle included as fundamental.—History, however, is full of instances of pious and devoted men, under every form of religious faith, who have not only sanctioned, but participated in, the revolting violence and cruelties of war. No one will call in question the religious character of the early fathers of the church, the reformers with Luther, the Covenanters of Scotland, or the pilgrims who landed on the Rock of Plymouth. Perhaps even the crusaders to Palestine, the German invaders of Saxony, and the Spanish conquerors of South America, may be allowed to have been actuated by a sincere faith in what they received as Christianity; but in none of these instances, or similar ones which history records, has the aspect of the cross, in any of its varied lights, obliterated the heathen spirit of Mars; and what reason is there to believe that any view of Christianity, which includes not its peace principle as essential, whatever ascendancy it may gain over every other view, will spread over the future, a forbearing tranquillity which it has ever failed to do in the fairest trials of the past? The true teachers of Christianity are, then, the peace-makers.—They alone preach a gospel from which peace can spring. They alone exhibit its love as identical with its faith.

Another objection to the practicability of peace efforts comes from a numerous class, confiding less in the power of Christianity.—The war spirit is said to be ineradicable, as founded in nature. All brute animals are by instinct prone to violence and conflict, and human beings have been engaged in war and bloodshed from the earliest ages, and in every realm. War must, then, ever continue, while man retains his present passions; and his race must be miraculously changed in nature, or exterminated from the earth, for a new creation, before peace can dwell over its extensive sphere. We then strive to counteract the laws of Providence, when we oppose war; every generation must pass through its bloody trials, and look to a future life for a regenerated, pacific constitution.

The fact of the universal custom of conflict, brutal and human, is indisputable; that in brutes it is founded in their unalterable nature, will not be questioned; but when this law is applied also to man, the whole truth is not shown; it is forgotten that man has higher and freer impulses, which counteract and modify his animal nature. His calculating reason, and penetrating foresight of consequences, direct his very passions to an action, by which their present gratification is sacrificed to future good. Moral principle, too, is perceived by his mind, and an instinct, nobler than the animal, bends him into obedience to it. Man, by nature, is acquisitive and grasping; and yielding only to this nature, the world would be a universal scene of robbery and plunder. Civilization, pointing through experience to general good, has brought him under laws which respect the right of property, and induce scruples of honesty, restricting desire, where no punishment would follow its violation. Man, naturally, is indolent and self-indulgent; the view of future melioration rouses his energy, sloth is shaken off, self-denial practised, and active enterprises undertaken, which ultimately lead to exertions and privations for the good of others. Naturally, man is ambitious and despotic; how seldom is the man or woman seen, who does not love to rule; but civilization again has induced a general respect for equal rights, and the thrones of despotism are fast sinking before the rising claims of universal freedom.

Now, enlightened interest, justice and humanity all plead strongly for the abolition of war. Peace calls on man to modify his martial nature, as he has done for other bless-

ings. Christianity enforces this demand with higher authority and still more imposing motives; and if his animal nature has given way before weaker impulses for other objects, there can be no reason to despair of a conquest over it, in this case, when all the lights of reason, humanity and religion are made to bear upon it, and in full view, all the horrors, depravities and sufferings of war, and the rich blessings of unbroken peace, are duly presented and appreciated.

These replies are offered to the consideration of intelligent men, who entertain the objections stated. To the confiding Christian, who relies on the revealed will of God, however it may apparently oppose human experience or reason, a decisive answer can be made to every discouraging argument.—God has, by his prophets, declared there shall be a reign of universal peace, when men shall beat their swords into ploughshares, their spears into pruning-hooks, and shall learn war no more. Christ has enjoined, with peculiar emphasis and repetition, that forbearing love from which peace must necessarily result. These predictions and injunctions are the warrant of the peace-makers. Fortified with these, they are assured they shall not labour in vain; they see in them certain pledges of divine assistance, and ultimate success.—*Peace Society Tract.*

SINGING IN CHURCHES.

This is a subject on which, as we are well aware, there is much diversity of opinion; perhaps it would not be going too far to say, some unnecessary and improper warmth of feeling. Yet it is difficult to imagine, apart from the acknowledged waywardness of human nature, why this is the case. Only one exception occurs to us, at this moment, to the general practice of singing as an integral part of Divine worship; that exception being the highly respectable body known as the Society of Friends, who hold peculiar sentiments on the subject. All other professing Christians, Protestant and Roman Catholic, incorporate vocal music with their worship in the sanctuary of the Most High; as did the heavenly intelligences mentioned in the Apocalypse, who sang a new song unto Him who was slain, and who liveth again as the Intercessor for His people;—they beheld the glory which earthly worshippers can yet but dimly conceive—“even the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth”—and straightway raised the loud pean of triumphant joy, “Alleluia, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.”

It is not our present purpose to defend the Christian practice of singing as a part of Divine worship. We assume it to be not only justifiable and right, but authoritatively ordained. Our remarks will have reference to the mode in which, as we conceive, the audible praise of a Christian congregation, commonly called Church music, should be conducted. That it should be reverent, all will admit. Such a spirit becomes the sanctity of Divine worship. Where it is lacking, praise is not only a vain oblation, but a mockery and insult which Jehovah will punish. Nothing should be introduced into this service of the temple incompatible with the solemn awe which the creature should feel in the presence of the Creator, the probationer at the bar of his Judge, the finite when beneath the shadow of the infinite, and the mortal on the threshold of immortality.

But that which is reverent may unquestionably be joyous also. A due solemnity of feeling by no means precludes an indulgence of those grateful emotions which the privilege of access to God must excite in the soul of every true believer, and that buoyancy of spirit which suggests and necessarily accompanies, thanksgiving and praise. Devout gratitude is often ecstatic, and it need be no matter of surprise that men conscious of the grandeur of that service in which they are engaged, and authorized, by Holy Writ, to believe that with such sacrifices God is well pleased, select tunes as well as hymns in accordance with the exceeding joy which pulsates through every affection of the heart, and inspires them with a hope unspeakable and full of glory. A glad some spirit and deep reverence may go hand in hand, and find utterance in melodies in which liveliness and even excitement may have kindred interest.

If singing be a part of worship, an expression of grateful praise on the part of the multitude assembled,—(and if it be not this, it is mockery all)—should not those who can sing, join with the spirit and with the understanding also, in the act so acceptable to God and so becoming his people? Heart-worship cannot be delegated—the Most High cannot be praised, any more than he can be served, by proxy. And yet, praise is due unto Him who hath heaped benefits upon us, and who hath redeemed man from woe. Admitting that there often is praise which is not vocal, and

that it is quite possible to make melody in the heart while the tongue is silent, still it seems to us a nobler worship when the whole people “lift up their voices,” and in one united anthem fill the Almighty’s Temple with the incense of vocal praise, and “crowd His gates with thankful songs.”

The practical effect of congregational singing, as distinguished from that which is only choral, is a strong argument, we conceive, in favor of its universal adoption. As in this department of the paper we have spoken religiously upon other subjects, so we may speak on this; and perhaps it may be safely affirmed, that where the practice prevails, on the principles already laid down, there will generally be found a more healthy, warm, active, spiritual Christianity, a more fervent devotional spirit, and a consequent greater enjoyment of the ordinances of the sanctuary. If religion be love, and its fruits peace and joy, it must prompt to gratitude and praise. It is in the very nature of joy to have utterance; it must speak, either in rapturous ecstasy or by the silent but increased throbbing of the heart. It is a well-spring that can be dammed up by no artificial barriers; it will leak through or overflow.

Joy is communicative; and when it is the pure joy of vital religion, of sanctified affections, fused and moulded into the image of Him who is emphatically declared to be LOVE in all its purity, sublimity and potency, it cannot fail to have the best effect upon those associating with its possessor. This is well known to those upon whom devolves the spiritual oversight of their fellow Christians; and who are, in a certain sense, responsible for the continual burning of the fire upon the altar. They see it verified in many individual cases of conversion, in the growing spirituality of any section of their congregation, and more especially in those seasons of the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, distinguished as revivals. The spirit of the new convert, or of the little band of more faithful disciples, or of the Church more generally, diffuses itself; and while kindling new fires in hearts before cold and dead, feeds again in its turn upon the warmth it has communicated.

It is thus with congregational singing. The voice of voluntary, grateful praise, soon finds its echo, and that again its response; thus the affections are called into play, the bond of union is drawn closer, while its circle is enlarged, paradoxical as this may seem; and when each finds others joining in the glad anthem, and swelling the pæan of “worship and thanks and blessing,” his own tongue is unloosed—new hopes, new feelings, new desires, new joys are awakened, or old ones revived—and the Church becomes more earnest and active, more like a living member of the body of Christ, more prepared for warfare and for conquest,—their united singing of one common song being their rallying point in time of danger, their strength in weakness, and that which unites them in the bonds of peace and of fellowship with the Head.

Indeed, we can easily suppose that if congregational singing was generally introduced into the churches, ministers would not so often complain, as now they do to an alarming degree, of supineness, inactivity, and declension, in every direction. We do not mean that this should be relied upon; as remedial even, without vital piety and the influence of the Divine Spirit. We believe that there exists among all denominations a good substratum of practical Christianity, and that a fuller dispensation of the Spirit awaits only man’s disposition to receive it. And we believe also that the inert mass of Scriptural religion—(the words, though a contradiction in terms, seem best to convey our meaning)—might be made active and operative for indescribable good, if the warm spirit that prompts to and accompanies congregational singing could be made to breathe upon it.

Upon another point we do not wish to be misunderstood. There can be little, if, indeed, any good congregational singing, such as is reverent and appropriately expressive, without a leader and a choir of greater or less power; and we think an organ so admirably adapted to give body and stability to congregational singing, that we would like that instrument introduced into all churches of adequate size and appropriate construction. There is little chance of harmony, of general uniformity in time and other particulars, without some one to take charge of, conduct, and regulate the whole. What we and many others desire to hear, is the congregation singing with the choir or organ—singing all, heartily and in time—so that singing may indeed be a part of the worship in which the people themselves participate.

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