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T H E

WITNESS OF TRUTH.

VOL. III.

OSHAWA, APRIL, 1848.

NO. 4.

ANCIENT SCRIBES AND MODERN SCRIBES.

We take pleasure in laying before our readers the letter which follows, written by a gifted brother who has not previously spoken to us through the Witness:—

“But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” Mat. xv: 9.

The question often presents itself to my mind, when reading or thinking of the striking passage quoted above, Do our creed-making, creed-loving, creed-defending, and creed-following system-builders ever think of the import of these words of our Lord and Master, contained in this clear and definite passage? Methinks they do not. It was addressed to scribes and Pharisees: and our traditionary friends cannot think they are scribes and Pharisees, and consequently it does not suit them. But before proceeding, let us take a brief review of the circumstances under which these memorable words were uttered.

The scribes and Pharisees, were very zealous in observing, and on every occasion enforcing obedience to the commands or traditions of the Elders; and on more than one occasion did they call forth severe reproaches from our Saviour by their duplicity and hypocrisy. They made long prayers, that they might be seen of men. They made clean the outside of the platter, while all within was full of pollution: and now they come to him, with a complaint against his disciples, charging them with eating bread with unwashed hands, contrary to the traditions of the Elders. Christ in his reply, charges them with making void the law of God by their traditions, and calls them hypocrites, and then follows the passage I have quoted. “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

Again he says, "Let them alone; they be blind, leaders of the blind, and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Not only the blind leaders, but their equally blind followers. Now without wishing to judge uncharitably, does not the word of God warrant us in saying, that those now who either teach or follow the doctrines of men, given to us in creeds, catechisms, disciplines, and such like, are pursuing the footsteps of the scribes and Pharisees? Oh! I fear that many will discover, when it is too late, God cannot be worshipped by "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," nor by following the doctrines of men.

I am aware that those who believe in creeds, and who defend them, endeavour to prove that the doctrines contained in them are taken from the word of God. This however I will not admit, nor can it be proved. On the contrary, any one who is at all familiar with the creeds and disciplines of our modern, as well as ancient sects, and who are familiar also with their bibles, are aware that much that is taught in these man-productions cannot be found in the word of *truth*. Some there are amongst the sects who are aware of this, and who, in defending themselves, find themselves placed in a strange dilemma. They will not boldly assert that their ministerial assemblies, or conferences, have the power claimed by the *Hicul* of the Roman hierarchy; but when pressed upon the subject, they are driven into a position in which they virtually assert the same thing. They contend that their churches (meaning I suppose their ministers,) have a right to draw up creeds, articles, and rules, which are to be taught, believed, and followed by their respective bodies.

Now if this is not giving to their ministers the same power as that claimed by the pope in this particular, I think there may be a dispute without a difference. Ask them to prove that God authorized their ministers, or any other ministers, to draw up creeds or confessions, and to enforce the observance of them upon his people,—they cannot do it,—and although they cannot do this, and although they admit that their ministers are neither apostles nor inspired men, yet they still think that these ministers have powers greater than those committed to the apostles. If you ask such persons for scriptural proof for many of their practices, such as baptizing infants, having god-fathers and god mothers, —allowing one man to rule a church,—trying members by a committee,—they must either admit, that, like the Pharisees and scribes of old, they are following the doctrines and commandments of men, or else

they must believe that their ministers have a similar power committed to them to that held by the apostles.

I now come to the point at which I aimed when I commenced this article. Has God ever given a command which he will punish us for disobeying unless that command was given through properly authorized and well authenticated agents? I contend he has not. Under the old dispensation, God spoke to the people through Moses and the prophets, persons that the Jews well knew were authorized by God to make known his will to them; and it was for disobeying what was there taught that they were to be punished—not for disobedience to the commands or traditions of the Elders. And under the new dispensation, God has spoken to us through his Son, and through his inspired apostles, but through none others. When God sent his Son into the world, he did not require us to obey him until we had ample proof of his being sent from God. And so with the apostles. They were not to commence their ministry until they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. "God bare them witness with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit."

Now I contend that since the days of the apostles until the present, God has not inspired or commissioned any person or persons to make known his will more fully to us; and hence I believe that all the doctrines contained in creeds, decrees of councils, and disciplines, are to be rejected as being similar to the traditions of the Elders, which called forth our Saviour's condemnation.

The Jews, as I before stated, were to be punished for disobeying the commands given to them through Moses and the prophets. So are we for disobeying or neglecting the gospel preached by Christ and his apostles. Our Saviour says, "I judge no man, but the words that I speak unto you, they shall judge you in the last day," and it is said that Christ "shall come with his holy angels, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." When we appear before the bar of God we will not be condemned for disobeying the commands given by men; but we may be condemned for neglecting God's commands.

The apostle Paul says, "But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, ----- let him be accursed," and in writing to the Corinthians, he says, "I declare unto you the gospel ----- by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached to you." He then goes on to state what he preached, and evident it is that we

have little from him similar to the doctrines contained in man's productions.

In conclusion, let me add, that as we have in the word of God a gospel that did not originate with man—a gospel that is able to save our souls—and which was delivered to us by Him who spake as never man spake—or by those he inspired—let us give heed to the things spoken; for if they did not escape who disobeyed the word spoken by angels, “how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which was spoken to us by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them that heard him.” “This is your “condemnation,” says the Saviour, “that light has come into the world, and you love darkness rather than light, because your deeds were evil.” Let us reject men's doctrines, and let us follow “the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

J. S.

BIBLES, AND BIBLE READING.

No. II.

Shall we advance in the useful practice of bible reading? is the question of questions which we have proposed for the consideration of all who believe in divine revelation. To have a bible—to allow it house-room, or a place in our library—or to read it occasionally,—may answer the shrewd commercialist, or the popular gentleman; but the christian grows lean, and finally starves upon such fare. The experiment has been tried; yea, it is being tried now; and its effects are two visible and fatal to require luminous comment. Our brethren, in times past, have been famous for their apt and ready knowledge of the bible. Great indeed has been our strength, and the consequent triumphs of our cause, by reason of the “excellency of the knowledge” of which we were possessed, from a habitual and attentive reading of God's own Word.

But we must not become weary in doing well. There never is a good time to faint. “Whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule.” A strong man soon becomes weak under injurious influences. No one uses the same strength over and over; and without a full supply of the necessary elements and essentials of strength, it must fail. Who thinks of living upon the past? Shall a man eat enough in a day or a year to last him the period of a common lifetime? It is the province of just caution and wise vigilance to scrutinize ourselves narrowly and repeatedly, candidly placing the true measure upon all

our attainments, and thereby ascertain whether we are declining or making progress.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,” is an inspired exhortation which has never lost its significance. To “hold fast the faithful word,” is at this day as lawful, as profitable, and as necessary as during the ministry of Titus. And if christians are required to “stand fast in the Lord,” and be “a habitation of God through the spirit,” and “speak the same thing,” and be “of one accord,” and “press on toward the heavenly mark,” there are inducements and reasons the most serious, great, and numerous to become constant, apt, and diligent readers and learners of the divine volume.

On the subject of religion, however, there is a most slippery philosophy. The arts and sciences, and all that pertains to human learning, requires study; but the christian religion, and the whole volume of heavenly light and wisdom, may be learned in a moment!! The wide scheme of redemption—the immeasurable compass of God’s love—the height and depth of Heaven’s purposes in reference to a world of woe—and all that the Almighty Father has said and done, from the birth of time to the death of his Son, may, in a few dreaming moments, or in a number of elect days, according to custom, be fully understood, fully learned, and fully accepted! There is not a subject in the whole world of subjects on which the generality of men reason so erroneously as upon the subject of christianity. This is so well described in a recent poem, that we shall be excused for copying a few lines by way of illustration:—

“In science, learning, all philosophy,
Men labour all their days, and labour hard,
And, dying, sigh how little they have done.
But in religion they at once grow wise.
A creed in print, though never understood;
A theologic system on the shelf,
Is spiritual lore enough, and serves their turn.”

In this manner speaks the author of the “Course of Time,” and although he belonged to the good old Church of the Presbytery, he well knew the grand defect we have in view.

Is there a book on earth so unpopularity popular as the bible? We spoke in our essay last of the number of copies of the divine book, and intimated that there was a supply for all who desire to read. This, in one respect, is true; but it is only true in reference to the best portions of the best localities, taking into view the whole world. For

if we are to credit our Bible Society Reports, and certainly there is no reason to reject their statements, we have the alarming fact before us that only one in every sixteen persons has the entire bible, and only one in every eight who has a copy even of the New Testament! which proves, that, even if there be a full supply of the scriptures printed, there is an important blank in their circulation.

Unquestionably this limited distribution of the good book arises from an imperfect estimation of its worth; and again this meagre estimate of it arises from the fact that it is not read or studied; and hence the cardinal import of the great query of all the queries, *Shall we in practice improve in bible reading?* But then the question may be rebounded upon us, Who will give himself up to the perusal of a book, the value of which he has yet to learn? Let us admit all that is implied in this question, and what follows?—that we cannot consistently advance in the reading of the bible until its value be more fully known? This does not fairly follow; for in theory we already place a higher value upon the bible, than we are willing to acknowledge in the reality of practice. If, then, we are not using the book according to our present voluntary acknowledgement of its worth, consistency dictates that we should immediately extend the circle of our practice to the same compass as our theory.

And this, in the meantime, is all that we can rationally desire; for if every professor was to peruse the bible according to his own sense of its treasure and grace, he would soon become additionally impressed with its true worth, and would engage in the reading of it accordingly.

May we ask, then, in the name of all, what shall be our practice in time to come? Let us, at once, each for himself, resolve and say with the simple-minded and great Dr. Watt,

“Then let me love my bible more,
And take a fresh delight—
By day to read these wonders o'er
And meditate at night.”

A few thoughts more by way of a third lesson may yet be expected.

CONDUCTOR.

From the Christian Magazine.

SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL.

AGAIN we ask, What are we doing for the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Are we interested in, or indifferent to, the situation of those who are living in ignorance and in alienation from God? Other

causes are prospering and advancing with rail-road speed; causes, which, if they have any benefits, they are confined to a life fast passing away and reach not into that state of measureless existence upon which we shall enter. Our cause is worthy of the loftiest efforts within the grasp of man. It claims the noblest self-sacrifice of talent and character, and of the most indomitable energy of purpose that ever prompted the soul of man to exalted deeds. It calls for men of talent and character, and of the most indomitable energy of purpose, and of the most celestial purity of principle, and of the most enthusiastic devotion, to take part in an enterprise which aims to realize the purpose of God in their present and eternal destiny, by raising a race weltering in an abyss of sin and wretchedness, living without hope, or upon deceptive hope, and without God in the world. It calls upon the rich to devote their wealth to sustain a work that is to spread joy, peace, and salvation throughout the earth. And it invokes us by all that is precious in our faith or sublime in our hope, to consecrate ourselves and our substance in the spirit of "Him who though HE WAS RICH, FOR OUR OWN SAKES BECAME POOR, that we through his POVERTY might be rich." Until this holy cause shall command a devotion like this, it will not prosper. The wealthy, the good, the gifted, the "children of light" every where, must engage in it with that earnest conviction that 'springs from a sense of its incomparable truth, or we cannot, we ought not to hope for success. Thank the Lord, there are a few inspired by a sense of truth and duty who will devote themselves, and are ready in this selfish, sensual age to go to the work in the spirit of those who "count all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord;" yea, who "count them but dross, that they may win Christ and be found in him." They have pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to this cause, and though few and scattered, their influence is widely felt and will be felt even to the perfect day. May the Lord increase their number, and swell the host of those who shall sooner or later realize the glorious promise connected with turning many to righteousness. And those who have determined to do nothing—to be drones in the gospel hive, to lounge and loiter away the golden moments of life, spend its powerful energies in gain-getting, ease indulging, or murmur-encouraging pastimes and delusions, let them get out of the way, for a good cause is well rid of them; and a few faithful men will do more in one year with a hearty co-operation, than all such have ever done in one thousand. I know what I write, and I almost tremble while I write, and whilst I would

not discourage the feeblest laborer in the cause, I have no patience with those who are always planning but never executing, who are always telling how it should be done but never do it, or what is still worse, who are ever ready to murmur and complain, to discourage and deter, whilst they never move a finger to get rid of the evils complained of, or to help forward a better state of things. To the work—to the work, O servant of God, for the harvest is ripe, the reapers are few, and the eye of the Lord is upon his people. I know thou has spent already many a weary day and toilsome year, and thy labor has been unrequited, but remember that thy warfare ends only with life.

“Then nerve thy spirit to the proof,
And flinch not at thy chosen lot;
The timid good may stand aloof
And men may frown,—yet faint thou not.

And if thou fallest in the dust,
And those who helped thee flee in fear,
Die at thy post and manly trust,
That to the faithful, God is near.

And other tongues the truth shall wield,
And other hands the banner wave,
Till from immortal harps is pealed,
The blast of triumph o'er the grave.”

J. B. FERGUSON.

A VOICE FROM ERAMOSA.

Eramosa, 8th March, 1848.

DEAR BROTHER:—In the last number of the *Witness* I observed a communication from the esteemed brother Bradt, from which I was pleased to perceive his willingness to assist us in the matter of procuring a suitable Evangelist. It appears he is acquainted with five or six brethren whom he can recommend to us, three of whom he has named.

Brother Black, brother Anderson, and brother Kilgour, are well known in this region, and we believe their praise is in all the churches, and in none more than in the churches to which they belong. If any brother, therefore, can, indeed, procure the services of any one of those brethren in the manner desired, he will certainly deserve “the thanks of a large majority of the brethren in Canada.” But in order to this, more will be necessary than simply naming them. But it is asked, with some degree of surprise, why the talents and useful

abilities of those brethren are allowed to remain unnoticed, and apparently dormant? And also, why they are not encouraged and sustained by the brethren? These are certainly very interesting questions, especially in connection with the fact that we are in quest of an Evangelist. Be it known therefore to all interested, that the talents and abilities of the brethren mentioned are clearly seen and highly valued in the churches here, and that they have frequently attempted to bring them into more general and extensive usefulness. They have, indeed, in former times, and in various ways, been instrumental in accomplishing much good, and are now by no means unemployed; but each and all of the brethren referred to, feel constrained by reasons thought by themselves good and sufficient, to remain in their present position, and to decline laboring as Evangelists, except for short periods when circumstances permit. Hence the necessity of our "advertisement," and hence the necessity for the further services of the beloved brother Bradt in the matter.

Affectionately,

WILLIAM OLIPHANT,
Secretary of the Co-operation.

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LETTER FROM B. FRANKLIN.

THE following letter comes from the State of Indiana. Brother Benjamin Franklin, editor of the *Western Reformer*, is the writer, whom, though we have not seen, we love for the truth's sake. It will be seen that his epistle is a reply to one that was sent from Oshawa on the 10th of February.

D. O.

*Milton, Ind., Feb. 28th, 1848.*

BROTHER OLIPHANT, DEAR SIR:—Yours of the 10th inst. this hour came to hand, and I hasten to reply before I lay it down, that by many and pressing engagements may not cause it to be neglected.

The first two Numbers, of *The Witness* came to hand last week, and after spending some two hours in the perusal of them, with much interest, I entered *The Witness* upon my list of exchanges, and started the *W. Reformer*, from the beginning of the present volume, in exchange.

Believe me, my dear brother, to be much pleased with the meek and unassuming, though firm and unflinching appearance of your publication. When I saw the title of your pamphlet, *The Witness of Truth*, I turned my attention to that holy witness, the Fore Runner of Jesus Christ, and reflected upon his fate for bearing witness to the truth.

I then thought of the Great Witness of all the witnesses, sent of God to bear witness to the truth,—our adorable Lord and Saviour, and of the awful indignities, heaped upon him for no other reason but meekly bearing witness to the truth. I then looked to his chosen witnesses, whom he clothed with divine authority and power, to go into all the world “to preach and testify that it is he which is ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead”—to bear witness to the truth; and looked back to all the prophets who “bear witness of him,” and reflected upon the manner they were all treated, by an ungrateful world. Not only was their testimony not believed, but they were beaten, sawn asunder, destitute, tormented, and afflicted. Not only did they evince to the world their candor by “praying night and day with tears,” and suffering much privation during life, but, that their testimony might stand, they sealed it with their own blood. All this, however, was working out for them “a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory.” What an illustrious phalanx of witnesses they present, standing, as they do, associated with Him who “is the express image of the invisible God”—“the first born from the dead of every creature.”

Every name, thus highly honored of God, in the estimation of all good men, the angels of God in heaven, and the Almighty Father of all, is as far above all the kings, lords, and potentates of this earth, as the heavens are above the earth. They have honor, which death, the grave, and hades cannot tarnish—honor that comes down from God. “He who shall honor the Son, shall my Father honor,” said the Great Teacher.

You do not suppose, I presume, that you will ever get the honor of this world by bearing witness to the truth; for if you should, you would not resemble those witnesses to which I have alluded; nor can you ever get a large amount of the goods of this world for bearing such testimony; but you may get a competency, and eternal life in the world to come. This is enough.

You say you are young. I am by no means old myself; nor have I any great experience to boast of. Not only so, but you have had great advantages compared with those which have surrounded me. You have received a liberal education in early life, and thus brought up even with the improvements of the age at the start. I was brought up comparatively in ignorance, and what little education and knowledge I have has been acquired since I had a family, and in great poverty.

I therefore do not take upon me to advise my brethren of the editorial ranks what course they should pursue. If you, at any time, should

have some enterprise in view, or any important matter upon which you would like to have my opinion, it shall be given.

I heartily concur with you, concerning some papers, and have frequently thought of it, and talked of it; but our papers are like all the works of man; they comprise a *little* good, and much that is objectionable.

Our editors ought to be co-workers, and as such, should be very familiar with each other; but such is not the case in every instance.

We should be very glad to see you in our state. If you come, be sure and give us a call.

Your fellow Witness and Reformer,

BENJ. FRANKLIN.

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## COVETOUSNESS—BENEVOLENCE.

### No. III.

“Be followers together of me . . . as you have us for an ensample: for many walk . . . as the enemies of the cross of Christ; . . . who mind earthly things.”  
—*Phil.* iii. 17-19.

If it be true that spiritual happiness depends to any considerable extent upon christian benevolence, our stock of happiness, must, in the reckoning of every one, be very limited. There is certainly a famine in the land. Where shall we find Canaan's plenty—the milk and the honey of gladness flowing from the ever-streaming benevolence of christian principle? We ask—where? If the christianity of this age could be made to appear in physical form, every professor having his religion indicated in his countenance and bodily frame, we should find few rosy cheeks, plump limbs, or robustly proportioned figures. With this simile; before us, what a meagre and skeleton-looking company rises to view!

But without the further aid of this figure, let us suppose that every christian professor in the community, from north to south, from east to west, could be assembled in one of our court rooms, and each for himself to answer this very plain question: How much, dear brother, have you earned during the past year, and how much have you given to further the Lord's cause?—what truthful reply might be expected? Would the answer be that he had given for benevolent purposes one dollar in ten? one dollar in twenty? one dollar in fifty? one dollar in a hundred? But we cannot proceed with this calculation. A major majority of the richest in benevolence, would, by this broadside arithmetic, be ciphered out of the synagogue, and out of heaven at last.

Put it off as we may, however, there will be at length, a day of reckoning—not only a great day, but a great reckoning day. Few, very few, care or prepare for it. Pearls are found at the bottom of the sea and moisture is to be met in wastes of barren sands; but to what shall we compare the few in number whose plans, principles, and pursuits tell the whole world they are certain they shall account to God for all their gifts and means, moral, intellectual, and temporal?

Our speakers and writers have shunned this subject; some from one motive, and some from another. Delicacy, timidity, or sometimes perhaps a conscious participancy in the like sin, has prevented the bold and otherwise willing reprovcr from an encounter with this general and fatal evil. From whatever cause, or motive, or fear, there certainly has been a neglect. On our part there shall be no longer delay; for we are resolved to show a bold front, and break through the obstacles which deterred others. We know indeed that he who smites with the sword is liable to be smitten himself. The cost has been counted. We ask no favours. We have no fears. While in the spirit of scattering the glowing embers of rebuke, we are not unwilling to stand rebuked, if guilty. “With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again,” is a rule that we would not hand over to our neighbor, and imagine it was applicable to him, and to him only.

Mysterious as all the views and doctrines may be that we find in the rankest sectarianism, the mystery of a disciple of Jesus acting like his Lord, and at the same time devoting his whole life, energies, acquisitions, and means to his own individual interests, is a mystery which we set down as being longer, and broader, and deeper, and higher than the whole doctrinal mysteries of christendom gathered and cemented into one. It is not only a mystery but a novelty. Were the subject of a less serious character, it would be decidedly amusing to picture a fancy sketch of a popular Christian, with his supposed thoughts and affections high up in the heavens, and his eyes, and his hands, and all his plans busy to secure the so-said trifling things of earth. To find a man soberly in the belief that he is dressed in white, soaring like an angel above the skies on wings of love, while at the very moment he is working among the materials of a coal mine, far under the surface, must be considered sufficiently absurd and farcical; but not more so than to find one of our latter-day saints who has his treasure in heaven, and his whole heart intently fixed upon the precious things of the world.

Talk of benevolence?—! What an insult!! Religion in the nine-

teenth century can do without it!!! It would sometimes be a little relief even to find a certain class of religionists given to honesty in the sense of the moral worldling! Bargains are made—schemes are tried—speculations are entered into—and statements for truth are colored with a shade so doubtfully dark—that it requires a charity as wide as the Gulph of Mexico to enable us to feel that such persons are entitled to the rank of common moral men. A blush starts upon both cheeks of the pious professor when he seriously reflects that he has brethren of this order.

We speak of—whom? foreigners? strangers? aliens? Let no one deceive himself. It is not always desirable, nor always profitable, to leave home!

There can be no surer criterion by which to arrive at any man's true character, than his usual conversation and his uniform course of action. Words are the issues of the heart, and actions are only the outward embodied form of purposes. No man objects to this rule of judging; nay, further, no man can lawfully object: for it is the teaching of the Great Teacher and his messengers. If, then, we find an individual who has made a profession of religion, but whose principal speech is engrossed with the things of self, and whose labours have no reference to his neighbour, but are wholly engaged to obtain what will administer personal gratification, shall we scruple to call such an one selfish, although he bears the christian name? Whatever others may choose, let us call things by their proper names!

Was it every way judicious, prudent, and safe, we might here mark down a number of instances, some of them coming under our own observation, partially illustrative of what we affirm, and which should be taken as undoubted proof that something ought to be said upon the subject. But thinking that many will regard themselves doubly taxed in reading what has already been advanced, we shall draw to a conclusion for the present. Still, we have not yet examined the whole surface of this topic; and a number of additional reflections, are in waiting. Before a final conclusion, we design putting two or three eyes into the face of this subject, and make it look two or three different ways.

CONDUCTOR.

## REFORMATION.

No. V.

IN endeavouring to present the basis upon which, in our judgment, the reformation of the existing religious communities should rest, we have stated, by implication at least, two truths which we wish now to

consider in their direct relations to each other. These truths are: 1. That the Christian community should be united by the ties of a common Christianity. That there should be one faith, universally received as evangelical, and one all-pervading family-affection,—a bond of perpetual peace. In other words, that all who profess faith in Christ should be united together as one body, having Him alone as their head, and acknowledging a common standard of doctrine and of duty. 2. That, on the otherhand, each individual member of that body, must for himself, at his own responsibility, and at his own peril, in the exercise of the right of private judgment, determine this faith, ascertain this doctrine, and render this obedience.

We candidly confess, indeed, that if the history of Protestantism were to be taken as an exemplification of the true nature and tendency of these principles, which, as we have stated, are among the original and essential features of this portion of christendom, we should be constrained to admit them as fallacious. For how would it be possible to reconcile with these truths the sectarian antipathies, discords, feuds, and animosities that have prevailed among Protestants;—the divisions, heresies, and endless wars and fightings that have characterized every portion of this wide-spread reformation from Popery?

But if the Protestant world can be convinced that the course which has been pursued results in religious dissensions, there is also another fact of which the same experience may convince them, viz: that all this sectarian animosity and prejudice has failed to prevent entirely a spiritual unity amongst the truly enlightened, liberal, and pious of opposing parties. This fact, fortunately, stands forth in bold relief, and while it demonstrates that unity is not incompatible with liberty of judgment, it proves, still further, that the real tendencies of heart-felt religion are to produce peace and unity, and that whatever creates or perpetuates division, must be opposed to Christianity. When men, who, in the deliberate exercise of judgment, have attached themselves to different religious bodies, are able by the elevating influences of divine truth and love, to rise above the narrow limits of sectarian prejudice, and to embrace each other as children of a common Father, and heirs of a common inheritance, the power of these divine principles is shown to be such, that they require but a fair and open field of action, to gain a complete and glorious triumph.

There is, then, through the influence of divine truth, and in direct opposition to the genius of sectarianism, a union of heart between the pious. Amidst the conflict of parties, the shock of contending creeds,

the theological thunders of anathemas, and the fires of persecution, there have been always found some who alike distinguished with trembling reverence the still, small voice of God himself: and have each pondered in doubt and solicitude, the inquiry—"What doest thou here?" Amidst the interminable debates of partizans, there have been some who have felt as Christians, and recognized the image of the divine object of their affections, even amongst the opposing hosts; and with the tender cares of charity, have sought to heal the wounds which bigotry had inflicted. But this is merely a spiritual union—a secret sympathy. It is an invisible union, while there is, at the same moment, a most visible disunion. It is a star of hope, however, amidst the clouds of the tempest. It is the spirit of God moving upon the face of chaos. It is christianity itself, struggling amidst the discordant elements of human passion, to bring order out of confusion, and create anew the heavens and the earth. But is not this mighty spirit to throw off the burden of human crimes and follies? Must it struggle forever in an unequal conflict? However unjustly it may have been once shorn of its strength, is not its power increasing in the prison-house of its foes? And may we not hope to see a visible, as there is an invisible unity in the family of God?

There are many who regard such a unity as impracticable, Discouraged with the prospect, they are disposed to 'bear the ills they have,' and seek to convince themselves that no visible union was ever contemplated in the christian system. They even seek to justify the schisms of christendom, on the ground that they induce greater vigilance, and serve to maintain purity of doctrine and discipline, and greater activity amongst the religious community. But evil is never justified, because it may, by an over-ruling hand, be made productive of good. Nor is it possible for any one to consider, dispassionately, the express objects and tendencies of Christianity, without perceiving at once that partyism and discussion are as remote and distinct from these designs and tendencies as earth from heaven. It is in direct opposition to such alienations and divisions, that the Apostle declared there is ONE BODY, as there is one spirit, one Lord, and one faith; and that he has earnestly besought Christians to be "of one mind," to "speak the same things," and to have "no divisions" among them. It is in reference to the same matter, that the Lord prays the Father to keep the disciples whom he had given him, that they might be *one*. "Neither," adds he, "pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be *one*: as thou Father art in me, and I

in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

In the present effort at reformation, it is this unity which has been chiefly urged upon the religious community. Christian union and intercommunion were the original and ruling thoughts with those with whom this movement began. To produce another schism—to add a new party to those already existing, was abhorrent to their feelings and their principles. It was, indeed, for the very purpose of avoiding this, that they, in the beginning, united with one of the principal denominations of the day, after a candid statement of their actual position, and of the basis of union which they approved. Nor did they ever desire to assume a distinct or sectarian name or character, or to separate themselves from the denomination to which they were thus attached; but rather, in connexion with that body, to labor for christian union, and the restoration of the simple faith and institutions of the gospel. The reformers separated themselves, therefore, in no case. They were in some cases separated by that body; in others, they outgrew the covert of its sheltering wings.

Through the whole progress of this religious movement, it has ever been maintained, that sects and parties are the great obstacles to the ultimate triumphs of the gospel, and that there is a basis of union upon which all true believers may be united as one body, while, at the same time, there need be no retrenchment of christian liberty. In short, it has been the great design to urge the importance of the two great truths which we have now under consideration, that there should be unity of faith, and at the same time liberty of private judgment. To reconcile these is a problem which Protestants have been endeavouring to solve for the last 300 years. It is believed that in the principles of the present reformation its solution has been found.

The circumstances in which this movement originated gave to it its character, and directed it almost exclusively to this very question. It was provoked, at first, by a manifestation of the most obstinate sectarian prejudice on the part of several leading denominations; and the virulence with which it has been opposed by the various parties during its progress, has only served to augment the proofs of its necessity, and to continue it in its original direction against the ramparts of sectarianism. Everything derives its characteristics from that which gives it birth. This reformation was born of the love of union, and christian union has been its engrossing theme. Amidst all the vicissitudes to which it has been subjected, this alone has been its end and aim. Amidst all

the storms of sectarian controversy in which it has been cradled and nurtured, it has sought for itself, and proposed to others, as a peaceful shelter, no other home than A COMMON FAITH, founded upon the rock of divine truth, and embosomed in the graceful foliage of *liberty of opinion*. The Lutheran reformation, on the other hand, was occasioned by gross corruptions of the most important *doctrines* of the gospel, as in the traffic of Tetzal and the bold assumptions of Leo, and hence a restless zeal for *purity* of doctrine possessed the early reformers, and spent its theological debates, and in the elaboration of creeds and formularies. The same feature has remained prominent in Protestantism to the present hour. There is no question of any thing but *doctrine*. It is a *theory* of religion that justifies or condemns. It is a creed or a confession that makes the saint or the sinner.

There has been, however, in the present effort for union, no desire to depreciate the value of purity of doctrine. But while it has been duly urged that there can be no christian union, except it be a union in gospel truth, there has been a freedom from that morbid sensibility upon the subject of doctrinal views which has led to so many fine-spun theological abstractions, and created so many divisions by unprofitable and unauthorized inquiry. In adopting the scriptures as the only source of religious knowledge, there is an ample, and the only security for purity of doctrine: in the reception of the simple gospel of Christ there is true evangelical faith; and, in the confession of the great fundamental truth of christianity, there is a divine basis of union, which can be neither overthrown nor controverted. It is in urging these, as the great fixed principles of union and co-operation, that the present reformation has sought to restore to the church, the true foundation laid by Christ and the Apostles; and while securing an essential unity of faith, to grant a just and scriptural liberty of opinion. R. R.

Some of our readers who also read the Harbinger, should be aware that the articles on Reformation, by our brother in Christ Dr. R. Richardson, are written equally for the Witness and Harbinger, and hence the reason why we give no credit in copying them. And although we have taken a democratic despotic liberty of curtailing some of the essays, we hope to be pardoned, since the size of our paper seems to call for short articles. We are delighted with the essays, and we have good reason to know that others also have prized their worth. D. O.

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#### REPLY TO A REPLY.

We give publicity to the following communication with some reluctance—not because of the sentiment, style, or general bearing of the communication, in itself considered, but more particularly because

we are apprehensive of a controversial correspondence. A discussion between correspondents is the most unmanageable, and, we might say, he the most unintelligible, of all discussions. The editor is supposed to take a side, and agree with one of the contending parties, when, in fact, may not coincide with either. Besides, there are scores of casual readers, who will inevitably read one or other of the corresponding controversialists and perhaps never see a line of reply, and who will therefore probably remain forever under the impression that what they read is to be received in good faith as agreeing with the general tenor of the work. If there was no other reason, then, for having a full measure of cautiousness respecting a controversy conducted and carried on by correspondents, we regard this one as enough—that the articles of the parties cannot appear in the same number, but must be scattered and separated by the intervention of weeks or months.

Still, we cannot in consistency refuse our present correspondent a hearing. So much have we said, and so much have we yet to say, upon the one-sided and one-eyed papers of sectaries, which exclude everything not shaped and colored in the moulds and dye-stuffs of lady orthodoxy, that we can afford to press a little upon the opposite extreme before either bringing ourselves or others in matters of this sort to a just equality. As, then, our pages have been open, so shall they still be open to correspondents and writers of every order who demean themselves and treat others with respect. D. O.

—, 15th March, 1848.

MY CHRISTIAN BROTHER:—I am not much accustomed to writing to Editors, although I have longed to say something to you upon many things I have read in the periodical. If I would tell you the number of times that my pen has been taken to address you, it would only afford amusement, and as my determination is to prepare something to send before rising from this sheet, I will come to the subject without much lingering.

Some pieces in the *Witness* upon the Spirit from correspondents have caused me "vexation of spirit." If I was asked of an objector about these things, I would reply, They are mixtures of opinion and philosophy. I am no disputer, nor am I willing to enter into the field of controversy, as my learning is not adequate; but if my ability was sufficient, I would tackle the "Reply" of the last *Witness*.

Is it not bad policy to say before enemies and cavilers that a passage of scripture is not translated correctly, in the common bible, and

that it means something else than what it says? Though it may be granted that what is affirmed is true, can we not prove all that we need to prove with the bible as it is? What does Paul teach when he says, "To the weak become I as weak."? I may be wrong, but I have really thought that frequently our great men done harm by the way they express their sentiments. I would not state that the sentiments are improper, but that they are careless of the result of expressing these sentiments.

It however appears to me clear that a wrong belief is manifest in these pieces upon the Spirit. Surely the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are the same. I look upon the difference attempted to be made, not only as untrue, but very injurious. Do, brother, give the essay on the Spirit you promised last volume, and I know that you will not speak of it in this way, and surely there is a call for it when things concerning the spirit are so haphazardly spoken.

I have a word to say upon the assertion that the Comforter came from the Father and not from Christ. Great emphasis is put on the words, "whom the *Father will send*," but surely the brother who quotes the passage knows that the Saviour in another place, says, "When the Comforter is come, whom *I will send* unto you," and afterwards also, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart, *I will send* him unto you." And when he says that "all things that the Father hath, are mine," what advantage can it be to a saint or a sinner to make out a difference between the Spirit as the Father's gift and not the gift of Christ? But I have said all that I have to say upon the subject, for I cannot carry on a dispute, although I believe that we should contend "for the faith."

Yours with sincere christian affection,

ISAAC TRUTH-LOVER.

## TWO WEEKS' TOUR.

*Eramosa, Jan. 22, 1848.*

DEAR BROTHER OLIPHANT:—You know that the few churches in this section of the country have for several years been organized into a co-operation for spreading the gospel. We have generally selected the proclaimers from among ourselves; and in consequence of the way in which our brethren are engaged with their farms and families, there are only certain seasons that they can leave home; and then frequently under the most unfavorable circumstances. When shall we be in apostolic order, with an efficient eldership at home, and zealous "men of God" as evangelists abroad?

The following sketch of a two weeks' itineracy in the service of the co-operation, principally through the Townships of North East Hope and Wellesly, we wish you to publish in the "Witness," as our Report to the brethren.—The present visit to these places was in connexion with an effort made in North East Hope last year by brethren Correll and one of us (J. Kilgour) when three persons became obedient to the faith.—The first night after leaving home, we were entertained and refreshed in more respects than one by our brother Hoffman of Berlin. He and our dear brethren in that place are standing fast in the truth, and we were much encouraged by some recent and valuable additions to the church there, together with the cheering facts that their congregations are generally good, and prejudice is giving way. We were also glad to learn that this church has some pious and intelligent brethren to assist brother Hoffman.

Our next station was at the house of brother James Campbell of North East hope, who, with his wife and Nephew, compose the little band we went to see and confirm in the truth. The meeting was pleasing and profitable for all of us. We found them alive in the truth, and prospering. They rejoiced in having an opportunity of being further instructed in the will of our Master, and confirmed in their profession. Without losing time, we made arrangements for presenting the gospel to the inhabitants of this vicinity, but here also, as in many other places, sectarianism and spiritual death prevail to a great extent, producing an aversion to the soul-purifying gospel of Jesus Christ, and a behaviour after the model of the "ancient order of things." We did not succeed in getting good meetings in this place. However, we formed an acquaintance with some friendly people with whom we conversed freely. Here also we made a visit to brother Elder Bayley (Baptist) and family, and found them very friendly and disposed to listen to an explanation of our distinguishing views. He expressed himself generally pleased. We were both gratified at his candor and kindness.

Our next station was in the rear of North East Hope, where a few believers were immersed shortly after last year's efforts. There, along with two intelligent Baptists, united upon the faith and obedience of the truth, they meet as a church to break the loaf every first day of the week. We were very anxious to have the brethren to whom we were sent, united with these brethren; and in order to a comfortable union, we requested and obtained an evening's conversation with the members of this church. At first they were rather shy: but we were not long with them when we found ourselves at home, and much of the suspicious feeling removed. There is every reason for believing that a real union will be formed among them. We spent much time along with brother Millne, their teacher, at his own house, and at the several places where he holds meetings, and found him a very pious and intelligent brother, much respected, and promising in usefulness. We think that a little help to enable him to preach the gospel in the several places where he goes, would be well applied. In this latter station we had good audiences. But when our meetings were getting large, and confidence in

the people towards us increased, so that there was an anxiety to hear us, we were obliged to return home. It may be that good will come out of this endeavour; but how very small the good in comparison to what would be, if a brother was kept wholly in the field. This would be to reap as well as to sow; but the plan hitherto followed, is, to be at some trouble in sowing, and then allow others to reap. It is high time, beloved brethren, we were alive to our responsibilities. The affairs of our Master's Kingdom has been committed to his people. We are to occupy till he comes. May all of us be found waiting for the coming of our Lord, that we may give in our account at last with joy, and each of us be saluted with "Well done good and faithful servant."

JAMES BLACK.

JAMES KILGOUR.

### MATERNAL EDUCATION.

Let not mothers be incredulous. The dawn of reason in their babes is very early, and often brightens into morning, or travels into the full effulgence of day, before they look on them as aught but a delicately organized mechanism—a pet—a plaything! O, let them think how soon their little one leaps when the mysterious charm of music thrills through the tiny brain! how soon it learns to modulate its feeble voice, before it can articulate to the melodies that bring from its eyes an eloquent smile! and that earliest smile which responds to the maternal caress is the first lesson of the affections.

Mrs. Howitt, whose works overflow with the good, the true, and the beautiful, says.—“Children should very often be sung to; they should be brought up with melodies, and taught that universal harmony should be the element of their being.” Sentiment precedes intelligence; and thus, though the voice of instruction waits for the more full development of reason, yet, with its mother's milk, the young child may drink education.

The duty of every reflective and intelligent mother is thus early to inspire a love of beauty and of virtue, long before the abstract terms can be understood, or direct teaching can be comprehended. And the affections may be cultivated, and the reason aroused, and the memory stored with recollections long, long before they can find utterance in language. “And a wise man scorneth nothing, be it never so small or homely, for he knoweth not the secret laws that may bind it to great effects.” The ocean, vast and mighty, is composed of single drops; and atoms crowded on atoms form the lofty, the colossal mountain; and so character is formed hour by hour, and all things aid in its development.

"I am a missionaay in my nursery," said a young, lovely, and sensible mother, to the writer. "Six pairs of little eyes are daily watching mamma's looks, as well as listening to her words; and I wish my children never to see in me that which they may not imitate, that which may naturalise my instruction or influence."

Need I say that her children arose and called her blessed?

"Thelwall," says Coleridge, "was accustomed to say that 'he thought it very unfair to influence a child's mind by inculcating any opinion before he had come to years of discretion, and was competent to choose for himself.' I showed him into my garden, and said it was my botanical garden. 'How so?' said he, 'it is covered with weeds.' 'Oh!' I replied, 'that is only because it has not yet come to its age of discretion and choice. The weeds, you see, have taken the liberty to grow, and I thought it unfair to prejudice the soil towards roses or strawberries.'"

So; then, thou art set as the guide and guardian of thy tender little ones, to plant, to prune, to water, and to weed. "For if this field be not tilled every day," says Bishop Hall, "it will run into thistles. This work must be continual, or it speedeth not." The seeds of first instruction are dropped into the deepest furrows; and hence, never let them recollect the time when excellent thoughts were strangers to their minds. It is a feature of fallen humanity; that our evil tendencies are the most active, and the most easily developed. The diviner parts of the character are easily subjugated by the vicious and the sensual; and therefore let not the observant and curious appetite of youth be fed on poison or on garbage, whilst truth and virtue are banished from its presence. They will be found apt scholars in the school of vice or of folly; and, humiliating as may be the sentiment in the ears of philosophers and sentimentalists, it is too true that early and evil habits soon cling around the will-like captive, and clustering weeds impede the pathway of the virtuous.—*Selected*

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### SPECIAL NEWS.

*Era, N. Y. Feb. 8th 1848.*

BROTHER OLIPHANT:—We have had five additions since you were here. The brethren at Cooksville I believe have had two; in Pompey two; Tully three; Cicero two; and Butler some five during the summer and fall.

Yours &c.

J. M. SHEPARD.

*Norton, Ohio, 19th February, 1848.*

BROTHER OLIPHANT:—Brother J. H. Jones laboured with us five

days in January, and by the blessing of the Lord, seven made the good confession, and were baptized in the name of the Lord. Three have united who had previously been baptized by the Baptists. The next week I went to Wooster, and seven were baptized there also, and two united; one of them from the Methodists. Of those baptized, one was a Presbyterian deacon; two were Episcopalians; one a Methodist, and one a Lutheran. Last week I went to Clardon, where eleven were added to the faith. Bless the Lord. May the Great Shepherd of the sheep keep them in the way of life everlasting. "O that men would praise the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endures forever"

Yours in the Lord,

A. B. GREEN.

*Louisville, Ky., Feb'y 25th, 1848.*

DEAR BROTHER OLIPHANT:—With great pleasure, and in great haste and love, I answer your last.

In Clark county, Indiana, (opposite Louisville,) we have had, lately, forty-eight additions to the church of God. In said county, we have had an average of twenty-one additions per month for a year past.

In Louisville forty have been added recently.

In Kentucky there are about thirty-five thousand members. In the state of Indiana there are more than forty thousand.

May the Lord preserve and bless you.

Yours in the truth,

S. W. LEONARD.

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"CHRISTIAN BAPTIST."

SIXTH EDITION.

The "Christian Baptist" was first published in seven unbound volumes, at one dollar per volume, or seven dollars for 2016 pages, large duodecimo but is now comprized in one large royal octavo volume, of 678 pages, at the following rates:

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To afford this standard work at these prices, it is necessary that a large edition be printed, and that the money should accompany the order, with the addition of fifty cents for box. Letters must be post paid.—Responsible agents wanted.—Religious editors publishing this advertisement shall receive a copy of the work.

D. S. BURNET.

Cincinnati, March 6th, 1848.

NOTE TO D. S. BURNET:—*Dear Brother*:—Our readers in this country are well acquainted with the so claims and merits of the above work it would be wholly unnecessary to publish your notice in full. You may expect an order for some 50 or 100 copies, soon as our commercial sky is a little brighter.

D. O.

“THE CHRISTIAN PSALMIST. A collection of tunes and hymns, of various metres, original and selected: for the use of the church of God, bible classes, and singing societies. By Silas W. Leonard and A. D. Fillmore.” This work is favourably noticed by a number of papers and periodicals which have met our eye. It is a convenient pocketable book, of between three and four hundred pages. The music is said to be choice. A few of our brethren in Canada have purchased and used the “Psalmist,” and doubtless we shall have more of them at no distant period. All orders for the work directed to S. W. Leonard, Louisville, Kentucky, will receive prompt attention.

D. O.

MEETINGS IN JUNE.

We are authorized to announce two meetings for the month of June, designed to be as large as the friends and brethren can make them. The times and places are—first Friday in June, at Jordan, Niagara District, twenty-three miles west of the Falls,—second Friday in June, at Bowmanville, Newcastle District, twenty-five miles west of Cobourg, and nine miles east of Oshawa. The steamboat landing, Port Darlington, is only one and a half or two miles from Bowmanville.

An effort will be made to secure the labours of brother A. S. Hayden for one or both of these meetings.

D. O.

NOTICE TO THE CHURCH IN BERLIN.

To comply with a requisition from the brethren in Waterloo, officially tendered by brother Cyrus Bowers, desiring our labour for a month in that regⁿ, would afford us great pleasure; but other and various obligations forbid doing so immediately, much as we desire it. Nor can we fix upon a time, or give a definite promise. If possible we should leave for that place to-day. But it is literally impossible.

We hope to occupy our moments with a constant eye to the great and coming day. Whether we shall satisfy all our brethren before that day arrives, is exceedingly problematical.

D. O.

Erratum. In our last number, page 58, the words “different kinds of confidence” occur twice, and if the reader will please put the words *different degrees* for “different kinds,” in the place where they first occur, the sentence will read correctly.